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The Role Of A Principal In Establishing And Maintaining Positive Behavioral Interventions And Supports (pbis): An Ethnographic Case Study

Angela Wanzek

THE ROLE OF A PRINCIPAL IN ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS): AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic case study was used to examine roles of a principal in implementing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) in one North Dakota elementary school. Observations, school documents, and semi-structured interviews were analyzed to identify the role of a principal. Skinner's reinforcement theory and Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory served as theoretical frameworks.

Research indicates a trend in the increase of PBIS in schools across the country. A need remains to identify the role of elementary principals utilizing PBIS in North Dakota elementary schools. Certified and classified staff were interviewed to examine their perspectives on the role of an elementary school principal.

Eight themes emerged with one common theme being the most significant: communication. Themes developed into three assertions that expanded upon collaborative professionalism to innovate and improve PBIS for principals across North Dakota.

Keywords: principals, positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), ethnography, ethnographic studies, leadership, school culture.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Using an ethnographic case study approach, I examined the role of an elementary principal in the implementation and maintenance of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) in one North Dakota elementary school. I documented expectations of key informants regarding a principal's role in administering PBIS. Information was collected throughout my time at the site through semi-structured interviews, observational data, and various school and district documentation resources.

PBIS is a systems approach to designing effective school environments that provide behavioral supports for all children within a school. PBIS is implemented using specific strategies. Those strategies are based on a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for students. The idea of using a tiered approach to develop the social culture of a school is not new. PBIS uses a three tiers approach to behavioral interventions (Tier 1 – school wide behavioral interventions, Tier 2 – intensive, more specific interventions, and Tier 3 – individualized behavior plans) in order for all children to achieve both social and academic success (Hannigan & Hauser, 2015).

Batsche et al. (2005) defined a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) as "the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions" (Batsche et al.,

2005, as cited in Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2018a, para. 2). North Dakota implemented a multi-tiered system of supports state-wide as a means of improving schools to create educational systems where "ALL STUDENTS can be successful," "ALL TEACHERS can be successful," "ALL INITIATIVES align to promote DISTRICT improvement and success," and "where ALL RESOURCES and SUPPORTS are allocated to support . . . school improvement goals" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018).

According to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, as written in their North Dakota Multi-Tier System of Supports Playbook (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018), MTSS is defined as . . .

> . . . a framework to provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally in school. NDMTSS focuses on providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals. Data are used to allocate resources to improve student learning and support staff implementation of effective practices. (p. 5)

While Batsche et al. defined MTSS as a practice, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction has defined MTSS as a framework. The difference in the two would suggest that practice is the physical application of teaching instruction and curriculum based upon student need; while framework would suggest the structure of how the instruction and curriculum is matched to the practice using a three-tier model before the practice (teaching) can begin. Similarities would suggest three common themes in both definitions:

1. Instruction and interventions are matched to student needs;
2. Student progress is monitored for decision-making; and
3. Data are utilized for decision-making and improved teaching practices.

Funded by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education, and Early Intervention Services through a state grant from the U.S. Department of Education, MTSS has been implemented in an effort to create and refine academic and environmental improvements in schools throughout the state using this tiered approach. The North Dakota playbook stated:

> For some students, the typical evidence-based instruction and behavioral supports provided in the classroom are not sufficient to address their educational needs or prepare them for postsecondary opportunities. They will need individualized, more intensive intervention composed of practices that are evidence-based. (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018, p. 5)

This shift in thinking focused on a change to the educational system in North Dakota, designed to impact teaching practices and learning outcomes for students. Refining our current educational systems in North Dakota has required data and extensive research to determine how to best meet the needs of our students.

There are many components to a school system, components that include administration (leadership), staff (both certified and classified), and available funding from the state (for resources). All components must be examined to determine whether an intervention systems' approach to learning and behavior will be effective and sustainable. In their playbook (the current state guide for MTSS), the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (2018) identified, "Leadership and organizational supports, such as

scheduling, roles of staff, adequate planning time, professional development structure, evaluation, leadership support, policies, and funding can also facilitate or impede the effectiveness and sustainability of the system of instruction and intervention" (p. 5). As a North Dakota educator teaching in a school system that is currently in the early stages of MTSS implementation, and as a graduate school researcher, I was intrigued to identify how the role of leadership in an elementary school setting can establish and maintain PBIS. It was made apparent in the NDMTSS playbook that implementation of PBIS in North Dakota is no small undertaking and should be a priority in school districts. "The exploration stage is important: otherwise, NDMTSS gets added to the multiple other time-consuming initiatives and viewed as one more thing to do" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018, p. 6).

So how do we define the leadership of a school? Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2011) stated, "The principal, then, is the pivotal point – the catalyst – for what happens in the school" (p. 4). They made it clear that a principal takes on the leadership role of a school. Ubben et al. continued to identify the roles and responsibilities of a school principal by considering the individual (personality) of a principal and the institution that shapes that administrative role.

A social systems theory explains the relationship between a leader (personality) and an institution and how they work together interchangeably. Ubben et al. (2011) defined roles as "the official positions and offices that have been established to carry out the organization's purpose and functions" (p. 4). Roles are responsibilities of the institution. The challenge for a principal is to address both the individual and organizational needs of the institution to achieve congruence. "The greater the

congruence, the more productive the organization is" (Ubben et al., 2011, p. 5). In other words, if a principal's personality is congruent to the needs of an organization, productivity will be greater.

In an effort to understand the role of a principal better, Kellough and Hill (2015) stated, "The role of the principal has become increasingly challenging" (p. 11). The role of a principal expands far beyond school management. The role of a principal is to consider what is best for an entire school while also making decisions for individual students. A principal has management responsibilities, as well as, leadership responsibilities. Management responsibilities may include: managing people, maintaining a safe environment, facility management, and managing financial data. In other words, a principal often has the role of "manager" to keep a school operating. Leadership responsibilities may include developing or supporting a shared vision promoting academic success while maintaining a positive learning climate. "Leading ensures building relationships of trust and credibility and unified efforts toward achieving the school's vision" (Kellough & Hill, 2015, p. 11). When considering the difference between a principal's managerial roles versus leadership roles, the role of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS would fall clearly into the role of a leadership position rather than a managerial position.

The NDMTSS playbook (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018) identified how to build a system in a school for a leadership team identifying principals and superintendents as "high impact leadership" (p. 18). The goals for "high impact leadership" in MTSS are to focus on "effectively leading system change through strategic implementing of a teachable point of view, instructional leadership, data utilization, and

continuous improvement" (p. 18). This indicates that MTSS requires the leadership of an effective team, including a principal and members of a school organization working collaboratively to make decisions based upon data. These decisions serve as a means to provide continuous improvement efforts towards student learning. Instructional leadership identifies with the notion of leading from within an organization and using teacher perspectives to aide in the decision-making process. The question remains as to what a principal's role specifically is in the implementation and establishment of PBIS for North Dakota elementary schools. According to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, a "building principal provides a critical role in the effective implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, n.d., p. 1). However, a more specific definition of what this critical role entails is not available, at least not at the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. Therefore, the gap in research would suggest a need to further identify the role of an elementary principal in North Dakota utilizing PBIS (in practice), how this role corresponds to the expected role of an elementary principal (in research), and how it compares to outlined roles of a principal utilizing PBIS (in research).

The NDMTSS "provides a framework for implementing educational practices to ensure academic, behavioral and social-emotional success of all students" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018, p. 21). Social-emotional learning (SEL) goals can be designed to improve academic and behavioral outcomes of students by using the PBIS tiered approach to behavioral interventions. SEL goals are recognized as inclusive solutions for all students and address lagging skills in students. For these reasons, a PBIS systems approach to social-emotional learning was implemented in North Dakota to

promote academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success of all students. “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a process that is consistent with the core principles of MTSS” (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2018a, para. 3).

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), social-emotional learning (SEL) is:

> The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2018, para. 1).

Children who are competent in social awareness are able to regulate their emotions and demonstrate positive relationship skills as well as effective decision-making skills. Social-emotional learning is conducted using a three-tier approach to enhance the quality of life and reduce problem behaviors in schools.

Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, & Leaf (2008) suggested that PBIS implementation promotes a positive change in staff and student behaviors; however, there is minimal literature available that provides a clear description of the role of an elementary principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS within an elementary school setting. Hannigan and Houser (2015) identified 10 key markers in the establishment of PBIS. One of the first questions to address is if a school has a PBIS team. Another question is if the administrator actively supports their PBIS team by attending all meetings as well as supporting decisions and work of the team. No clear indication of a principal’s role is discussed in the Hannigan and Houser text. The PBIS

approach at the time of this study reflected a trend in development of positive school culture and student achievement. PBIS emerged in the mid-1980s as an approach for understanding and addressing problem behaviors (Dunlap, Carr, Horner, Zarcone, & Schwartz, 2008). A gap in literature at the time of this research suggested a need to identify the role of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting.

Enthusiasm many school districts experience with recent application of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and use of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is coupled with that of researchers documenting the impact of PBIS within school settings. According to the OSEP National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS (2018), recent data indicated that "it's national network support [*sic*] **26,316 schools, representing 13,896,697 students**"; and "of 14,324 schools reporting Tier 1 fidelity in 2016-17, 9564 (65%) report high fidelity implementation"; and "of 9,407 [schools] reporting T2/3 [Tier 2 and Tier 3] fidelity, 3114 (33%) and 1837 (19%) report high fidelity, respectfully" (OSEP National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2018, "Frequently Asked Questions," para. 2). These statistics indicate that of an average 26,000 schools across the United States, 14,000 schools report high fidelity in Tier 1 and 9,000 schools report high fidelity in Tiers 2 and 3.

How does North Dakota compare to the United States in PBIS implementation? According to one individual at the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction who wished to remain anonymous, it is hard to determine the exact number of schools that have successful PBIS systems because so many are at different stages of implementation.

Statement of the Problem

There is a body of research that indicates students who attribute their success to effort make better academic and behavioral progress than students who attribute their success to outside forces (Johns, 2015). PBIS are implemented in elementary schools to:

> create environments where all students can learn . . . maintain and communicate a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning . . . outlining evidence-based instruction and interventions while ensuring appropriate access to resources and supports. (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2018, p. 7)

A PBIS leadership team is led by a key individual within a school, one who can clearly communicate the vision for implementation of PBIS. According to Hannigan and Houser (2015), "An administrator is an active member of this team and guarantees that the team has time to meet" (p. 17). Cressey, Whitcomb, McGilvray-Rivet, Morrison, and Shander-Reynolds (2015) stated that the school principal is the leader for PBIS implementation with a role that allows frequent contact with classroom teachers, special education teachers, counselors, and families; Hannigan and Houser (2015) stated that a PBIS team designates a person as the PBIS coach to ensure the team meets monthly and follows up on commitments the team makes, and an administrator "shares the research, purpose, and the goals of PBIS and role of the PBIS team with the entire staff and asks staff members to state their interest in being a member of the team" (p. 19). An administrator's role, according to Hannigan and Houser (2015), is to serve as an active member of a PBIS team, rather than serve as communicator or sole leader as Cressey et al. suggested.

After reviewing recent literature at the time of this study, though, it was not clear how to clearly define the role or roles of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in the North Dakota elementary school setting. The reason we needed to investigate principal and staff perceptions of this perceived role or roles in PBIS implementation was because we needed to determine if there has been a lack of alignment between PBIS research and actual practice in North Dakota elementary school settings.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) website provides a clear description of how critical components of PBIS contribute to successful implementation; however, the critical role or roles of a principal are not described. "Administration" is referenced, and expectations of an administrator are described, but the actual roles of an administrator are not included in any description. Table 1 compares the general role of a principal as described by two authors to the role of a principal in the establishment of PBIS as described by one author. Parallels (commonalities) in descriptions suggest many similarities including: providing opportunities for shared leadership, creating a positive work environment, and curriculum development.

In comparing the general role of a principal to the role of a principal establishing PBIS, though many expectations are similar, the focus shifts to additional expectations on a principal involved in PBIS; more specifically, the role of a principal involved in PBIS includes being an instructional leader utilizing collaborative professionalism as a member of a school organization rather than delegating responsibilities. The role of principal now changes to developing a PBIS team as one of the first steps in helping to implement PBIS, rather than all tasks being the responsibility of one individual, the principal.

Table 1. Roles of a Principle as Outlined by Three Sources.

Role of a Principal (Ubben et al., 2011, p. 18)	Role of a Principal (Kellough & Hill, 2015, pp. 11–31)	Role of a Principal in the Establishment of PBIS (Hannigan & Houser, 2015, pp. 15–16)
Curriculum Development	Delegate Responsibilities	Establish and Operate an Effective PBIS Team
Instructional Improvement	Effective Time Management	Establish and Maintain Faculty/Staff Commitment
Student Services	Reflection	Establish and Deploy Effective Procedures for Dealing with Discipline
Financial and Facility Management	Understand Leadership Style	Establish a Data Entry Procedure and Design an Analysis Plan
Community Relations	Understand Leadership Approach	Establish a Set of School-Wide Behavior Expectations and Rules
	Lead By Modeling	Establish a Behavior Reward/Recognition Program
	Maintain Focus on Learning Time	Develop and Deliver Lesson Plans for Teaching School-Wide Behavior Expectations and Rules
	Build and Maintain a Learning Community	Develop and Deploy a School-Wide PBIS Implementation Plan
	Take Care of Support Staff	Establish Classroom Systems-Routines/Procedures
	Avoid Playing Favorites	Establish and Execute an Evaluation Plan
	Create a Positive Work Environment	
	Provide Opportunities for Shared Leadership	
	Encourage Teachers to Assume Leadership	
	Be a Multicultural Leader	
	Provide Learning Community Strategies that Support Diversity	
	Become an Effective Leader	

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role (or roles) of one principal in one elementary school located in eastern North Dakota in order to clearly define the role of that elementary principal in regards to PBIS and to determine how PBIS had been established and maintained in that setting. The intentions of the researcher in conducting this study were: (a) to provide information to elementary school principals across the state of North Dakota on how one elementary principal dealt with establishing and maintaining PBIS in one school, (b) to look for ideas or insights that might support continuous school improvement efforts in the use of PBIS in elementary school settings, and (c) to search for a means to educate principals in elementary schools across North Dakota on one process of PBIS implementation and to assist in the development of PBIS and collaborative professionalism in and amongst elementary schools across the state.

Importance of the Study

A review of the literature and research at the time of this study based upon educational practices around the state has demonstrated a need to clearly define the role of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in elementary school settings, especially in North Dakota elementary schools. The North Dakota Department of Instruction has created a playbook, *Improving Student Success Through NDMTSS: North Dakota's Multi-Tier System of Supports*, to outline and define how to improve student success through North Dakota's multi-tiered system of supports. This playbook, however, does not specifically define a principal's role.

Hannigan and Houser (2015) developed the PBIS Champion Model System, a PBIS system designed to be implemented in stages – Bronze (Tier 1 interventions), Silver

(Tier 2 interventions), and Gold (Tier 3 interventions). Hannigan and Houser argued one of the first steps to implementing a bronze PBIS champion model system would be to establish and operate an effective PBIS team. An administrator is an active member of a PBIS team. Roles listed in Table 1 defined the role of a principal as a member of a PBIS team. Baker and Ryan (2014) stated, "Successful implementation requires a hands-on PBIS Leadership Team that is dedicated to doing the work involved in PBIS" (p. 16), and in *The PBIS Team Handbook*, Baker and Ryan indicated an administrator, as a part of this PBIS team, has specific roles. Table 2 identifies those roles.

Table 2. Key Responsibilities and Tasks for an Administrator on a PBIS Team.

Role	Key Responsibilities	Tasks Involved
Administrator	Actively supports PBIS	• Publicly states support for PBIS with stakeholders: entire staff, district, families, and community • Dedicates financial and practical resources to implementing and sustaining PBIS
	Supports PBIS as a priority	• Identifies PBIS within the top three priorities for school improvement • Documents this priority in the written plan, newsletters, etc.
	Attends PBIS Leadership Team meetings regularly	• Attends most meetings • Shares leadership • Supports coach and others • Implements decisions • Funds startup costs
	Ensures that the PBIS Leadership Team meets regularly	• Provides resources (release time, paid time, space, and materials) • Encourages team to schedule meetings to present progress to others

Adapted with permission (Appendix A) from *The PBIS Team Handbook: Setting Expectations and Building Positive Behavior*, by B. Baker and C. Ryan, 2014, pp. 17-18. Copyright 2014 by Beth Baker and Char Ryan.

Characteristics of PBIS

The notion of "continuum" emphasizes how research-based behavioral practices can be organized within a multi-tiered system of supports, which is also referred to as Response to Intervention. "Response to Intervention (RtI) . . . is a problem-solving framework that uses data to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction across grade-levels, and then matches interventions to individual student needs" ("Principal Perspectives," n.d., pp. 1-2). In RtI, the relationship between positive school and classroom culture and individual student success is emphasized.

As a framework, PBIS emphasizes a process approach, rather than focusing on curriculum, intervention, or practice. Bradshaw and Pas (2011) defined PBIS as "a noncurricular universal prevention model that draws upon behavioral, social learning, and organizational principles, targeting staff behavior to promote positive change in students" (p. 531). Hannigan and Houser (2015) defined PBIS as "a systems approach to establish the social culture and the behavioral supports needed for all children in a school to achieve both social and academic success" (p. 3). The OSEP National Technical Assistance Center (2018) has defined PBIS as an "Implementation framework for maximizing the selection and use of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices along a multi-tiered continuum that supports the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of all students" (para. 1). In a PBIS system, three main elements exist to support the outcomes for social competence in students (Baker & Ryan, 2014):

1. "Data to support decision making" (p. 10).
2. "Practices to support student behavior" (p. 11).
3. "Systems to support staff behavior" (p. 11).

Figure 1 illustrates these three main elements of PBIS.

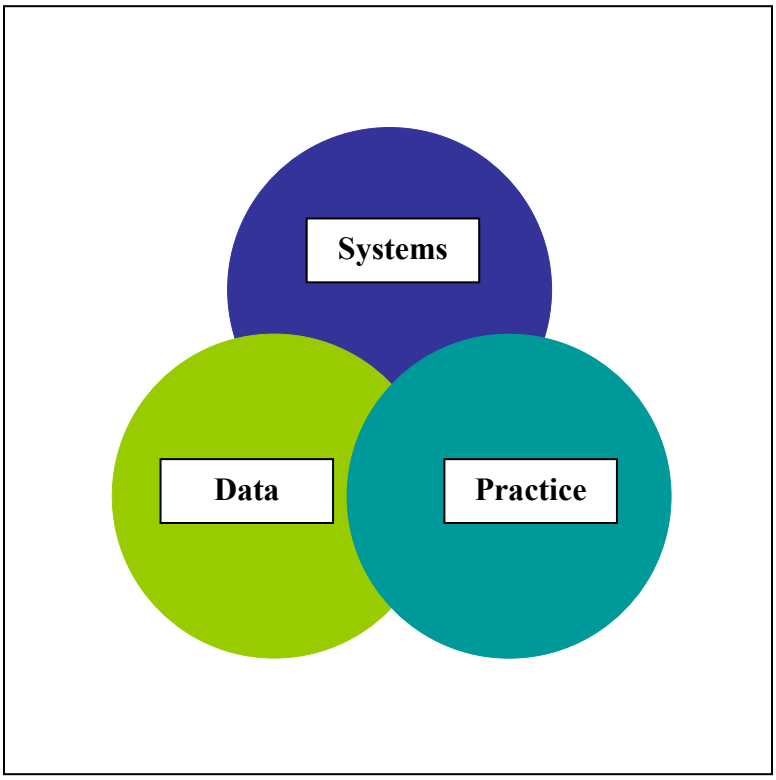


Figure 1. PBIS Elements. Adapted with permission (Appendix A) from *The PBIS Team Handbook: Setting Expectations and Building Positive Behavior*, by B. Baker and C. Ryan, 2014, p. 11. Copyright 2014 by Beth Baker and Char Ryan.

Bradshaw and Pas (2011) stated that the aim of a PBIS model is to alter a school environment by creating: (a) systems to improve behavior, and (b) procedures to promote positive changes in staff and students in all school contexts.

Similar to RtI, PBIS is designed as a framework following a 3-tiered system of interventions providing supports based on student need and response to intervention. If a student is not responsive to interventions in the first tier (and most students will respond to this first tier level of interventions), more intensive interventions are provided within a

second tier. The third tier identifies a highly individualized plan for students who require more intensive interventions (see Figure 2).

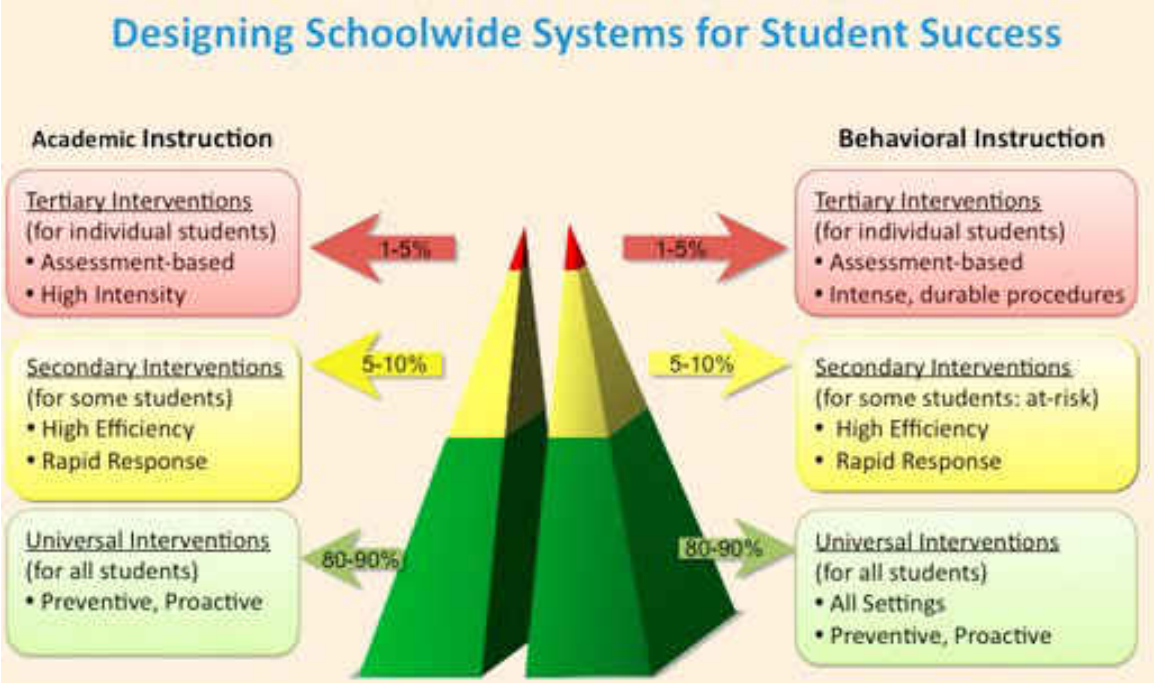


Figure 2. PBIS Three-Tiered Triangle. Reprinted from *Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) & PBIS* [Webpage], by Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports: OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2018, para. 4. Copyright 2018 by Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)..

Horner et al. (2015) also described three tiers or levels to a PBIS system. Horner et al.'s description of three tiers of interventions are described in Table 3. PBIS is a behaviorally based systems approach to enhancing the capacity of schools to facilitate environments where teaching and learning can occur. A goal of PBIS is to create an environment for teaching, learning, and improved behavior within a school setting. With the continued evolution of PBIS and implementation of PBIS in schools, there is a critical need to provide a clearer understanding of how to define the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS in elementary schools in North Dakota.

Table 3. Three Tiers to the PBIS Model and Core Elements of Each Tier.

Prevention Tier	Core Elements
Primary	• Behavioral expectations defined • Behavioral expectations taught • Reward system for appropriate behavior • Clearly defined consequences for problem behavior • Differentiated instruction for behavior • Continuous collection and use of data for decision-making • Universal screening for behavior support
Secondary	• Progress monitoring for at risk students • System for increasing structure and predictability • System for increasing contingent adult feedback • System for linking academic and behavioral performance • System for increasing home/school communication • Collection and use of data for decision-making • Basic-level function-based support
Tertiary	• Functional behavioral assessment (full, complex) • Team-based comprehensive assessment • Linking of academic and behavior supports • Individualized intervention based on assessment information focusing on (a) prevention of problem contexts, (b) instruction on functionally equivalent skills, and instruction on desired performance skills, (c) strategies for placing problem behavior on extinction, (d) strategies for enhancing contingence reward of desired behavior, and (e) use of negative or safety consequences if needed. • Collection and use of data for decision-making

Adapted from "Is School-Wide Positive Behavior Support an Evidenced-Based Practice," by R. H. Horner, G. Sugai, and T. Lewis, 2015, *PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports: OSEP Technical Assistance Center* [a webpage], retrieved from http://www.pbis.org/research/default.aspx. Copyright 2015 by Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS).

Theoretical Framework

According to Vinz (2017), the goal of a theoretical framework is formed by identifying the purpose of a study and what theories and ideas exist in relation to the topic of research being investigated. "By presenting this information, you 'frame' your

research and show that you are knowledgeable about key concepts, theories, and models that relate to your topic" (Vinz, 2017, para. 3). A theoretical framework provides direction for research and justification for an investigation so that the research "is not just coming 'out of the blue'" (Vinz, 2017, para. 5) and is based upon scientific theory.

Researchers Horner et al. (2009) proposed that the guiding framework of PBIS is based upon behavior theory, applied behavior science, and PBIS values based on cultural and contextual influences. Other research suggests, based on information and suggestions from B. F. Skinner (1938), reinforcement seems to be the more effective method when managing problem behaviors. Marshall (2013) stated that B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) was the famed Harvard University psychologist who became popular with his practice of behaviorism, which is an extension of operant conditioning. Skinner's reinforcement theory of motivation was created and developed to indicate that an individual's behavior is a function of its consequences. It is based on the law of effect (i.e., an individual's behavior with positive consequences tends to be repeated, but an individual's behavior with negative consequences tends not to be repeated). The reinforcement theory of motivation overlooks the internal state of individual (i.e. the inner feelings and drives of individuals are ignored by Skinner). Skinner's theory focuses completely on what happens to an individual when an action takes place. According to Skinner, the external environment of an organization must be designed effectively and positively to motivate an individual. Skinner's theory is a strong tool for analyzing the controlling mechanism for an individual's behavior. However, it does not focus on the causes of an individual's behavior.

Much like that of B. F. Skinner's reinforcement theory, Urie Bronfenbrenner's 1917 biological systems' theory addresses how a child's environment influences their growth and development (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Biological systems theory outlines the importance of children's biology and environment as a main factor that fuels their growth. Bronfenbrenner believed that a person's development is affected by most everything in the environment that surrounds them. According to Paquette and Ryan (2001), "Elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the aging of a child" (p. 2). As children get older, they tend to react differently to environmental changes and may be able to better determine how a change will influence their responses to their environment (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). By articulating on the assumption that as children get older, they tend to react differently to environmental changes, intervention strategies used in each tier of PBIS implementation addresses each level of those changes based on student need. Depending on how a student reacts to those changes, the tiered approach to interventions addresses each level of response by a student.

After analyzing existing theories and examining the field of research in similar studies immediately preceding this study that correspond to the purpose of my research, I chose an ethnographic case study approach for my research. Ethnographic research can be conducted in almost any setting by agreement with the people who populate the setting or create the culture in that setting. Culture provides explanations for how people think, believe, and behave. "Culture is built up from the patterns of meaning that participants in groups create while interacting with each other, with other groups and with the physical environment where they are located" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 55).

Ethnography assumes that researchers must first discover what people actually do and the reasons they give for doing it before trying to interpret their actions through their personal experience or theories derived from professional experiences. The basic tools of ethnography are a researcher's eyes and ears, and these are used as the primary modes of data collection. Ethnography paints a picture of people going about their daily lives over a relatively representative period of time. "Ethnography takes the position that human behavior and the ways in which people construct and make meaning of their worlds and their lives are highly variable and locally specific" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 1). The content of an ethnographic case study can address components of a culture such as beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions, emotions, verbal and nonverbal means of communication, social networks, behaviors of a group of individuals with their associates, the manufacture of materials and artifacts, the structures of power and prestige, historical influences, and patterned use of space and time (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

The ethnographic research process requires both face-to-face interaction with people in a research community and the use of tools of data collection to get a deep look into a culture. LeCompte and Schensul reiterated that "ethnographies and other case studies all use participant observation and various forms of face-to-face, in-depth interviewing as the principal forms of data collection" (p. 117). Interviews are a means of face-to-face interaction and for this particular study; interviews were one source of data collection to gain further insight into participants' viewpoints in this study.

The problem to be investigated is usually identified in advance by researchers working with stakeholders in the place where the study is to be carried out. Stakeholders

are critical to good ethnography since they not only help to identify and clarify a research problem, but are also gatekeepers, interpreters of local culture, potential members of a research team, and users of study results. A problem guides a study even though the study may conclude with a complete redefinition of the problem (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). According to LeCompte and Schensul:

> The seven characteristics that mark a study as ethnographic are as follows:
>
> - It is carried out in a natural setting, not in a laboratory.
> - It involves intimate, face-to-face interaction with participants.
> - It presents an accurate reflection of participant perspectives and behaviors.
> - It uses inductive, interactive, and recursive data collection and analytic strategies to build local cultural theories.
> - It uses multiple data sources, including both quantitative and qualitative data.
> - It frames all human behavior and belief within a sociopolitical and historical context.
> - It uses the concept of culture as a lens through which to interpret results.
>
> (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 12)

Ethnography generates theories about cultures or explanations of how people think, believe, and behave situated in local time and space. “One of the strengths of ethnography is that the methods used can produce a picture of cultures and social groups from the perspectives of their members” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 33). Ethnographers also become intimately involved with members of the community in the natural settings where they do research. I became involved with key informants of my study within their natural setting as part of a research community. Ethnography, in

research, is a commitment to accurate reflection of the views and perspectives of participants requiring mutuality and reciprocity. For this study, a close eye was used to provide an accurate reflection of the perspectives of key informants using extensive field notes, observational data, and transcribed interviews. Ethnographic research uses inductive, interactive, and recursive processes to build ideas to explain the behavior and beliefs of participants involved in the study. I interacted with participants during the course of this study to understand the processes they used to establish and maintain PBIS implementation in the school participating in this study.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following overall question: What is the role (or roles) of an elementary school principal in establishing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) in an elementary school setting in North Dakota? More specifically, this will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do the expectations of certified staff and classified staff in one North Dakota elementary school define the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?
2. How does one North Dakota elementary principal define his/her role in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?
3. How does the role of one North Dakota elementary principal influence the culture in one school during implementation of PBIS?

Scope of the Study

For this qualitative case study, I investigated the role of an elementary school principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS within one elementary school setting. My

university advisor recommended I contact a principal she knew of who had established PBIS in her school, but that principal indicated she was soon planning to retire, and would not be willing to participate. This first principal I contacted recommended another principal for my research study based upon the second principal's use of PBIS within her school. Contact was made via email, and the alternate principal agreed to participate in the research study. By examining the practice of an elementary principal in a district where PBIS has been utilized, this study may have contributed to a greater understanding of a principal's role in establishing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports in an elementary school setting.

Assumptions

The premise of my overall argument that principals can play a significant role as a team member in establishing and maintaining PBIS rests on two suppositions:

1. The role a principal plays in establishing and maintaining PBIS impacts the culture of the school where that principal leads.
2. As leaders, a principal is the leader who provides an overall means to establish and maintain the continued existence and fidelity of PBIS programs within the school they lead.

Delimitations

All research has parameters chosen by a researcher inherent to a study:

1. The key informants for this study were selected from one North Dakota school district located in the eastern side of the state.

2. This qualitative case study was limited to staff working within the specific school setting of an elementary school. Not all staff employed within the school participated in the study.
3. The site location for this study was chosen based upon a recommendation by a university professor and a principal (not the participating principal) working in the school district where the study took place.
4. I selected a principal who utilizes PBIS in her school.

This study included data collected from an in-depth approach using semi-structured interviews and observations that took place both in and out of classrooms, the hallways, the office, and the school cafeteria. Field notes and school documents were also reviewed and used to disseminate data. By doing so, I achieved a greater understanding of staff perceptions of the expected role of their principal in the establishment and maintenance of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) in an elementary school setting. Participants included 14 certified staff and 6 classified staff. I collaborated closely with the principal to gain insight into the role of the principal and participants who were interested in participating in this study. This study may serve as a foundation for future research on a principal's role in establishing PBIS and the ability to maintain effective PBIS within an elementary school setting.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are integral to the study and these definitions clarify their meanings within the context of this study.

Certified Staff: Includes the staff and administration of the school that have teaching credentials and/or other certification for their position within the school.

Classified Staff: Consists of school employees that do not need certification or licensure to be qualified for their job.

Elementary School: A school in which the highest grade is no higher than fifth grade.

General Education Teacher: Teacher who obtains and maintains a valid teaching license and is employed by a school district.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): "An integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on CCSS [Common Core State Standards], core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success" (California Department of Education, 2017, "CDE's Definition of MTSS," para. 1).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). "An implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students by (a) emphasizing the use of data for informing decisions about the selection, implementation, and progress monitoring of evidence-based behavioral practices; and (b) organizing resources and systems to improve durable implementation fidelity" (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 1).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS). An acronym used before PBIS to describe the same thing. PBS was changed to PBIS to avoid confusion with the Public Broadcasting System (also known as PBS; Sugai, Horner, & Lewis, 2010).

Principal. Site administrator who obtains and maintains a valid North Dakota administrator's license and is employed by a school district, and who has professional responsibility for overseeing all staff within the school.

Response to Intervention (RtI). "A process in which students are provided quality instruction, their progress is monitored, those who do not respond appropriately are provided additional instruction and their progress is monitored, and those who continue to not respond appropriately are considered for special education services" (Bradley, Danielson, & Doolittle, 2005, p. 486).

Special Education Teacher: Teacher requiring advanced certifications and/or degrees who obtains and maintains a valid North Dakota teaching license to teach children with special needs, and who is employed by a school district.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I provided an overview of the characteristics of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). This chapter also described a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, the conceptual framework, research questions, the scope of the study, assumptions, delimitations, and the organization of the study.

Description of Next Chapters

In Chapter II, I examined 12 areas of literature related to a principal's role in maintaining and establishing positive behavioral interventions and supports: (a) Historical Context of PBIS, (b) PBIS Framework, (c) Theoretical Framework; (d) PBIS Implementation, (e) a Principal's Role in PBIS, (f) Leadership and Change, (g) Teachers' Perceptions of PBIS, (h) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), (i) PBIS

Connection to Student Achievement, (j) Misconceptions of PBIS, (k) Data-Based Decision Making and PBIS, and (l) Overall Impact of PBIS.

Chapter III introduces the qualitative methods and research design of this study. Chapter III also discusses the researcher's subjectivities, researcher's background, case selection, data collection, data analysis, verification of findings, and ethical considerations. Chapter IV presents the results of the study. Chapter V includes a discussion of results, and addresses conclusions, recommendations, and ideas for further research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

At an elementary school, the main role of a principal is that of being the instructional leader; however, what role do principals have in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS within their respective schools? How does this role compare to the role of a principal as perceived by staff within a school environment? Responsibilities of a school principal have grown throughout the decades to the point that a principal's job expectations have become unrealistic or impossible for one person to achieve. Challenges in balancing management and instructional leadership responsibilities in addition to keeping instruction and student achievement a top priority are not easy for a principal. Principals who are able to delegate responsibilities not only practice responsible leadership, but also prevent leadership dysfunction (Kellough & Hill, 2015). Principals are being placed on the frontline in education as responsible individuals being held accountable to not only improve student progress, but also maintain safe, school environments (Richter, Lewis, & Hager, 2012).

Maintaining a safe school environment is the purpose of PBIS under the direction of a leadership team, where a principal delegates responsibilities amongst members of the team. PBIS is a framework used by many schools to determine how to operate as a community to improve student behaviors, and as a result, to create a safe school

environment. Principals are members of a PBIS leadership team and assist in the implementation of PBIS. “The PBIS Leadership Team is responsible for implementing PBIS throughout the school. This group tackles many of the foundational, behind-the-scenes tasks and decisions that determine how PBIS will function in a specific school building” (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 16). The principal is not the primary decision maker; but rather provides administrative support and influence within a PBIS Leadership Team.

To accomplish my literature review, I conducted detailed computer searches on campus and at home using the UND Chester Fritz Library research databases, as recommended by my advisor. Staff were available to help me in person while I was on campus, as well as by phone and email when I was not on campus. As a beginning researcher, having assistance when needed was important in order to conduct valuable research on my particular topic from individuals who were specifically hired by the university to assist graduate students with research. These individuals obtained degrees pertinent to library science, knew the university library system, and were informative and able to answer my questions. Key search terms included: PBIS, classroom behavior, principal’s role, behavior management, elementary school, school-wide, and educational leader. Focus was placed on finding research within the last 10 years. An exhaustive review of the literature was performed as an exploration of research by analyzing articles, textbooks, and documenting quotes to gain perspectives on PBIS and leadership pertaining to various subject areas. The goals of the literature review were:

1. To explore the historical background of PBIS and its implementation in elementary school settings.
2. To understand the underlying principles and theories of PBIS.

3. To examine the role of a principal as an educational leader implementing whole-systems change.
4. To examine the existing literature at the time of this study and how it describes the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS within an elementary school setting.

There are 12 subsections in Chapter II: Historical Context of PBIS, PBIS Framework, Theoretical Frameworks, PBIS Implementation, a Principal's Role in PBIS, Leadership and Change, Teachers' Perceptions of PBIS, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), PBIS Connection to Student Achievement, Misconceptions of PBIS, Data Based Decision Making and PBIS, and Overall Impact of PBIS.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a research-based strategy developed to create a positive school climate to reduce disruptive behavior problems through the application of behavioral interventions, social learning, and organizational behavioral principles. The purpose of PBIS implementation is to improve school systems and procedures to promote positive change by focusing on positive behaviors students exhibit while at school. PBIS is a whole-school intervention with the goal of educators being to seek to prevent disruptive behavior by creating and sustaining primary, secondary, and tertiary systems of support (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010). This three-tiered model initiative has been produced by the United States Department of Education, and it is estimated that more than 14,000 schools across the United States, in at least 44 states, and several countries around the world are implementing PBIS to increase student achievement (OSEP National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2018).

Within the past decade, an increasing trend has been for schools to implement school-wide discipline systems across the United States. Many schools have been implementing School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS). At the time of this study, a recent shift towards the use of universal discipline systems to decrease disruptive behaviors had been effective (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013). With the increasingly widespread adoption of PBIS, it is important to explore the question of effective leadership in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in elementary school settings in North Dakota schools; a gap in the literature at the time of this research.

Statement of the Problem

PBIS are implemented in elementary schools to improve organizational health and climate by teaching appropriate behaviors to students and matching the level of intervention resources to the level of behavioral challenges presented by students. The concepts of PBIS are much like that of RtI (Response to Intervention); however, RtI encompasses the academic progress of students. The PBIS framework is designed to provide a clear set of practices embedded within a three-tier system of support in response to student behaviors rather than to focus on academics. Teachers use specific procedures and response techniques based on data as evidence to determine tier placement and outcomes. PBIS is led by a team that guides implementation and develops procedures for teaching expectations to students, and the team also collects data. A PBIS leadership team is supported by a key individual within a school, one who can clearly communicate the vision for implementation of PBIS (Baker & Ryan, 2014). After reviewing recent literature at the time of this study, it was not clear how to clearly define

the role or roles of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS as part of a PBIS Leadership Team in a North Dakota elementary school setting. There has been a need to investigate principal and staff perceptions of this perceived role or roles to determine if there is a lack of alignment between PBIS research and actual practice in North Dakota elementary school settings. For districts, schools, principals, certified staff, and classified staff, it is critical to understand what effect PBIS has on the climate of elementary schools located in North Dakota.

The NDDPI website describes a clear distinction on how critical components of PBIS contribute to the outcome of successful implementation; however, the critical role or roles of a principal are not described. "Administration" is referenced, and expectations of an administration are described, but the actual roles of an administration are not included in any description. Baker and Ryan (2014) in *The PBIS Team Handbook,* defined the role of a principal as one who actively supports PBIS with a team, publicly states support for PBIS with stakeholders, identifies PBIS as a top priority, attends meetings, provides resources, and attends PBIS team meetings on a regular basis. Baker and Ryan (2014) reminded us that support from administrators is key to successful implementation of PBIS; however, "new research on staff investment in PBIS tells us that administrator influence is essential if we want staff to adopt PBIS initiatives" (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 19). Principals who can effectively communicate and show support towards PBIS implementation will increase staff awareness and investment towards a new system change. "Having the administration on board provides the backbone needed to rally the staff in using positive behavioral procedures" (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 19).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine, explore, and identify the role of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS. My purpose in conducting this study was to provide evidence to inform the debate regarding best practices for elementary school principals across the state of North Dakota implementing PBIS. There is a dearth of research-based evidence on this practice of implementing and maintaining PBIS, a practice that has been wholeheartedly embraced in North Dakota. The results of this study will serve as a means to provide further information to current elementary school principals in North Dakota on the effects of implementing PBIS, or perhaps, things to avoid when establishing and implementing PBIS.

Historical Context of PBIS

Throughout the literature, a clear understanding of the purpose of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) appears evident, and PBIS has been thoroughly studied since its introduction in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997). According to Sugai and Simonsen (2012):

> PBIS is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students by (a) emphasizing the use of data for informing decisions about the selection, implementation, and progress monitoring of evidence-based behavioral practices; and (b) organizing resources and systems to improve durable implementation fidelity. (p. 1)

The historical development of PBIS began "during the 1980s when a need was identified for improved selection, implementation, and documentation of effective behavioral interventions for students with behavior disorders" (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012,

p. 1). Researchers from the University of Oregon began a series of research studies to provide greater attention towards "prevention, research based practices, data-based decision-making, school-wide systems, explicit social skills instruction, and team-based implementation and professional development" (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 1) and to focus on student outcomes (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

In the 1990s, a grant was established by the U.S. Department of Education using *Race to the Top* funds to develop a National Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports to improve student climate and provide assistance to schools using evidence based practices for behavior management. By the 2000s, The National Technical Assistance (TA) Center on PBIS had assisted in shaping the PBIS framework to provide direct professional development and technical assistance to more than 16,000 schools (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). The National TA Center shifted its focus from disseminating evidence-based behavioral interventions for students with behavioral disorders to focusing on school-wide behavior of all students with an emphasis on implementation practices and systems. As a result, PBIS has been "defined as a framework for enhancing the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve academically and behaviorally important outcomes for all students" (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 2).

By defining PBIS as a framework, the emphasis is on the process or the approach, rather than a curriculum, practice, or intervention. Defining PBIS as a continuum emphasizes how research-based practices "are organized within a multi-tiered system of support" (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 2), also known as Response to Intervention (RtI).

According to Simonsen and Myers (2015), “PBIS is based on decades of work in public health and prevention science, which has taught us to invest in prevention for all (Tier 1) supports, identify and provide targeted (Tier 2) supports for individuals who are at risk for developing challenges, and provide individualized and intensive (Tier 3) supports for individuals with chronic or significant needs” (p. 2). This tiered approach, as depicted using a triangle, is also known as Response to Intervention or RtI, or Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) with Tier 1 representing 80% of the student population; Tier 2 representing 15%, and Tier 3 representing 5% (Simonson & Myers, 2015, p. 3).

PBIS Framework

The PBIS framework has a number of defining characteristics. First, student outcomes serve as a basis for selection of practices to be implemented in a school culture, data collection, and evaluations of implemented systems and how they affect student outcomes. There are three types of outcomes: “(a) academic and social, (b) individual and small group, and (c) judged on their educational and social value and importance” (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 2).

Second, the PBIS framework also highlights the “adoption of evidence- and research-based practices that characterize” (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 2) programs based on the many environments within a school culture (McIntosh, Filter, Bennet, Ryan, & Sugai, 2010). “These practices are organized to support students across (a) school-wide . . ., (b) non-classroom . . ., (c) classroom . . ., and (d) individual student . . . routines” (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012, p. 2).

Third, PBIS is characterized by support practices and systems that address a continuum of behavior. These practices are unified with procedures for monitoring progress of students, screening out students not responding (and then providing additional interventions to non-responders), rules for team-based decision-making, monitoring of implementation fidelity, and expertise and fluency in local content. The PBIS framework also stresses the importance of continuous professional development for coaches, trainers and staff, monitoring of implementation, and system-based competence and supports (McIntosh et al., 2010; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Many authors define and characterize PBIS in varied ways. As a researcher, it was important for me to understand and compare the varying definitions and defining characteristics of each author of PBIS research.

According to Averill and Rinaldi's (2011) findings, PBIS represents a model, in which preventative behavioral instruction is provided to a whole school to foster a positive climate. PBIS encompasses a multi-tiered, databased approach to service delivery. "The first tier includes teaching a set of appropriate behaviors within the whole school; the second tier activates behavioral interventions for students who do not respond to the primary instruction; and the third tier involves individualized behavior support plans for students who do not respond to primary or secondary prevention support" (p. 91).

In contrast to Averill and Rinaldi (2011), Simonsen and Myers (2015) identified "four critical and interrelated features" (p. 5) of PBIS. Those features include "outcomes, data, practices, and systems" (p. 5). PBIS schools determine and select measurable

outcomes using data to implement student-focused practices and staff-focused systems. Each feature is described below:

1. "**Outcomes** are locally determined, contextually and culturally relevant, observable, and measurable goal statements that describe indicators of successful implementation of PBIS for students and staff" (Simonsen & Myers, 2015, p. 5).
2. "**Data** refers to quantitative indicators of implementation fidelity and effectiveness" (Simonsen & Myers, 2015, p. 6).
3. "**Practices** are the interventions and supports for students" (Simonsen & Myers, 2015, p. 6).
4. "**Systems** . . . include supportive administrator participation; teaming structures . . .; professional development supports (ongoing training and coaching); staff recognition; data structures that facilitate easy input and flexible output; and other organizational supports for staff" (Simonsen & Myers, 2015, p. 7).

Research has indicated schools that implement PBIS show an increase in prosocial behavior of their students and a decrease in problem behavior of students (Simonsen & Myers, 2015). With that being said, it is not surprising that many schools have begun implementing the PBIS framework in the United States.

Theoretical Frameworks

A theoretical approach to PBIS is grounded in behaviorism based upon support from psychology, education, and related fields. A study of this theoretical framework is important to my literature review to show a demonstrated understanding of behavioral

theories and concepts relevant to my research topic of PBIS and leadership. To understand specific functions of human behavior, there is also a need to review past literature based upon relevant research conducted by psychologists B. F. Skinner (1938) and Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), which will help us understand the theoretical framework of PBIS.

B. F. Skinner (1938) developed the idea of operant conditioning, which is defined as the "changing of behavior by the use of reinforcement which is given after the desired response" (McLeod, 2007/2015, p. 2). Behavior which is reinforced tends to be repeated (i.e., strengthened); behavior which is not reinforced tends to die out – or be extinguished (i.e., weakened). With operant conditioning, consequences can either reinforce or punish a specific behavior. Skinner identified two key concepts: (1) contingency – relation between a behavior and it's consequence, and (2) behavior can be reinforced (strengthened) or decreased. Although much of Skinner's work was done in lab settings with animals rather than humans, many examples of operant conditioning occur in the classroom setting today with students. Some students engage in behaviors that are respectful, while other students will engage in disruptive behaviors. If the desired outcome for both behaviors is attention, and both types of students are getting access to the desired response (attention), both types of behaviors are likely to continue. If the focus of response is put on a desired behavior (prosocial behaviors), behaviorism would suggest that the prosocial behaviors would increase, while disruptive, problematic behaviors would decrease due to lack of response (attention). In other words, behaviorism is the idea of shaping a behavior based on response.

According to McLeod (2007/2015),

> A simple way to shape behavior is to provide feedback on learner performance, e.g., compliments, approval, encouragement, and affirmation. A variable-ratio produces the highest response rate for students learning a new task, whereby initially reinforcement (e.g., praise) occurs at frequent intervals, and as the performance improves reinforcement occurs less frequently, until eventually only exceptional outcomes are reinforced. (p. 7)

Although many psychologists, scientists, and researchers continue to contribute to a further understanding of behaviorism and behavioral theories, there has been a purposeful shift in understanding theories of behavior based upon one's environment. In contrast to reviewing individual behavior theories, Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed a theory that looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her environment. In understanding individual behaviors, other influences of PBIS also suggest identifying aspects of the environment. According to Paquette and Ryan (2001),

> Bronfenbrenner's theory defines complex layers of environment, each having an effect on a child's development. The interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his immediate family/community environment, and the societal landscape fuels and steers his development. Changes or conflict in any one layer will ripple throughout other layers. To study a child's development then, we must look not only at the child and her immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment as well. (p. 1)

Creating a safe environment in schools can create a positive learning environment for students. This safe learning environment is described as a real world setting, which is a key element in the establishment of PBIS. An environment can affect the probability of a behavior occurring (making it more or less likely to occur), because it can alter the consequence of a particular behavior. Establishing routine expectations in an immediate environment as a means to provide reinforcement will assist in continued development of prosocial behaviors. When routine establishments are not provided in a classroom environment chaos and a lack of expectations results. In order to understand how environment can affect behaviors in schools, many specialists and psychologists are conducting Applied Behavior Analysis or ABA. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is used a means to identify the time, setting, and types of behaviors that occur during a student's day. This approach is used to address social problems "by (1) implementing theoretically sound interventions . . . to alter observable and measurable actions of individuals (*behavioral*) and (2) demonstrating that the selected intervention is functionally related to the behavior change (*analytic*), producing change that is both meaningful (*effective*) and lasting across contexts (*generality*)" (Simonsen & Myers, 2015, p. 12). ABA is an approach that can be applied to individuals and their environments. So when understanding the theoretical framework of PBIS, it is important to understand individual behavior (behaviorism), the context of the environment (interaction of a child's development to the environment), and the relationship between the two interchangeably by conducting an applied behavior analysis.

PBIS Implementation

A review of the literature revealed that critical aspects of a successful PBIS implementation program and the leadership role that a principal has in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS are reflected within research results. The review of literature found in this chapter spans a timeline of approximately 20 years; at the end of those 20 years, PBIS was fully established. This review explores the literature over the 20 years since 1997 and connects ideas that PBIS implementation continues to be addressed within schools; however, there is a gap in the literature in regards to clearly explaining the role of a principal within the establishment and effective maintenance of PBIS.

"The OSEP National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions characterizes schoolwide PBS as having three components including (a) universal support, (b) group support, and (c) individual support" (Turnbull et al., 2002, p. 378). Turnbull et al. (2002) argued, "In order for schoolwide PBS to be fully implemented, each of these three components should be addressed, and all students who require support within each component should be receiving the appropriate degree of intensity" (p. 378).

Note that PBS and PBIS are essentially the same thing. However, according to a blog by George Sugai, Rob Horner, and Tim Lewis, Public Broadcasting (known as PBS) was being confused with Positive Behavior Support (PBS). Public Broadcasting actually contacted Sugai, Horner, and Lewis, asking them to stop using the acronym PBS, to avoid confusion (Sugai, Horner, & Lewis, 2010). I will use PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Supports) for the remainder of this paper.

A review of the literature also indicated there remains a need for a tool to categorize a school's overall phase of implementation and document a schools' progression towards sustainability of school-wide PBIS. Bradshaw, Debnam, Koth, and Leaf (2009) argued, "Given the increased interest in PBIS among schools, districts, and state departments of education, additional cost-effective tools are needed to monitor fidelity and evaluate the impact of the universal primary supports level of PBIS on student and staff outcomes" (p. 145). Due to an emphasis on databased decision-making, schools that implement PBIS are being encouraged to monitor the fidelity of the programs and use that data to make decisions regarding their implementation practices. Two of the most commonly used measures for monitoring PBIS implementation include the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET), and the Team Implementation Checklist (TIC; Bradshaw et al., 2009).

A trained external observer who analyzes the effectiveness of PBIS will assess seven indicators or categories within a PBIS system: "(1) expectations defined, (2) behavioral expectations taught, (3) system for rewarding behavioral expectations, (4) system for responding to behavioral violations, (5) monitoring and evaluation, (6) management, and (7) district-level support" (Bradshaw et al, 2009, p. 146).

The TIC was developed to help schools monitor and sustain implementation of PBIS. The members of a PBIS school-wide team complete a checklist on a scheduled basis by indicating whether PBIS start-up activities are defined and posted in all areas of a building. "Although the TIC is widely used, there is limited empirical research examining its reliability and validity" (Bradshaw et al., 2009, p. 147).

The manner in which PBIS practices are being performed should be done so in a manner that coincides with success; in other words, done so with fidelity. The PBIS team should promote continued practice with fidelity so that a drift, or a decline in the standard of practice, doesn't occur. Molloy, Moore, Trail, Van Epps, and Hopfer (2013) said, "Implementation quality matters because programs delivered with high quality are more likely to produce the desired effects" (p. 593). Molloy et al. argued that programs delivered in the real world often look different from what was originally intended by program developers. "Depending on which components of the program are being trimmed or altered, such modifications may seriously undermine the effectiveness of a program" (Molloy et al., 2013, p. 593). Baker and Ryan (2014) also recommended that continual monitoring using routine assessment is an effective means to avoid a drift. Utilizing the coach from a PBIS leadership team, when there is a noticeable decline in fidelity, can increase support to increase PBIS sustainability.

Molloy et al. (2013) also stated that the recommended and most widely used source of data for continual monitoring of PBIS effectiveness has been students being referred to a principal's office for discipline. Data is generated when a student is referred to the office. Office discipline referrals, often referred to as ODRs, serve as a practical data source as they are assessable and standard in schools.

Using the school's information management system to monitor and record the amount of office referrals by location, by behavior, by time of day, by student, and other factors can contribute to more specific information on how to establish a set of school-wide behavior expectations for a particular school. The school-wide behavior

expectations are stated to apply to all students and staff in the school setting. Rules are positively stated and practiced during social skills instruction.

Freeman, Smith, and Tieghi-Benet (2003) have found that "policymakers, administrators, teachers and other school staff members are recognizing that a strong emphasis on teaching and supporting social skills can ensure student academic success" (p. 66). Freeman et al. also suggested the outcome of any effort to improve behaviors is highly dependent upon the interest and motivation of teachers and other school staff that are responsible for a program's implementation. Freeman et al. (2003) suggested, "An important step in the implementation process is to discover, in each school, how to tap the commitment and capacity of school staff for organizational and personal learning" (p. 66).

So why would schools want to commit to using PBIS? The focus of PBIS is on prevention rather than on elimination (of problem behaviors). The implementation process is long, but with over 14,000 schools in the United States implementing PBIS with fidelity, research suggests an increase in attendance and an overall improved school climate is the result (Simonsen & Myers, 2015).

A Principal's Role in PBIS

Elementary schools are complex settings comprised of unique structures and challenges that can affect the overall climate of a school. Implementation of PBIS targets problem behaviors with the intent of improving the overall climate of a school by involving all students and staff. Recommended by Bradshaw et al. (2010), the first step to implementing the PBIS model is to form a team that includes 6-10 staff members and an administrator, all of whom provide building-level leadership regarding the

implementation of PBIS. The team is expected to attend training, establish a plan, develop materials to support program implementation, train other staff members, and meet to discuss school wide behavior management systems and procedures (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Providing safe schools is becoming a number one priority for school administrators (Connelly, 2013). At the time of this study, demands for safer schools had increased due to public awareness and concerns related to discipline, drug use, and violence (Richter et al., 2012). With this increased expectation on principals to create safer school environments, principals are held at the frontline and have become accountable for the educational progress of all students and for maintaining safe, school environments. Richter et al. also stated that there has been an increasing consensus in education that skills of effective principals will increase the overall likelihood of overall school success.

According to Kellough and Hill (2015), an important task of a principal is to identify the expectations staff and community have of an instructional leader. School systems generally set expectations for principals using standards as outlined by the "Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (formerly known as ISLLC [Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium] 2008)" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 26, The Wallace Foundation section). Professional standards are designed to assist educational leaders in developing a vision, advocate and sustain a school culture, ensure a safe and effective learning environment, collaborate with families and the community, promote integrity by performing in an ethical manner, and understand and promote many contexts that include: political, social, economic, legal and

cultural contexts (ISLLC. This information is important to understanding staff expectations of the perceived role of a principal in the implementation and maintenance of PBIS. Understanding this information provided me with the idea that I would be interviewing various classified and certified staff members to gain their perspectives on the expected role they perceived a principal should have in establishing and maintaining PBIS.

Examining the roles of a principal, based on research and staff perceptions, was an integral part of understanding the basis for this study. Principals are hired based on specific criteria, such as education, credentials, and experience; however, Kellough and Hill (2015) stated that principals are also hired to be either change agents or curriculum experts. Understanding the difference between the two, and the reason a principal is hired, is important for a principal to understand so that the expected role of a principal as perceived by a hiring committee not be confused with the expected role a principal may have for himself/herself. A principal's role and influence is "important to school success and students' academic achievement" (Kellough & Hill, 2015, p. 3). Studies indicate that novice principals have difficulty transitioning into the role of principal due to many various tasks, diversity, and lack of predictability (Kellough & Hill, 2015). Assuming these roles requires a principal focus attention to school management and instructional leadership duties.

According to Northouse (2013), school management refers to the order and consistency of a school including items such as planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, and controlling and problem solving. Leadership refers to producing change and movement, establishing a direction by creating a vision, and setting strategies to achieve

objectives. Leadership also refers to aligning people, to communicate goals to staff by seeking out commitment and building teams and coalitions. As stated before, PBIS is led by a leadership team. A principal's role on a PBIS leadership team is considered to be a leader rather than a manager as a principal helps to create an overall vision setting the stage to clarify "the big picture" by incorporating a systems' change and working with staff to produce the change. The principal's role on a PBIS team is to also to motivate and inspire both staff and members of the team and to inform everyone of daily activities and functions required to maintain the effective implementation of PBIS.

Much of the role of a principal "from the 1920s until the 1970s . . . was focused on managerial aspects of operating the school" (Kellough & Hill, 2015, p. 16). Instructional leadership started to gain a greater emphasis in the 1980s and 1990s. With the development of educational reform, the role of a principal "became threefold: managerial, instructional, and . . . transformational" (Kellough & Hill, 2015, p. 16). Kellough and Hill recognized transformational leaders as those that "tend to promote a vision that inspires stakeholders while also providing a model to guide improvement" (p. 16).

School principals build leadership within staff at their respective schools. They integrate opportunities for others to lead and build team leadership. Transformational leadership (Richter et al., 2012) is one means to facilitate positive change by building trust and group efficacy, while Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) recommended developing collaborative professionalism. Richter et al. (2012) defined transformational leadership as:

> Transformational leadership is centered on the concept of leaders engaging and encouraging organizational members to become active and committed participants in evaluating and improving their school culture through shared decision making and developing school-based solutions to challenges, including accepting ownership for student success. (Richter et al., 2012, p. 69)

In comparing the two definitions (by Kellough & Hill, 2015, and Richter et al., 2012) of transformational leadership, and identifying some of the similarities, it is noted that some of the most important transformational skills of a transformational leader identified in the literature are: developing a shared school vision, establishing a collective decision making structure, providing individualized support, and holding high performance expectations. Although transformational leadership is discussed in this literature review, there is "no single right way for principals to lead all schools in different situations" (Kellough & Hill, 2015, p. 17).

Collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018) describes how educators can work together in a unified fashion to transform teaching and learning to work with all students in developing fulfilling lives of meaning, purpose, and success. Based upon evidence and through modes of rigorous planning, collaborative professionalism becomes the life and culture of a school where all educators of the school care for one another as they embrace school challenges and expectations together and professionally respond to important aspects of a school. PBIS embraces a school-wide community, and through collaborative professionalism, schools can create a paradigm shift from individualism to cultures of collaboration to create effective PBIS strategies and modes of implementation.

Managerial skills are also needed to address duties and responsibilities required for day-to-day operations of schools; managerial skills are important in buffering a school environment from distractions and interruptions. A principal's need for appropriate training and support associated with proactive behavior management, particularly in relation to students at risk or identified with disabilities, has been well documented within the literature.

In a study conducted by Richter et al. (2012), leadership skills were assessed to determine the relationship, if any, between leadership skills of a principal and PBIS support. It was stated that:

> Consistency, communication, utilization of common language, and more positive outcomes for all students were major categories of principal leadership skills perceived as already in evidence, but improving since implementing school wide PBIS. Shared leadership, vision guiding, principal supportiveness, and dedication of resources were major categories of principal leadership skills perceived as having also been in evidence but even more strongly emerging since implementing PBIS. (Richter et al., 2012, p. 74)

When understanding the functions of transformational leadership (as a change agent) and reviewing the argument proposed by Richter et al. (2012) – modeling shared leadership, continual guidance of a vision, and providing continued support – it appears evident that these roles of a principal show a level of dedication to implementation of PBIS. When school leaders are able to recognize that they are role models, they exhibit behaviors that are consistent with the mission and vision of their school (Fiore, 2011). According to Fiore, "This modeling, research has shown, has a dramatic and immediate

positive effect on the internal public of the school. It forces school leaders to focus less on their management responsibilities and more on their ability to lead" (p. 94). Modeling appropriate behaviors based upon the mission and vision of a school is indicative of strong leadership (Fiore, 2011).

Leadership and Change

What culture exists in a school has likely developed over a period of time, and many staff become comfortable with "the status quo." Staff generally become suspicious when any change has been implemented whether it be for the better or not. Identifying and communicating a clear understanding of the reason for a system change should be brought to the attention of staff in a gradual manner. With respect to implementing change, staff should be informed first of the specific good things that are observed and happening to ensure a level of trust and commitment to their school. Kellough and Hill (2015) emphasized that a school leader should "remind staff that every school can improve and that you look forward to working with them in identifying target goals and making improvements together" (p. 5). Setting goals collectively and referring to them as "our goals" provides staff with an opportunity to buy-in to changes and helps staff identify with necessary changes. Staff buy-in is important to increasing commitment or maintaining a high level of commitment to a needed change.

In order to get buy-in or a commitment from staff for PBIS, a transformational leader recognizes shared opportunities for building motivation amongst staff to help staff believe that together, they can and will achieve effective PBIS implementation. As noted previously, a principal's role on a PBIS leadership team is to provide support. A

transformational leader shows support and commitment to the shared vision of PBIS using various opportunities of motivation and communication to staff.

Communication to staff refers to communication to all staff – all staff both certified and classified. Involving all staff through collaborative leadership, much like a PBIS leadership team, is essential to organizational buy-in. The goal of a PBIS leadership team is to meet routinely and promote effective communication among staff with the goal of bringing about a positive organizational change amongst all staff. When principals promote and facilitate collaboration among all staff members, staff motivation to accept a whole systems' change and act towards it increases (Kellough & Hill, 2015). These collaborative groups, or teams, function as professional learning communities, or PLCs, where data is reviewed and discussed as a group, to make changes and guide instruction. In other words, a PBIS leadership team could also be described as a professional learning community or PLC.

Kellough and Hill (2015) argued:

> School leadership entails building a *unified* and *inclusive* school culture, with symbols (such as a school mascot), rituals (such as how schools begin and end the year and celebrate ongoing school and student academic success), traditions (how the community embraces recognition of local and national holidays), and equity (access to information, curriculum, and activities), that creates a school in which diverse staff and students participate together and feel connected through caring relationships" (p. 26).

This information was important as I engaged in the research process at the research site. It was important for me to identify, as a researcher, if the site school had a unified and

inclusive school culture with symbols, rituals, traditions, and equity, and if the staff felt connected through caring relationships. PBIS encompasses or promotes a positive school climate, and as a researcher, one aspect of my research process was to identify what type of climate had been developed at the research site.

Principals must also determine what is needed for a particular school by navigating community expectations. For this particular study, I did not interview members of the community. However, it was important for me as a researcher to identify why PBIS was established at the research site school. Was it established based on district-wide policy, data and statistics indicating a need, or governmental school improvement reform policies?

School improvement has been a national concern for several years. The Obama administration funneled $7 billion into the School Improvement Grants program started when George W. Bush was president for school improvements to low performing schools (Brown, 2017). In an article developed by King and Malloy (2009) on how PBIS can lead to school improvement, more specifically addressing the Apex II project in New Hampshire, it was noted that "the seven schools that did implement features of PBIS showed a collective average 52% reduction in their annual dropout rates over the grant period and substantial reductions in behavioral problems" (p. 4). To clarify, one of the goals of PBIS is to create an environment that establishes and maintains positive relationships between the staff and students of a school. These relationships are established by a consistent use of teaching methods, reinforcement, and consistent recognition of pro-social behaviors. Implementation of PBIS results in an increased engagement of students in the educational process, which in turn, increases completion

rates of students who may not have otherwise graduated. “Schools that have adopted PBIS have fewer behavior problems, suspensions and expulsions, more consistent discipline systems, and increased time for teaching and learning” (Malloy, 2009, p. 1).

Principals who are able to recognize PBIS as one means for positive school reform also recognize the need for large-scale organizational change. “The idea of school improvement suggests a change of some type within the organization” (Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2011, p. 54). Significant change, like that which can happen in a school system, takes time and patience. Ubben et al. (2011) emphasized:

> It is absolutely necessary for the principal to involve others. The success of school improvement rests with the active involvement of all stakeholders in the school. From the collective gathering of baseline data, through the hammering out of the collective beliefs and goals, to the review of expectations for student learning, to the ultimate decisions of how to improve the school, a wide variety of people must be involved for their ideas and for their ultimate ownership. (p. 55)

Collaboration amongst staff in educational reform leads to a sense of collective responsibility (Lambert, 2003).

Teachers’ Perceptions of PBIS

Teachers are one of the key stakeholders in implementing PBIS within a school. If they do not fully accept the implementation and practices of PBIS, its effectiveness will be significantly compromised. One of the key concerns teachers have is managing problem behaviors of students. “In fact, managing students’ challenging behavior continues to be a struggle for many classroom teachers, resulting in the loss of instructional time and increased levels of frustration” (Alter, Walker, & Landers, 2013, p.

51). PBIS can help reduce problem behavior for teachers. The question is: Do teachers see a connection between PBIS and managing problem behaviors in classrooms?

The identification of teachers' perceptions on PBIS is important as teachers are key stakeholders implementing strategies in their classrooms, and teachers are trained to prevent many behavioral problems that occur in classrooms. Understanding teachers' perceptions is a pivotal component of this study. Sørlie, Ogden, and Olseth (2016) found that "improving teachers' use of evidence-based, proactive, positive practices in their handling of misconduct and vulnerable students is another cornerstone of school-wide PBIS. Many teachers, however, appear unaware of their influence on student behavior and the teacher's own behavior" (Sørlie et al., 2016, p. 2). Outcomes of PBIS are supported by three integrated elements: data to support decision making, practices to support student behavior, and systems to support staff behavior. In the third element, staff are trained to prevent behavioral problems; however, systems to support staff behavior using a more proactive and positive manner are important aspects to sustaining appropriate adult behavior in the implementation of PBIS. Understanding teacher perceptions and supporting teachers during PBIS implementation is significant to maintain teacher buy-in and continued success of PBIS.

Baker and Ryan (2014) stated that PBIS implementation is done school-wide, therefore,

> Every adult on staff who encounters students during the school day – from hall monitors to teachers and administrators – is trained in using PBIS practices so that students receive the same message consistently in all school settings. Successful implementation of PBIS relies on at least 80 percent agreement from staff, or

what we refer to as “staff buy-in”. Buy-in is an important and constant consideration, both while PBIS is being implemented and during later stages in which sustainability and improvement are the focus” (p. 12).

Roberts-Clawson (2017) conducted a qualitative study on teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of a PBIS system in an elementary school in North Carolina. Results of Roberts-Clawson’s study showed that teachers felt PBIS was effective at decreasing negative student behavior, but that PBIS was not effective for everyone. The teachers felt interventions should be targeted for individuals. Teachers indicated PBIS had a positive impact on academics.

Brushaber-Goulding (2015) discussed the amount of teacher “buy in” when implementing PBIS. In a small rural school in western New York, less than half the teachers were using PBIS programs. Why? Some felt they were not trained properly. Some felt it was a burden to implement the new program. Without total capitulation, results of their PBIS program were variable. Some felt the system was only somewhat effective in reducing problem behavior, but not effective all the time.

Understanding teachers’ perceptions was integral to my study. Staff, both certified and classified, were interviewed during the course of the study on their perceptions of PBIS implementation and maintenance.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (1997)

In 1997, when amendments were authorized as revisions to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) also known as Public Law (P.L.) 105-17, positive behavior supports (PBSs) were developed for students whose behaviors violated the rules and policies of schools. If a student with a disability qualified to receive services under

IDEA, the law required services be provided to that student administered by qualified certified personnel in order for the student to be academically and behaviorally successful in a least restrictive environment. With the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997, PBS received additional attention amongst educational researchers and leaders as a method to implement school wide strategies that would improve student behaviors.

PBIS Connection to Student Achievement

Bradshaw, Mitchell, and Leaf (2010) conducted a study to determine the effects of school wide PBIS on student outcomes. Their results yielded that "schools trained in school wide PBIS reported a significant reduction in both the percentage of children with a major or minor office discipline referrals (ODRs) as well as for the overall rate of ODR events" (Bradshaw et al., 2010, p. 145). Schools trained in school wide PBIS also noticed a reduction in suspensions.

Research has consistently shown that the amount of time academic instruction is provided to students is highly correlated with student achievement. Studies have also been completed demonstrating that school-wide behavior support can improve variables that have been suggested to improve academic performance such as student attendance, time in school due to reduced exclusionary disciplinary practices, classroom instructional time, and academic engagement. In addition, improved behavior support is related to improved academic outcomes and schools implementing school-wide behavior supports have been shown to have greater academic improvements compared to schools where school-wide behavior supports were not implemented.

PBIS is connected to school achievement through a process that allows student success by creating environments where students are safe to put forth efforts needed for

success. Johns (2015) argued, “There is a body of research that says students who are able to attribute their success to their role or effort make better academic and behavioral progress than those students who attribute their success to outside forces” (p. 7). In other words, students who can attribute their success to causes, such as effort, which are controlled within a school environment, enhance their work and increase their probability of feeling successful.

PBIS encompasses pro-social behaviors by staff towards students. When children are successful, they attribute it to someone being nice to them, or perhaps, even the work being easy (Johns, 2015). Teachers should understand that when students attribute their success to their efforts, they feel successful. When students succeed, it is important to specifically recognize what they have done to achieve their success. “Educators should always attribute student performance to those factors that are within the child’s control” (Johns, 2015, p. 9) Effort is within a child’s control.

Another method to ensure student achievement is through a behavior momentum, which is “the utilization of a series of preferred behaviors to increase the probability that non-preferred behaviors will occur” (Johns, 2015, p. 13). In other words, the Oreo effect; start with a non-preferred behavior, go to a preferred behavior, then go back to a non-preferred behavior. A series of preferred tasks intertwined with non-preferred tasks increases the probability of compliance. A student then gains a momentum to complete a non-preferred task intertwined into a series of preferred tasks towards the success of an overall series of preferred tasks. Johns (2015) argued that behavior momentum is “an effective strategy to utilize when students are resistant to specific academic tasks” (p. 16).

It is important to monitor a student during a difficult task, providing continuous positive reinforcement during the process.

Behavior specific praise, where a teacher recognizes a student for engaging in appropriate behavior and tells the student exactly what the behavior was that the teacher liked, is another recommended method towards student success and student achievement. Many studies have indicated the importance of positive reinforcement and its association with positive outcomes. A recommended ratio of verbal praises to correction for a student should be a 4:1 ratio. Effective praise should include the following characteristics by being:

1. Contingent on the desired behavior and provided immediately following the behavior
2. Behavior specific
3. Focused on effort and process
4. Teacher initiated. (Johns, 2015, p. 31)

Children who often exhibit behavior problems need more praise, not less. Children want to be recognized when they are engaging in appropriate behavior. Perhaps if they were, their tendency to behave incorrectly would lessen. Adults need to give specific feedback to a child about what the child has done that is desirable, and this feedback should be given using a direct approach with the student in a sincere manner.

Proximity control is a method of physical guidance, and understanding proximity control is important to the implementation of PBIS and student success. Proximity refers to the location or space of one individual to another, and the relative proximity of a teacher to a student is important. We all have a level of personal space that can be, or not

be, invaded. It is pivotal that a teacher understand the zone of proximity in which a particular student is comfortable in order for any type of praise or positive reinforcement to be effective. Individuals create invisible barriers that are attributed to various reasons such as culture, age, personality, and relationship to an individual. Active listening and eye contact is an important tool when delivering praise, but proximity control is also notably important. Understanding proximity control was important to the observational methods of my study. When a teacher recognizes a student's comfort zone, proximity control is an effective strategy to keep students on task, and to decrease behavioral problems; however, it can also increase behavioral problems if a teacher does not understand and recognize social boundaries for a particular student and encroaches into that student's safe zone (moves too close to the student).

PBIS implementation also increases student achievement when interest-based interventions are being used (Johns, 2015). "Interest-based interventions capitalize on student's interests when planning academic activities" (p. 53). Interest-based interventions involve understanding what a student's preferences are and building incentives based upon those interests. "Incorporating student interests into the content of curriculum can transform ordinary academic activities into highly interesting and reinforcing activities" (p. 56).

The Premack Principle, also known as Grandma's Law, is based on the idea that a student will receive or get to engage in a preferred task after the completion of a non-preferred task. This is another method for increasing student achievement. With this particular method, a student is reinforced after completing a non-preferred task by being able to engage in a preferred task once the non-preferred task is complete. When

understanding the Premack Principle; however, it is critical to recognize what a preferred task may be. If a teacher is not able to recognize what a preferred task is for a student, the student may not engage in pro-social behaviors. For example, in my case, if the non-preferred task is getting a chapter in my dissertation done, followed by washing dishes, I may not complete the chapter of my dissertation to avoid washing the dishes. Washing dishes is not a preferred task for me. If completing a chapter of my dissertation is followed by getting to read one of my favorite books for an hour before bed, I am more than likely going to work on my dissertation to reward myself later on.

Empowering students by giving them choices is one of the most powerful methods of student success in PBIS. Giving students choices allows students a minimal sense of control.

> The value of choice has been shown in research for both promoting appropriate behaviors and reducing challenging behaviors. Students who are provided with the opportunity to make choices are more likely to engage in appropriate activities and have positive interactions with their peers" (Johns, 2015, p. 73).

The ability to teach students to make choices is a beneficial life skill. Many strategies are recognized in the literature that identify specific components of PBIS as connecting to student achievement.

Misconceptions of PBIS

PBIS is a systems approach to establishing social climate and behavioral supports for all children in a school to achieve both academic and social success. PBIS is not a new idea, concept, intervention technique, or theory of behavior management. Designed to create a school-wide approach to enhance pro-social behaviors, the PBIS system is

intended to teach appropriate behaviors using data to support decision-making, develop expectations for student behaviors, and create systems to deal with disruptive behaviors (Baker & Ryan, 2014).

Many misconceptions surround the concept of PBIS. For this particular study, it is important to recognize and understand those misconceptions to compare the results of my study to these misconceptions. Sugai and Simonsen (2012) listed misconceptions surrounding PBIS very well. They described four misconceptions:

1. ***Misconception #1: "PBIS is an intervention or practice"*** (p. 4).
2. ***Misconception #2: "PBIS emphasizes the use of tangible rewards which can negatively affect the development of intrinsic motivation"*** (p. 4).
3. ***Misconception #3: "PBIS is something new that was designed for students with disabilities"*** (p. 4).
4. ***Misconception #4: "PBIS is for behavior, and RtI is for academics"*** (p. 4).

PBIS is not an intervention or practice. It is a framework or systems approach for schools to prevent problematic behaviors, teach pro-social skills, and reinforce new skills (Baker & Ryan, 2014). It is based on years of research in the fields of psychology and behavioral sciences that encompass specific techniques and procedures used to determine behavioral outcomes. This framework includes practices that are embedded in a three-tiered system. PBIS is implemented in stages. PBIS is a framework for schools to operate as a community to ensure a positive school climate. PBIS does not use tangible rewards, but rather, many strategies to effectively recognize pro-social behaviors based on researched techniques in the behavioral sciences. PBIS is not new and used school-wide;

not just for individual students. Tier 3 is designed to focus individualized interventions for students based on assessment information and recognition for individual attention.

PBIS is often incorrectly referred to as the behavioral side of RtI. This is not correct; however, they are closely related. PBIS utilizes a tiered-approach, much like that of RtI, both identifying strategies and techniques as a "response to an intervention." Educators use RtI, now known as MTSS, as a means to review the academic process of students. PBIS refers to positive behavioral interventions and supports based on the tiered model of RtI.

PBIS has been implemented in many schools across the United States. Years of research, experience, and practice have contributed to effective implementation of PBIS.

Data-Based Decision-Making With PBIS

What is "data-based decision-making"? If we re-arrange these words, we see data-based decision-making means decisions are made using data to justify those decisions. In addition, what sorts of data are used? According to Bernhardt (2018), there are basically four types of data used in education:

1. *Demographic data* answers, "Who are we?" (p. 15),
2. *Perceptions and organizational assessments data* answers, "How do we do business?" (p. 15),
3. *Student learning data* answers, "How are our students doing?" (p. 15), and
4. *Analyzing and assessing school processes data* answers "What are our processes?" (p. 15).

Data are numbers, bits of information, and collections of information used to answer questions. Data indicates what is indicative of the now. PBIS involves changing

practices based on what data indicates. Since PBIS is a framework, and not a program, there is not a scripted curriculum to follow. One tool recognized in the literature to help schools track data is the online School Wide Information System (SWIS) program, which involves a direct cost to the school district. Without good data and the ability to understand the data, PBIS leadership teams would have difficulty understanding what direction to proceed based on the results of the data. “Data collection is the science behind the art of teaching” (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 48). If data collection were not completed, decisions would be made on a whim, or hunch. It is important that decision in education be based upon results and interpretation of data. During PBIS implementation, action plans are created based on data.

According to Bradshaw, Pas, Debnam, and Johnson (2015), “PBIS promotes setting-level change as a means for systematically and consistently preventing student behavior problems and promoting a positive school environment” (p. 481). The PBIS model aims to alter a school environment by creating improved systems and procedures and using data-based decision-making in order to promote positive change in student and teacher behaviors. “Yet, research suggests that most schools struggle to collect and effectively use different types of data to determine the most appropriate Tier 2 and 3 interventions to meet the needs of nonresponders to the Tier I supports” (Bradshaw et al., 2015, p. 482).

A project by the Michigan State Action for Educational Leadership studied principals’ perceptions of their ability to effectively use data (Reeves & Burt, 2006). Results revealed many principals are uncomfortable with their ability to use data effectively. One principal stated, “I am looking at the data, making decisions based on the

data, but sometimes I do not know if we are looking at that correctly" (Reeves & Burt, 2006, p. 67). Another stated, "I look around and I know there are people in the room who buy into it [data analysis], but they are not quite sure how to do it" (Reeves & Burt, 2006, p. 67). These same sentiments and abilities likely carry over into implementation of PBIS.

On Page 50 in the *The PBIS Team Handbook,* Baker and Ryan (2014) identified four specific PBIS assessment tools and their purposes (Table 4).

Table 4. PBIS Assessment Tools and Purposes.

Tool	Who Uses It?	Method	What Does It Track?
Team Implementation Checklist (TIC)	PBIS Leadership Team	Self-report	Progress, action planning, and implementation fidelity
Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)	School Staff	Survey	Fidelity of staff needs
School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET)	Outside evaluator & School staff	Interviews, observations, and products	Implementation fidelity
Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)	PBIS Leadership Team	Self-report and survey	Implementation fidelity and action planning.

Overall Impact of PBIS

Teaching is an exciting and challenging profession. Many teachers are asked to teach using evidence-based practices, differentiated instruction, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of students in their classrooms. As an interest in learning about PBIS and ways to implement PBIS in the elementary school setting, my research journey not only began with a review of the literature, but also as an investigation of PBIS systems to understand the characteristics of an effective system and the processes that

support the sustainability of PBIS. An extensive research and literature review provided me with insight into the overall impact of PBIS, and helped me understand specific practices identified by researchers in the field that allow for positive, organized, and effective school environments.

Summary

Chapter II presented a review of the literature that examined 12 areas of literature related to a principal's role in establishing and maintaining PBIS in elementary schools: (a) Historical Context of PBIS, (b) PBIS Framework, (c) Theoretical Frameworks, (d) PBIS Implementation, (e) a Principal's Role in PBIS, (f) Leadership and Change, (g) Teachers' Perceptions of PBIS, (h) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), (i) PBIS Connection to Student Achievement, (j) Misconceptions of PBIS, (k) Data-Based Decision Making and PBIS, and (l) Overall Impact of PBIS.

Description of Next Chapter

Chapter III will introduce the qualitative research design of this study. Chapter III will discuss the researcher's subjectivities, case selection, data collection, data analysis, verification, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

At the core of understanding the effectiveness of PBIS within an elementary school setting is the belief that a principal plays the role of leader in the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of PBIS. In the educational climate in North Dakota at the time of this study, while implementing PBIS, there was a focus on improving student behaviors using multi-tiered systematic approaches to behavior management. According to one person stationed at the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction who wished to remain anonymous, many schools in North Dakota are at their infancy state of implementation of PBIS. In order to understand the role of an elementary principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS, a qualitative ethnographic case study approach was used to address the research questions of this study:

1. How do the expectations of certified staff and classified staff in one North Dakota elementary school define the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?
2. How does one North Dakota elementary principal define his/her role in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?
3. How does the role of one North Dakota elementary principal influence the culture in one school during implementation of PBIS?

In this chapter, the methodological framework that supports the research design is discussed; setting, participants, qualitative research data sources, and collection methods are described; and the process of data analysis is explained.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine, explore, and identify the role played by a principal in the implementation and maintenance of PBIS. My purpose in conducting this study was to provide evidence to inform the debate regarding best practices for elementary school principals across the state of North Dakota implementing PBIS. There is a dearth of research-based evidence on this practice (implementing and maintaining PBIS) that has been wholeheartedly embraced in North Dakota. The results of this study will serve as a means to recommend information to current elementary school principals in North Dakota on what might emerge from the research, or perhaps, things to avoid when establishing and implementing PBIS.

Appropriateness of Research Design

The primary purpose of this qualitative ethnographic case study was to understand the role of an elementary principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one North Dakota elementary school setting. In a qualitative ethnographic research study, description and interpretation of a role is only possible in the context in which it occurs. Any effort to explain what has been learned from the principal, certified staff, and classified staff in this research study has required an awareness of the context, the environment, in which PBIS has been implemented. Measures were taken to explore everyday activities within the school environment of the participating school and to capture human behavior that took place using observational notes and pictures. I spent

time in hallways, classrooms, the library, the main office, and the teacher's lounge to gain further insight into the social phenomena of PBIS implementation on a day-to-day basis. Observations and comments of what was seen and heard among staff and students were written down (documented). Implementation of PBIS is an integral part of a school setting where it occurs, and it is best examined within that school setting. "The distinctive need for case study research arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" (Yin, 2014, p. 4).

A case study approach allows researchers to focus on a single situation and retain a holistic and real-world perspective of unique phenomena such as small group behavior. In order to retain a holistic and real-world perspective, I needed to gain further insight into small group behavior by spending time with the small groups within school settings such as: classrooms, the library, the teacher's lounge, and hallways, and I listened to comments, observed interactions, and focused on details within the context of a given environment. Understanding a case study approach within my ethnographical research determined how I would be able to gain more information on social phenomena occurring within day-to-day interactions via (a) observational data, and (b) spending time with small groups of individuals within the school setting as an observer, rather than a non-interactive participant. Generating a theory requires a researcher to be part of the "every day activity," and "plays a crucial role as ethnographers seek to make sense of day-to-day life in a study community or institution and to identify the elements of local research results that raise questions about human behavior in other communities and institutions" (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 2013, p. 17).

Qualitative Methods

I chose qualitative methods of research for this study to gain an insight into the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting in North Dakota. Qualitative research seeks to study a social phenomenon within a group of people and provides a deep understanding of how a social phenomenon occurs within a target population. The purpose of this study was to study the implementation and maintenance of PBIS (social phenomenon) within a target population (one elementary school in North Dakota). The focus in qualitative research is on how a target population of people reach their decisions, how elements within an environment create responses, and how factors within a context contributes to decision-making and statements.

Ethnographic research relies heavily on qualitative methods of research such as observations, interactions, and interviews. Ethnography is also conducted in naturalistic settings conducive to researchers having face-to-face interactions with people, events, and social phenomena that constitute a research setting. Ethnographers seek to understand internal phenomena from the perspective of the people being studied rather than from a researcher's perspective. Ethnographers also use a variety of qualitative methods and tools to truly understand a social phenomenon through a specific population to create an explanation of a how people think, believe, and behave (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 2013).

In this particular study, my goal was to understand how members of one elementary school in North Dakota think, believe, and behave based on the role of the principal in establishing and implementing PBIS in an elementary school setting. In their book, *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research: An Introduction,* LeCompte

and Schensul (2010) stated, “Ethnography generates or builds theories of cultures—or explanations of how people think, believe, and behave—that are situated in local time and space” (p. 12). With that in mind, an in-depth interpretation of the shared practices that take place in an elementary school setting based on face-to-face interactions via interviews and observations was pertinent to the purpose of this study.

Ethnographic studies are carried out in naturalistic settings that require intimate face-to-face interactions with participants with the aim of presenting an accurate reflection of participant perspectives and behaviors using inductive, interactive, and recursive qualitative data collection methods and strategies to build local cultural theories. According to Mertler (2016), “Ethnography involves in-depth description and interpretation of the shared or common practices and beliefs of a culture, social group or other community” (p. 92). Ethnographic researchers frame human behavior and use the concept of culture as a lens through which to interpret results.

For this study, an effort was made to understand how a principal establishes and maintains PBIS within an elementary school setting to promote positive school change within a school’s individual culture (its combined beliefs, values, practices, materials, and problems). Based upon the educational theories of Skinner and Bronfenbrenner, this study further examined how the framework and implementation of PBIS affects staff perceptions of a principal’s role in establishing and maintaining PBIS.

The school in this case study was located in eastern North Dakota and served a diverse population of 164 students in grades ranging from Kindergarten to fifth grade. The school included an early childhood special education program as well as a self-contained Emotionally Disturbed (ED) classroom. There were 31 certified staff working

in the participating school in this study, including the principal; there were also 24 classified staff.

Forty-seven percent of students attending the school in this study qualified for free or reduced cost lunches. The student/teacher ratio was 20:1 and the school offered distinctive curricular programs for students who received special education and/or gifted education services. The socioeconomic landscape of the school was diverse, and the school served students from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as affluent ones. A racial breakdown (in percentage) was as follows: White, 76.82%; African-American, 4.87%; Asian-American, 1.20%; Native-American, 9.76%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 1.20%; Hispanic/Latino, 5.49%; Multi-Racial, < 1.00%. I received the information in this paragraph by the secretary of the school where my case study took place. The names of the school and the secretary, and any online information sites, are being withheld to maintain school site confidentiality).

Research Design

To address the research questions within this ethnographic case study, data were obtained using semi-structured interviews, written observations, and from official educational documents that explained the cultural dynamic of the student population. In order to provide an in-depth picture of the case in this study, I gathered contextual material from multiple sources. According to LeCompte and Schensul (2010), “In research, the formal plan of action for a project is called research design. A research design is a detailed set of questions, hunches, procedures and a plan of action for the conduct of a research project” (p. 87). The following sections describe an initial study or pre-study, the setting for this case study, participants, data collection, data analysis,

verification of data, researcher's background and subjectivities, and ethical considerations.

Initial Pre-Study

An initial pre-study was conducted in a centrally located elementary school in North Dakota in the spring of 2017 to explore the research questions to be used in this dissertation study. In my pre-study, I focused on the principal and staff of the school; acknowledging that principals are leaders (gatekeepers) within a school system, often responsible for implementing change and assisting staff in the development of a school climate. This decision to focus on principal and staff was also based on my past experiences with principals who implemented decisions and allowed researchers to conduct research within their respective elementary schools. Key informants (principal, certified staff, and classified staff) were interviewed. Operationalization, analyzing the wording of interview questions to make them understandable, was used as a means to evaluate and determine whether or not interview questions stimulated responses that corresponded to the purpose of the pre-study. This formative research model (the pre-study) was a useful way to summarize what I believe to be the most important domains and concepts in building my dissertation study. "Researchers build formative models based on their own experiences, curiosity, knowledge base, self-conscious biases or predilections, close reading of the literature on the topic, and ideally, initial visits to the field" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 151). During the course of my pre-study, 15 certified and 4 classified staff were interviewed, and 31 pages of observational notes were taken. Eighteen hours were spent at the location site of the initial pre-study. My intent was to identify observational data, and stimulate responses from the pre-interviews that

would assist in information required to address and refine research questions for my dissertation study.

The initial pre-study was important for me to identify my interview questions for my actual dissertation study and was conducive to providing information needed to answer research questions in my actual study. Interview questions were altered before actual dissertation interviews were conducted to better provoke responses from interviewees that would provide extensive thought-provoking suggestions pertinent to the purpose of the study.

The intent of my initial pre-study was to observe and interview only certified staff; however, research has indicated that both certified staff and classified staff within a school assist in development and maintenance of a positive school culture. The input from various certified staff members indicated a need to interview classified staff as a means to get well-rounded data to gain a clear indication of a principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting.

Setting

Case Selection

This case study required a "case" to study. Case selection began with my college advisor recommending an elementary principal (Principal A) who had obtained a reputation, and whose school had a reputation, as a model system for MTSS within the district. However, as mentioned in Chapter I, Principal A was not available for this study and recommended another school system and principal (Principal B) for my study. Principal B implemented MTSS also, but at a later date than Principal A.

I sent an email to Principal B of the potential study site asking for permission to conduct my study, and explaining my research project. After receiving permission to conduct my study, I retrieved a list of staff members who might be interested in participating.

Description of the Setting

An understanding of a setting within which events and experiences of a specific group of people take place is integral to data collection and data analyses in ethnographic research. In this study, events and experiences of the participants involved took place in an elementary school located in eastern North Dakota. Construction began on this elementary school site in 1948, and the school opened in the fall of 1950. A second wing was added to the school in 1955. The school was named in honor of a former superintendent of the district. During a flood that occurred in 1997, the selected school site sustained garden view level damage, with the library and cafeteria sustaining significant damage. Mobile classroom units were added to accommodate space needs while damaged areas of the school were repaired.

This study took place in an elementary school with a population of 164 students. The ethnic population of the students attending this elementary school at the time of my study included: White-Caucasian, African-American, Native American, Asian, and Other.

This site was chosen because it was recognized as having used PBIS among all staff members and was recommended by another principal working within the same city of the research site. A breakdown of the number of students attending this school at the time of my study is given in Table 5.

Table 5. Student Population for Each Grade Level.

Grade Level	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students	Students in Special Education
Early Childhood Special Education	1	15	15
Kindergarten	1	19	1
1st Grade	1	16	1
2nd Grade	1	20	1
3rd Grade	1	23	2
4th Grade	2	40	1
5th Grade	2	31	2
Total Number of Students		164	

Participant Criteria

This ethnographic case study approach involved the responses of 20 key informants who were employed within the school district at the time of this study, and who could be described as: (a) certified staff (staff and administration of the school that have teaching credentials and/or other certification for their position within the school), or (b) classified staff (school employees that do not need certification or licensure to be qualified for their job). In order to obtain permission to interview these people, I first obtained the approval of the school district (Appendix B). Next, I contacted the principal of the school I wished to study by e-mail who forwarded my email on to all the staff. In my e-mail, I introduced myself, explained the purpose of my study, and suggested an interview take place at a time and location of the potential participant's choosing. Once I arrived at the research site, I made a final selection of participants based on visual observations and discussions with the principal. Final participants were those who: (a) utilized PBIS within their classrooms and the school; (b) performed in a professional and

collaborative manner, and (c) agreed to participate in the study. This type of selection is called purposeful sampling, where researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2015). The secretary provided a staff list to me so I could learn staff names, and I took the time to view a staff composite of pictures so I could match faces with names.

Participants

Ethnography emphasizes a commitment by a researcher to provide an accurate reflection of the views and perspectives of participants involved in a study. In my study, it was important I developed trusting relationships with the staff of the elementary school in the study to access their views accurately. I tried to develop these trusting relationships by making myself visible, dressing professionally, and performing in a professional and collegial manner. "When the investigator and participant build a trusting relationship, they create together a safe and open environment in which the voices or opinions and views of the participants emerge in an authentic way" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 16). It was important to my methodology that I be observed in the natural setting of my study as a researcher in order to gain the trust of staff members and to gain accurate participant perspectives. "Ethnography emphasizes participant perspective and meanings" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p. 150).

For this study, a total of 20 people were interviewed once each within a 4-day period from May 1st to May 4th of the year 2017 using a semi-structured interview format. Protocol interview questions were designed in alignment with the methodological framework of this study. Participants were asked to candidly comment on a variety of guiding prompts that focused on the culture of their school including: a description of

their principal, years teaching in the field, teaching/administration background, teaching/administration practices, familiarity with PBIS, implementation of PBIS, establishment of PBIS, maintenance of PBIS, and their principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS within their school.

Individuals were selected based upon researcher discretion and availability interviewed included: the principal; a counselor; general education teachers of grades kindergarten through fifth grade; special education teachers for IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) categories of emotionally disturbed children, children with learning disabilities, and medically fragile children; a music teacher; a physical education teacher; a school nurse; and classified staff such as a cook, an after-school program coordinator, a secretary, and para educators (Table 6).

Table 6. Participants in This Case Study.

Participants	Professional Title/Grade	Years In Profession	Years At School
1	Principal	20	7
2	Kindergarten Teacher	14	2
3	1st Grade Teacher	15	2
4	2nd Grade Teacher	24	24
5	3rd Grade Teacher	13	13
6	4th Grade Teacher	Unknown	2
7	5th Grade Teacher	1	1
8	Special Education Teacher (Emotionally Disturbed)	1	1
9	Special Education Teacher (Medical Impairment)	5	3

Table 6. cont.

Participants	Professional Title/Grade	Years In Profession	Years At School
10	Special Education Teacher (Learning Disability)	Unknown	2
11	Counselor	2	2
12	Music Teacher	1	1
13	Phy Ed Teacher	38	Unknown
14	School Nurse	Unknown	2
15	Sp. Ed. Para Educator #1	Unknown	5
16	Sp. Ed. Para Educator #2	Unknown	5
17	Instructional Para Educator	Unknown	1
18	Encore (After-School Program) Coordinator	6	2
19	Administrator Assistant/Secretary	Unknown	3
20	Cook	Unknown	12

Interviews were carried out in an informal and collegial manner. In an attempt to keep interviews informal, they were conducted during scheduled break times within the daily school schedule to help participants feel it was all part of their regular day, and some were held after school when necessary. Participants were asked where they preferred their interview be held to ensure maximum comfort for the respondents. Some interviews were located in key informants' classrooms or offices.

Data Collection

In a case study approach, studying a population in their natural setting offers an in-depth look at a specific culture. By gathering data from multiple sources, I obtained a

richness to my data that helped in understanding the culture of the school in my study and helped determine the principal's role in implementing and maintaining PBIS. Yin (2014) argued that multiple sources of data converge to present triangulated evidence of a phenomenon. This study involved three distinct methods of data collection:

1. Semi-structured interviews with both certified and classified members of the school.
2. Observed staff interactions taken from different locations within the school.
3. A systematic review of school documents.

I collected data by conducting semi-structured interviews, recording observations, and thoroughly reviewing documentation that was generated throughout the implementation of PBIS. Interviews were conducted with each participant at the research setting and lasted an average of 20 to 40 minutes. Observations were conducted during four consecutive schools days by shadowing the principal as she interacted with both staff and students. During that time, I took extensive *objective* (e.g. principal interacts with various general education teachers and special education staff, as well as students) and *subjective* (e.g. staff responses, student responses) field notes. "Field notes are written observations of what you see taking place in a particular setting" (Mertler, 2016, p. 202). Specific data about staff and students were gathered from educational documents located on the school's website, and through district data informational files. Each data source and data collection procedures are discussed on the following pages.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Qualitative research interviews are commonly used to obtain data. Being interested in others is the key to some of the basic assumptions underlying this interview

technique (Seidman, 2013). The type of interview conducted by a researcher is determined by the type of information the interviewer wishes to obtain. Three types of interview structures are possible: (a) a highly structured or standardized mode, (b) the semi-structured mode, and (c) the unstructured mode (Seidman, 2013).

A semi-structured interview contains a mix of more- and less-structured questions. “In semi-structured interviews, the researcher asks several ‘base’ questions but also has the option of following up a given response with additional questions, depending on the situation” (Mertler, 2016, p. 204). At some point in each interview, I used structured questions to obtain demographic data; that is, I asked the interviewee to respond to a particular statement to define a particular concept or term. I also asked less structured questions designed to elicit each respondent’s unique perspective on the research topic (the role of a principal in implementing and maintaining PBIS). These less structured questions were open-ended and flexible. “Open-ended interviews provide the respondent with only a few questions, [and those questions are] very broad” (Mertler, 2016, p. 205). Each interview was guided by my interest in a particular topic (the role of a principal in implementing and maintaining PBIS) and subsequent subtopics. For this particular study, the exact wording of interview questions and the order in which the questions were asked was determined ahead of time using the interview protocol I developed before and during my initial pre-study. Flexibility in an interview process allows an interviewer to explore perceptions of a respondent and to follow-up on new ideas as they are presented by a respondent (Seidman, 2013).

“When developing interview guides, it is advisable to keep your questions brief, clear, and worded in simple language” (Mertler, 2016, p. 204). I constructed one

interview guide (see Appendix C) to assist me in the interviewing process. An interview guide is a list of questions one intends to ask in an interview (Seidman, 2013). The interview guide is not a structured schedule or protocol. Rather, it is a list of general areas of be covered with each informant. In an interview situation, a researcher decides how to phrase questions and when to ask them (Seidman, 2013).

My interview guide (Appendix C) included specific demographic questions, a request to describe a term or concept, and semi-structured open-ended questions. I also allowed time for each interviewee to share any other thoughts he or she might have had on the topic and tried to engage each interviewee in a conversation about the topic (PBIS and principals). Interviews varied slightly due to the different roles of the individuals being addressed (e.g. principal, certified staff, classified staff), but by using the interview guide, five main questions were addressed in each interview.

Interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry. “Interviews are conversations between the researcher and participants in the study” (Mertler, 2016, p. 204). In education, interviewing is probably the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies. “At the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language” (Seidman, 2013, p. 8). Interviews obtain data that reflect behavior, attitudes, and experiences that take place while the interviewer is not present. I chose to interview the participants of my ethnographic case study because I wanted to know about thoughts, feelings, and events that were not observable by me in order to construct meaning (Seidman, 2013).

"Listening is the most important skill in interviewing. The hardest work for many interviewers is to keep quiet and to listen actively" (Seidman, 2013, p. 81). According to Seidman:

Interviewers must listen on at least three levels:

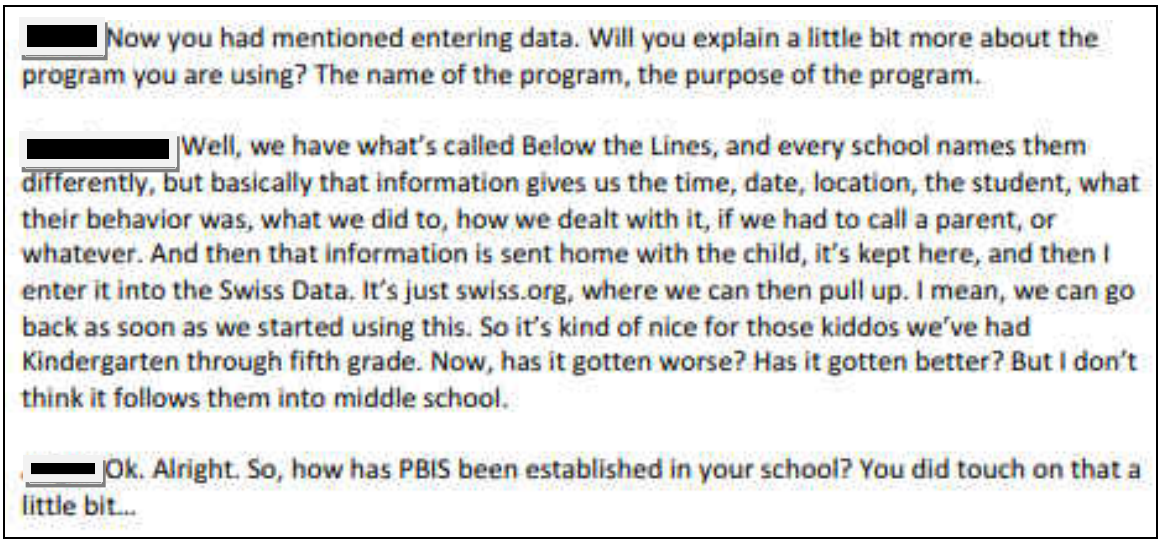
1. They must concentrate on the substance to make sure that they understand it and to assess whether what they are hearing is as detailed and complete as they would like it to be.
2. Interviewers must listen for what George Steiner (1978) calls the "inner voice" . . . By taking participants' language seriously without making them feel defensive about it, interviewers can encourage a level of thoughtfulness more characteristic of inner voice.
3. Interviewers—like good teachers in a classroom—must listen while remaining aware of the process as well as the substance. They must be conscious of time during the interview; . . . how much has been covered and how much there is yet to go . . .. Interviewers must listen hard to assess the progress of the interview and to stay alert for cues about how to move the interview forward as necessary." (Seidman, 2013, pp. 81-82)

In all the interviews I conducted, I used a face-to-face format. Each participant was interviewed one-on-one, independent of other interviewees. I provided each interviewee with a Consent Form (Appendix D) which was part of the project submitted to (and approved by) the Human Subject Office (Institutional Review Board) at my university. The document included a brief overview of the study, assurances of confidentiality, and an acknowledgement, signed by the interviewee, that he or she was

being audio recorded. In preparation for the interviews, I wrote open-ended questions that would allow for a greater understanding of the topic of PBIS. The statements and underlying beliefs shared by participants influenced my choice of questions during each interview. I wanted to allow for flexibility in the interview questions as I gathered unfolding perceptions from interviewees on the role of their principal in establishing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). Interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

I presented the same questions to each participant. Follow-up or probing questions were used if I needed additional clarification to answers. I approached each interview and participant in the same manner so the validity of the data would be intact. During each interview, I took notes that helped me to modify and enrich my questioning to gain greater understanding of participants' perceptions. Each interview was audio recorded after obtaining written permission from the participant to record the interview. Following each interview, the data was transcribed verbatim. Every effort was made by the transcriber to include, not only the exact words of both speakers, but also any other sound that could be heard or any activity that was implicitly or explicitly indicated on the tape. All coughs, pauses, laughter, and similar sounds were included in the audio transcriptions. An example of transcribed data is shown in Figure 3.

Audio-recordings, field notes, and transcripts led to greater reliability within the data by offering a means for me to cross check the accuracy of data collected. Data from interviews, field notes, recordings, transcripts, and consent forms have been kept in a locked cabinet to be viewed only by me for data analysis and by a select few who checked the validity of the data. This was to ensure the confidentiality of the participants,


[redacted] Now you had mentioned entering data. Will you explain a little bit more about the program you are using? The name of the program, the purpose of the program.

[redacted] Well, we have what's called Below the Lines, and every school names them differently, but basically that information gives us the time, date, location, the student, what their behavior was, what we did to, how we dealt with it, if we had to call a parent, or whatever. And then that information is sent home with the child, it's kept here, and then I enter it into the Swiss Data. It's just swiss.org, where we can then pull up. I mean, we can go back as soon as we started using this. So it's kind of nice for those kiddos we've had Kindergarten through fifth grade. Now, has it gotten worse? Has it gotten better? But I don't think it follows them into middle school.

[redacted] Ok. Alright. So, how has PBIS been established in your school? You did touch on that a little bit...

Figure 3. Example of Transcribed Data.

and the validity of the data. Transcripts of interviews combined with observations and other documents gave me a broader view and a way to better understand participants' perceptions than if only one type of data had been collected.

Observations

When using non-participant-observation as an ethnographic research method, the researcher enters the world of the people he or she wishes to study. In this case, it was an elementary school where PBIS was being utilized by both the principal and staff members. The degree to which I participated in addition to observing varied. In some situations, I had opportunities to participate in the activities I was studying; however, most observations were structured observations – observations looking for specific behaviors, reactions, and interactions that corresponded to positive behavior supports and proactive, preventative approaches to behavior with a reactive approach where student behavior was addressed only after it had occurred. Observations provided an important means of qualitative data collection as I was studying phenomena in an elementary

school setting. “Observations as a means of collecting qualitative data, involve carefully watching and systematically recording of what you see and hear in a particular setting” (Mertler, 2016, p. 200). I also performed unstructured observations where I engaged in periods of observation and note taking in events or activities simultaneously taking place. As a non-participant observer, I remained first and foremost an observer, but had some level of interaction with the participants being studied. Casual (unstructured) conversation and nonverbal communication took place between a participant and a researcher (Mertler, 2016). In order to observe the context within which this case study took place and not receive a skewed view, I observed during a 4-day duration from the dates of May 1st to May 4th of the year 2017 during the times of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the same time period in which I conducted my interviews.

In qualitative research, observation is a data collection procedure, and field notes are data (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Because there were many people in multiple settings, it was not possible to observe all activities and interactions that occurred. I focused on the principal most of the time, but I also observed staff and students. While observing, I took extensive field notes. My field notes included two types of information—descriptive and reflective. The descriptive part of the field notes were recorded in objective detail, such as the physical setting, the people involved in the interactions observed, accounts of the interactions observed, the reconstruction of any dialogue, and the behaviors of participants in the observed setting (Emerson et al., 2011).

In addition to descriptive material, my field notes contained reflective information, such as the subjective part of an observation experience. Field notes were developed based on what I saw, interpreted, and recorded, in other words, based on

behaviors witnessed. “A key strength of ethnography is its ability to discover new behaviors, attitudes and knowledge that may be shared by a study group or community, but that for the most part are not well documented in the literature or known by many outside groups” (Schensul et al., 2013, p. 14). A typical day of observation generated 15-20 pages of single-spaced handwritten notes, where I described activities, interactions, behaviors, and comments of participants, as well as my reactions to what I was seeing and hearing. My field notes were transcribed, entered into a database, and coded. An example page in my field note database is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Example Page From Field Notes Database.

Observations	Code	Category	Handbook Reference	Theme
1. Principal	Roles- Leader Mentor Facilitator Cheerleader Reporter Team member Team leader Communicator Trainer Responder Encourager Coach Active listener Questioning Organizer Modeling Hiring Supporter Establishing Delegate Decision-maker Integrator	Roles Attributes Reponses Performance Elements	Mission Statement- (the school district will)…”provide an environment of educational excellence that engages all learners to develop their maximum potential for community and global success.” Vision Statement- (the school district will)…”be a place where all stakeholders collaborate to achieve academic and co-curricular excellence,	The principal plays many roles throughout her day. In order to perform these various roles, the principal must obtain attributes that enable her to perform these duties on a daily basis. The principal’s roles and attributes must coincide to the mission and vision statement of the school.

The first column identifies the person being observed. The information from the observations were color-coded by role (a word to describe the action associated with a title, i.e.: designator, mentor), attributes (a word to describe a quality, i.e.: visible,

knowledgeable), response (a word to describe an action, either verbal-said, or non-verbal-not said, i.e., eye contact, voice tone), performance (a word to describe what was seen, i.e. collaboration, procedures, work) and elements (a word to describe physical elements, i.e. table, chair, degrees in frames).

Documentation

In qualitative research, valuable sources of information involve documents. "Documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site of participants in a study and can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals and letters" (Creswell, 2015, p. 221). Many documents relevant to the research questions were collected during the course of the study. Documents collected included: a list of certified and classified staff, individual teacher schedules, an incident form, a copy of the principal's schedule, a student bullying form, an early release parent notification form, the school's handbook, the BAT (Behavior Assistance Team) plan of action procedure form, a Restorative Interventions Implementation Toolkit, the school's target expectations poster, a Positive Behavior Support explanation form, a list of PBIS teacher expectations, a list of school rules, procedures for giving a "Right on Target" certificate, procedures for filling out a "Below the Line" Report, a Below the Line report form, a Fix-It plan, a list of steps for facilitating a Fix-It Plan, a copy of the school's special award, the "Right on Target" chant, the document *A Guide to Character Education*, the school's Code of Conduct manual, the school's mission statement, The Six Pillars of Education document, steps to the BLST (Building Level Support Team) process, a request form for student support in regards to the BLST process, and a Suicide Risk Assessment checklist. The single, unique characteristic of documents for case study

research is that documents require a large amount of physical space to be stored in. The main objective in using documents for research is to make the documents readily retrievable for later inspection. I made my documents readily retrievable by placing them in labeled color-coded file folders to represent each category including: Communication, Schedule(s), Report(ing), Policy, Procedure, Student Expectations, PBIS Information, and Curriculum (Table 8). Each file folder was kept in a locked file cabinet where only I had access to the documents using a key.

Table 8. Coding Document Data.

Documents	Code	Category	Handbook Reference	Theme
1. PBIS Information	proactive systematic approach challenging social behavior/behaviors X 2 responsive education/educate X 2 not a curriculum not a program learn appropriate behavior philosophical framework all students current individual school not a punishment-based model instructional model individualized process leads a school planning decision-making problem-solving improve social climate based on research applied in schools practiced in schools instructional focus	Teacher Expectations Principal Expectations PBIS Student Expectations Behavior/Behaviors Educate/Education Implementation	School Handbook Area #1: Emphasize 21st Century instructional practices, which foster student academic engagement. Goal #3: Research creative and research-based methods of instruction. School Handbook Area #3: Promote practices, which attract and retain high quality staff. Goal #4: Develop a staff evaluation model that promotes effectiveness. School Goals/Initiatives: PBIS 1. Self-Control Slips (Below the Line Behavior) 2. On Targets 3. Class Meeting Lessons (1x/month)	PBIS is implemented in the current elementary school based upon the district's initiative to provide a positive and safe learning environment for students at the schools within the districts. The PBIS program is used to help students develop the self-discipline to make good choices, reinforce positive behaviors, and redirect negative behaviors. The purpose of PBIS is to provide a common approach to school-wide expectations, encourage appropriate behavior, discourage inappropriate

Data Analysis

Qualitative Content Analysis

In qualitative research, researchers analyze observational field notes and record transcripts of interviews with participants. Analysis proceeds by using a coding system derived from a preexisting theoretical framework, constantly comparing items against one another, contrasting like and unlike items, looking for clues, looking for co-occurrences, looking for sequences of events, and examining emerging concepts for additional items to be discovered. “Content analysis can involve any kind of analysis where communication content (speech, written text, interviews, images, narratives) is categorized and classified” (LeCompte & Ludwig, 2013, p. 32).

The analytic process begins as researchers read text over and over, examining its content for similarities and dissimilarities, the frequency in which items are mentioned, patterns of consistency and inconsistency, patterns of linkages to other data and patterns, and overall themes. This process begins early in data collection and continues until all data has been collected. In my study, collected information from various sources was coded and tabulated; all sources of data were considered and triangulated.

“Analyzing qualitative data requires understanding how to make sense of text and images so that you can form answers to your research questions” (Creswell, 2015, p. 235). Through analysis, I attempted to gain a deeper understanding of what I had been studying with a purpose to refine interpretations continually. A researcher draws on firsthand experience with a setting, informants, and documents to interpret data. Creswell (2015) divided data analysis in an ethnographic case study into six parts: (a) prepare and organize the data for analysis, (b) explore and code the data, (c) code to build description

and themes, (d) represent and report qualitative findings, (e) interpret the findings, and (f) validate the accuracy of the findings.

Nastasi (2013) claimed, "The framework for discussing data analysis-interpretation reflects an inductive-abductive-deductive continuum" (p. 342). Nastasi stated that qualitative researchers are more likely to approach analysis with an inductive approach (process of generating codes, categories, themes, and finally a theory); however, most ethnographers are likely to fall somewhere on the thinking continuum between inductive and deductive (starting with theory based-codes that guide the process of analysis and interpretation of data) reasoning. In practice, ethnographic researchers are likely to reflect some degree of interaction blending both inductive and deductive practices, more appropriately labeled abductive (along the continuum). This allows a researcher to move from data to theoretically informed interpretations.

> The researcher may start with a general set of codes reflecting constructs derived from existing theory and research but recognize the potential limitations for application across populations and contexts. Although the general categories may guide initial analysis, coders will generate additional codes inductively to reflect the current data set. (Nastasi, 2013, p. 345)

Organizing and Preparing Data

After interviewing participants, interviews were transcribed. Transcripts were read, highlighted, and reviewed extensively to ensure accuracy, validity, and to immerse myself in the data. I listened to recordings several times and reread transcripts for accuracy. Samplings of interview recordings and transcribed data were checked by my

advisor and a peer in UND's Educational Leadership doctoral program to ensure accuracy. A sample transcript is shown in Figure 4.

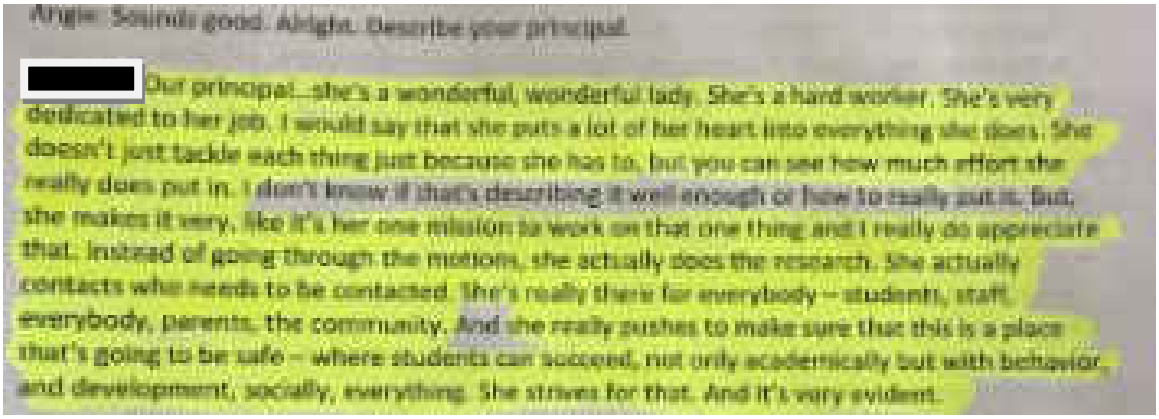


Figure 4. Sample Transcript After Highlighting.

Transcripts from interviews were kept in a binder, and each interview was given a number. Questions on transcripts were boxed using a thin black marker to make it easier to view each question as I was reading through the transcripts. I then reread each interview, using a black pen to draw a square around each significant statement. This provided the first step in my data analysis prior to using technology. Each interview was reread, additional comments highlighted and significant statements identified (Figure 5). After each significant statement, codes were written in. Codes were established based on commonalities in the definitions (meanings) of words stated within a significant statement. These were also checked by my advisor and a peer for accuracy of information.

Each interview was member checked by each participant for accuracy. Transcribed data, observation notes, and field notes were easily accessible and were the firm foundation my analysis was built on. During this process, I tried hard to keep an

open mind and let the data guide my learning about participants' perceptions of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) being utilized within their school.

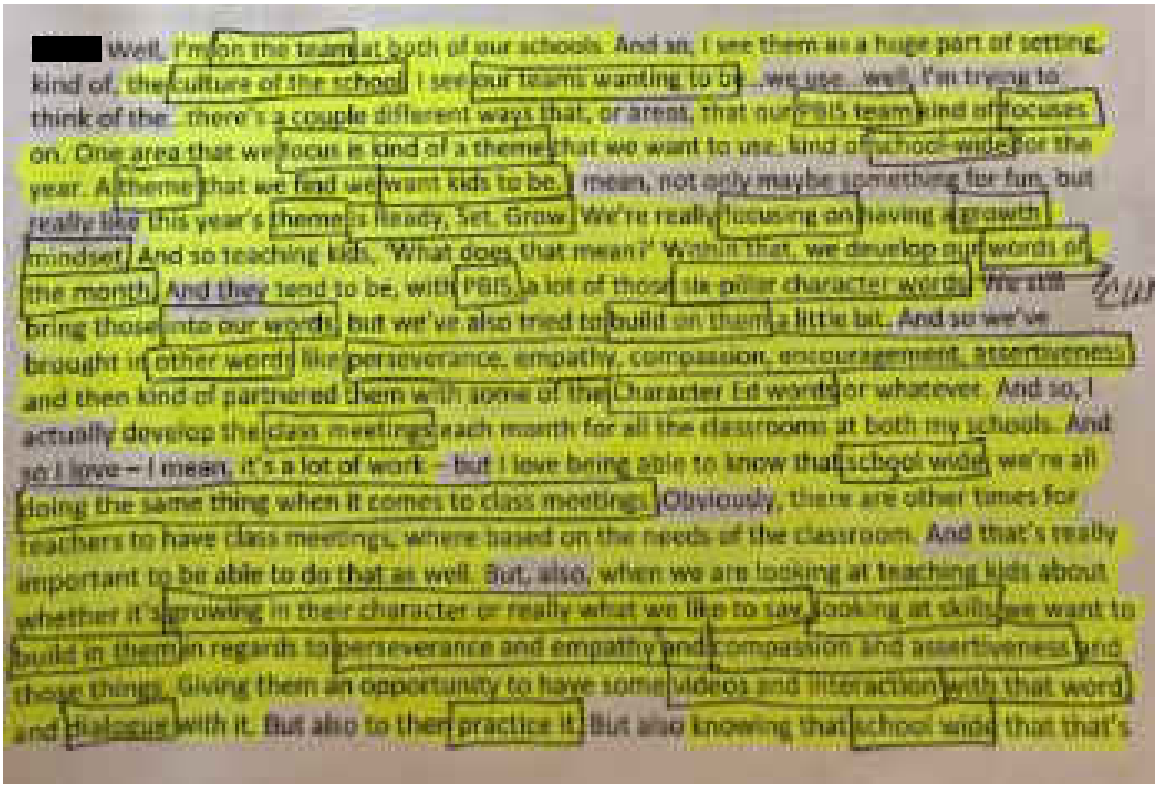


Figure 5. Sample Transcript After Initial Data Analysis.

Coding Data

Coding is one of the significant steps taken during analysis to organize and make sense of textual data. "Coding involves organizing data into categories related to the conceptual framework and/or the questions guiding the research in order to provide evidence supporting analysis and interpretation" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p. 81). "The object of the coding process is to make sense out of text data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes" (Creswell, 2015, p. 242). A code can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one, such

as a metaphor. During the initial phase of coding, I took the transcribed interviews and reduced them into significant statements. One purpose of coding is to narrow data into specific categories to make analysis manageable. In this initial reduction, I was careful to hold on to the meaning of data as they were reduced into significant statements. To ensure meaning was retained, I reduced data by taking out words that did not obstruct the meaning of each statement. This second step of analysis was done using an Excel spreadsheet. Numbering comments enabled me to easily move from raw data to significant statements (see Table 9).

Table 9. Example of Significant Statements on a Spreadsheet.

87	data of the referrals that are made
88	with PBIS system, referrals of recording behavhior
89	behavhior that's not where it should be
90	focusing on, wanting to encourage and reward behaviors that we like to see
91	Right-on Targets
92	have our right on targets that we utlize with our PBIS
93	so every classroom has it
94	looking for times that we see kids going above and beyond
95	Every kid
96	look different for every kid
97	Get a right on target for being regulated
98	based on what every kid needs
99	want to encourage that positive behavhior
100	a huge part of our PBIS team
101	what we want to do within the school to encourage the positive behavior that we see in kids
102	not just good job, but descriptively praising what we seem them doing and speaking into that for them
103	really believing in what whole 4:1 ratio of the positives that kids need

Using inductive coding helped me to understand the information well, and move towards further analysis. After member checking with my respondents, I developed another method of inductive coding using a table in a Word document that also included the questions, so that each response was broken down by each interviewee's responses (Table 10).

Table 10. Linking Data to Interview Questions.

Interview Question	Significant Statement	Secondary Reduction	Code	Category	Theme
Tell me about yourself.	"school counselor" "second year here" "Masters in Counseling"	Staff Title New to School Adequate Training	Staff Involvement Staff Involvement	Staff Collaboration Staff Collaboration	Principal's Role Requires Collaboration with Trained Staff
Explain the culture of the school.	"Love it here." "they have a great principal" "It's a great place to be" "culture here is one of community"	Culture P Positive Experience Community		Positive Culture Observations	Principal's Role Requires Establishing a Positive Culture

Nastasi (2013) suggested, "Coding in a reliable manner refers to the consistent interpretation and application of codes to the data set by multiple coders. Subsequently, consistency checks across individual and multiple coders must be conducted through the process of coding" (p. 347).

After coding each interview transcript, and looking for a method of analysis that would be easier for me to understand the responses to each question, I sought further advice from my advisor. My advisor suggested I recreate my coding analysis procedures by breaking down each interview and coding each question separately (Table 11).

Table 11. Coding by Interview Question.

Interview Question #1	Code	Category	Theme
1. Tell me about yourself professionally and personally.	1. Counselor 2nd year Counselor at 2 schools Here 2 days a week Another school 3 days week Flexibility with schedule 2. [redacted] 2 ½ years here 3. Special Education Strategist Teaching 5 years now 2nd year here Multiple impairments classroom Working with the medically fragile Self-contained classroom	Certified Staff (Job title that requires a degree for the position) [redacted] Years of Teaching/At current school Roles of Job	This particular elementary school is comprised of various certified and classified staff that are required to maintain the day-to-day functions of the school requirements. All staff is supervised and lead by the school principal. For this particular study, 16 certified staff (staff that require a degree for their current position), and 4 classified staff (staff that do not require a degree for their current position) were interviewed. Some

Codes that emerged from the qualitative data collected by labeling reduced the number of statements with descriptive words or phrases that pertained to each question. Significant statements were then reduced again to codes to capture the essential meaning of the raw data. I developed codes from all data sources including interview data, observation data, and school documents (see Table 12).

Table 12. Sample of Codes Across All Sources of Data.

Interview Codes	**Observation Codes**	**Document Codes**
Counselor	Leader/Leading	Policy
Schedule	Mentor/Mentoring/Coach	PBIS Information
Flexibility	Facilitator/Facilitating	Curriculum
Teacher	Cheerleader/Motivator/Encourager	Procedures
Structured Environment	Reporter	Student Expectations
Tone	Team Member/Team Leader	Forms/Reporting
S (Staff) Interaction	Communicator	Communication
s (student) Interaction	Trainer	Schedules/Scheduling
Culture	Responder/Informant	
Community	Active Listener	
Principal	Modeling	
Personal	Decision Maker	
Demographics	Eye Contact	
Behavioral	Nonverbal Communication	
Special Programs	Verbal Communication	
Economics	Visible	
Lower Income	Knowledgeable	
Supportive	Classroom Decor	
Small School	Classroom Schedules	
School Wide	S (Student) Interaction	
Parents	St (Staff) Interaction	
Appreciate	Dialogue	
Thankful	Performance	
Communication	Collaboration	
Common Language	Teaching	
Discussion	Students	
Mentor	Flexible Seating	
Right On Targets	Engagement	
Below the Line	Smartboards	

These codes were kept organized to enable me to move from raw data to statements to codes and back again within a spreadsheet. In this way, codes could clearly be linked back to original interview questions, responses, observations, and documents. Table 13 shows how codes were linked to significant statements and interview questions.

Table 13. Example of Linking Interview Data to Codes.

Interview Question #5: How would you describe the role of the principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS?

Interview #	Significant Statements	Code	Category	Theme
1.	She is really kind of like our leader of our team. Usually she and I will partner together and talk about planning. We created an agenda. She kind of is setting up the meetings and those types of thing. Definitely one to spear-head a lot of it in that way. Touch base on our data Touch base on class meetings Teachers have anything they want to me add to this or that. Really talk about our assemblies. Word of the Month	Team Leader Collaboration Discussion Planning Agenda Organizes Sets up Meetings Leader Review Data Class Meetings Teacher Input Discussion Assemblies Character Words	Team Leader Collaborator Meeting Facilitator Informative Communicator Facilitator	The theme emerging is that the principal plays many roles in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS, such as team leader, collaborator, meeting facilitator, being knowledgeable/informative, and the means for communication.

In an ethnographic case study, it is important to gain a sense of the whole database. In order to accomplish this goal, I read transcripts of interviews, field notes, and documents to make sense of everything before examining the unique and individual pieces of data. I then read the data for a second, third, and fourth time and made notes using short phrases, ideas, or key concepts related to the research questions. These

phrases, ideas, and key concepts could be identified by codes or categories that were applied to (linked to) the words, phrases, and sentences within the data (Table 13). The result was a data set divided into codes and categories. Each category could then be subdivided by new codes. In qualitative data analysis, this process continues in a cyclical act, over and over again.

Creswell (2015) recommended using the following steps for coding data:

1. Get a sense of the whole. Read . . . transcriptions carefully. Jot down . . . ideas as they come to mind.
2. Pick one document. . .. Consider the underlying meaning and write it down in the margin in two or three words.
3. Begin the process of coding the document. This process involves identifying text segments, . . . , and assigning a code word or phrase that accurately describes the meaning of the text segment.
4. After coding an entire text, make a list of all code words. Group similar codes and look for redundant codes. Your objective is to reduce the list of codes to a smaller, more manageable number.
5. Take this list and go back to data. Try out this preliminary organizing scheme to see whether new codes emerge.
6. Reduce the list of codes to get five to seven themes or descriptions of the setting or participants. (p. 243)

"Describing and developing themes from the data consists of answering the major research questions and forming an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon through description and thematic development" (Creswell, 2015, p. 246). Because in

qualitative research description is a detailed rendering of people, places, or events in a setting, it is easiest to start the analyses after the initial reading and coding of the data. In this particular ethnographic study, the goal would be to provide a considerable description of the setting since the physical environment plays a role in development of a school's culture.

"In addition to description, the use of themes is another way to analyze qualitative data" (Creswell, 2015, p. 247). Like codes, categories have labels that typically consist of two to four words. Coding enabled me to organize and group similarly coded data into categories because they shared some of the same characteristics. Some categories contained clusters of coded data that required refinement. Categories were combined into groupings of similar codes, and the groupings were labelled or described. The resulting label or description became a theme for that grouping of categories. A theme is an outcome of coding in categories (Saldana, 2016).

Emerging Categories and Themes

Keeping in mind the importance of member checking and peer reviewing to ensure the validity of data, I sought to find categories and eventually themes emerging from the data. To do this, I wanted to work closely with the data. I also sought out the advice of a fellow doctoral student working through a coding system at the same time I was. LeCompte and Schensul (2013) advised, "Researchers often borrow coding systems from other researchers or from studies they have already done themselves" (p. 127). The first step I took was to color-code the codes that were all the same. I then cut them out and rearranged them alphabetically. This allowed me to see the frequency of each code. I combined similar codes into categories. "Often these categories constitute important

variables, or categories whose component parts vary along a given dimension in the study and that are used for comparative purposes" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p. 128). The constant comparative method was applied to continue to compare data being gathered to emerging categories. In this way, I could see the relationships in amongst the codes. Through this process, I found many common categories and some contrasting ideas within the interview data. From these multiple categories, I could see commonalities. I then began to put common categories together under several universal themes that emerged from the codes and categories. Observation notes, field notes, and school documents were used to further validate or refute interview data. In this way, data collected was used to check for accuracy of emerging themes. "Rough deductive coding categories also can be derived from the conceptual and theoretical frames or research questions around which the researcher built the study" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p. 129).

Frequency distribution (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013) occurs when there is a high number or percentage responding to each attribute or category. "Producing frequencies assures that data are entered accurately and there are no unusual outliers" (p. 192). Using central tendency measures to determine the average or mean of each category, the categories with the highest averages developed into significant patterns that created common themes. Patterns began to emerge from the data. "Pattern level analysis involves organizing related items . . . into higher-order patterns and creating explanations for these relationships from conceptual factors and sub factors" (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p. 248). Pattern level analysis can be explained best by organizing puzzle pieces by color and beginning to assemble the puzzle based upon chunking the pieces by the picture on

the front of the piece. Creating themes based upon developing categories was, essentially, putting category pieces together as if to begin a puzzle; the finished puzzle being the theme. LeCompte and Schensul (2013) stated,

> One very common way to identify patterns is in terms of the frequency with which specific items, events, responses, kinds of persons, or themes occur. When a particular unit, or theme or idea appears over and over in the data, then researchers feel fairly certain that a pattern may exist. (p. 249-250)

One example of a theme discovered was the theme of communication. It contained categories such as *relatable*, *personable*, *connections*, *understanding*, *interactions*, *discussion*, and *common language* both among students and staff. This systematic cognitive process of combining codes and then categories enabled me to see more abstract ideas and eventually patterns that emerged into themes (Table 14).

Table 14. Example of Using Codes to Develop a Theme.

Interview Question #3	Code	Category	Category Frequency	Theme
3. Describe your principal.				
1.	(Principal)'s just very relatable and personable. She's caring. Really connects with everyone. She's understanding. Yet she has high expectations of how things are done in the building. The way kids are viewed. The way kids are treated. The language that we use within the school.	Relatable Personable Caring Connections Understanding Expectations View of Students View of Students Common Language	Relatable Personable Caring Connections Understanding Expectations View of Students Common Language Provides Trainings Social Emotional Learning Unity Successful Student Interactions Passion	One of the common categories that most staff suggested was communication. The principal of this particular school has provided staff with a level of trust that many feel comfortable in communicating with her using an open door policy. Another common

This continual comparison of grouping codes, creating categories, generating patterns, and developing themes took an extensive amount of time. LeCompte and Schensul (2013) reminded us, “The process of triangulation often can unearth patterns as responses, items, events, or themes from various sources of data begin to corroborate one another” (p. 253). The final step in my data analysis occurred as I identified patterns based on themes and subthemes. At each stage in data analysis, codes, categories, patterns, and eventually themes, were all tied directly to the raw data collected during interviews, observations, and documents. “Patterns can become more and more elaborated during the life of a study. New subcomponents of the patterns can emerge at any time during the study, and these can be added to guide further data collection and analysis” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2013, p. 255).

Figure 6 illustrates a concept map of the process of data analysis used in this study. The analytic process began by coding transcripts, and codes were grouped into categories. Categories were then subdivided to develop themes. Assertions were derived from themes and that generated one overall conclusion statement. Illustrating the analytic process provides elaboration and clarity on data analysis, and shows how information from transcripts transpired from codes into one generalized concept. Codes began as short phrases and were categorized by meaning. Themes were generated based upon shared or common attributes of meaning as listed within categories. Assertions were generated based upon an extensive review of data that developed from the themes and in comparison to other themes in which some meaning overlapped. One conclusion statement was created to explain overall findings of the study.

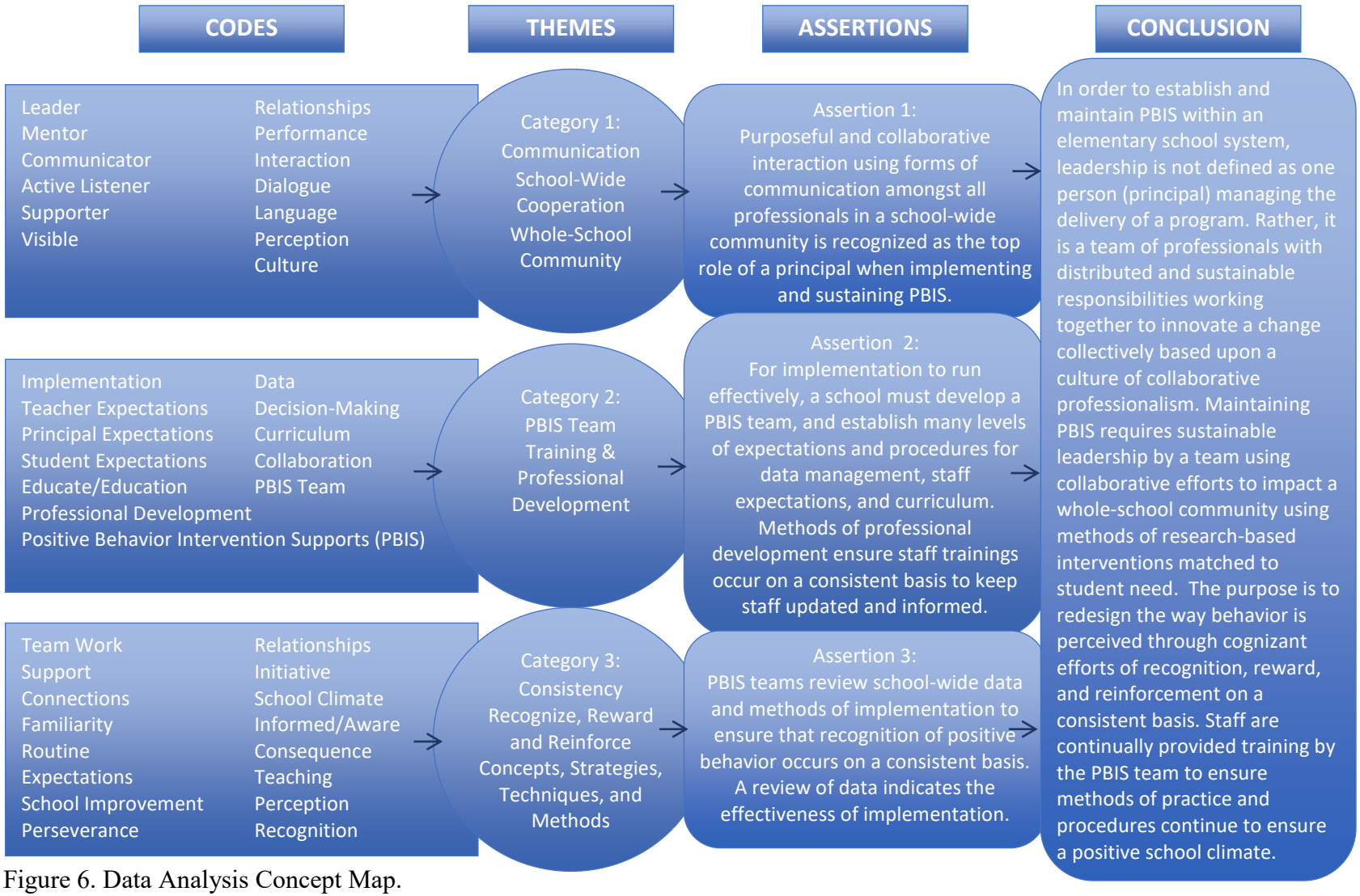


Figure 6. Data Analysis Concept Map.

Interpreting Findings

Nastasi (2013) stated, "The primary purpose of interpretation is to make sense of the data in order to answer research questions, develop or inform theory, contribute to the body of existing knowledge, solve real-world problems, or contribute to practice and policy decisions" (p. 348-349). Interpretation of the findings from this case study will be discussed in detail in Chapter V of this dissertation.

Verification of Findings

"Validating [or verifying] findings means that the researcher determines the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as member checking or triangulation" (Creswell, 2015, p. 259). Creswell (2015) identified three ways to establish validity: "triangulation, member checking, and auditing" (p. 259).

- Triangulation—checking the accuracy of data by using multiple data sources.
- Member checking—When a researcher asks participants to review transcripts and notes for accuracy. Participants are involved in establishing accurate descriptions of the context of a study, in substantiating themes, and in rendering opinions on accuracy of and interpretations of data.
- External audit—have someone not involved in a study read through the study and evaluate or report on their impressions of the study. They usually answer questions like: "Are the findings grounded in the data?" or "Are inferences logical?" (Creswell, 2015, p. 260)

Triangulation. I used three data collection methods to insure the internal validity of this ethnographic case study. "A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence" (Yin, 2014, p. 119). According to Yin:

> The use of multiple sources of evidence in case study research allows a researcher to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues. However, the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of *converging lines of inquiry*. The desired triangulation follows from the principle in navigation, whereby the intersection of different reference points is used to calculate the precise location of an object (Yardley, 2009). Thus, any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a similar convergence. (Yin, 2014, p. 120)

"Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals . . ., types of data . . ., or methods of data collection . . . in descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (Creswell, 2015, p. 259). Schensul and LeCompte (2013) stated, "Triangulation of data for verification of results and the integration of qualitative and quantitative data are critical components of ethnographic research" (p. 276). Triangulation helps eliminate biases that may result from an over reliance on one data-collection method (Figure 7).

Figure 7. The Process of Triangulation.

Because in a case study approach, it is critical to continually gather data from multiple sources to ensure a qualitative in-depth study, I used multiple interviews, observation notes, field notes, and an analysis of school documents to clearly describe how perceptions about the principal's role defined how PBIS had been established and maintained in an elementary school setting. Using triangulation, I recorded my thoughts and compared my data to PBIS expectations, helping me identify if what was being said in the interviews (interview transcriptions), corresponded to what I was seeing (observational data), and why this was all happening (documents/policies/district initiatives).

To further ensure validity, I constantly reviewed my observation notes, transcribed interviews, field notes, and documents. After coding and analyzing the data, I could trace my themes back to my raw data. The themes that emerged could be seen across multiple sources of data including interviews, observations, and documents. This is a good example of how triangulation of data may prove the data is accurate.

Member checking. To do this, I asked participants to read through the transcripts and observation notes and check for accuracy.

External auditing. Finally, I was able to conduct an external audit for validity. Several times during my research and analysis process, my advisor and another dissertation student reviewed my codes and themes and the processes I used to obtain them. Copies of interview transcripts were emailed to my advisor. Results of coding each question were emailed to my advisor for immediate feedback and validation.

Summary. Using the same interview protocol with all of the respondents made it possible for me to feel confident about the internal validity of the data. I made sure to follow specific steps in the collection of data, analysis of data, and in checking for accuracy. I used three different data collection techniques: interviewing, observation, and review of official documents to be sure data was triangulated, therefore maximizing accuracy of the data. I conducted member checking with the participants to ensure I correctly documented my participants' perceptions. Finally, I conducted an external audit by having my advisor and a fellow student double check my findings and procedures to ensure accuracy. Making sure data collected was triangulated allowed me to move on to the next step of data interpretation – data presentation and dissemination (Nastasi, 2013). Using well tested procedures during the analysis process helped me to be prepared to

accurately interpret emergent codes, categories, patterns, and themes and then answer the research questions posed within this ethnographic case study.

Researcher's Background and Subjectivities

It is difficult for me to judge what effect, if any, I had on the research setting or any of my participants. Participants knew I was a doctoral candidate and that the interviews they were giving would become data for my doctoral dissertation. All individuals I interviewed did so voluntarily. Our conversations (i.e., the interviews) were relaxed; and I judged, based on the kinds of things they were willing to discuss, that the interviewees were being honest and open with me. I also felt that, overall, the staff were willing to conduct an honest interview with me. As the researcher, I attempted to consciously set aside my own beliefs and feelings about the purpose of the study.

Based on my years as a practicing professional in education, I approached each interview with an open mind with the intent to hear honest voices, reflections, and lived experiences. In addition to gathering data, my experience as an educator also influenced my research design and interpretation. Throughout this study, I used a journal to collect my own thoughts as I continued to process information gathered and analyzed. In this way, I became aware of and was able to reflect upon my biases. As an educator with 18 years' experience, I needed to be very cautious that my own views did not affect the conclusions that emerged from this study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics are "principles that govern interactions between and among people and with regard to their relationship with their surroundings. Ethics underpin the values, norms and rules that dictate how people should act so as not to be harmful to others"

(LeCompte & Schensul, 2015, p. 2). Ethical principles for this study were taken into consideration as I took the role of a researcher very seriously; I attempted to conduct myself in a professional manner, used professional language, and acted in a manner that reflected the type of behavior expected of a doctoral student. Information collected was kept confidential and stored in the principal's office of the school where I conducted the study, away from any staff member of the school. I dressed in a professional manner in compliance with the school's dress code and the expectations of my university for what the role of a researcher representing the university should be for this particular study. Research behavior is shaped by requirements that investigators act in ways that do as little harm as possible to the individual people or groups that they study. Ethnographers, in particular, work directly with people and consequently cannot do their work without understanding how to address these considerations in the context of what constitutes appropriate behavior both in their own culture and in the culture and setting being studied. Lunch was eaten in the teacher's lounge, but minimal contact and comments were made so as not to engage with the study participants in a social manner.

Summary

Chapter III reviewed the research design of this study including: qualitative methods, case selection, data collection, data analysis, verification of findings, researcher background and subjectivities, and ethical considerations. This study utilized semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed and coded to provide an in-depth examination of a principal's, certified staff's, and classified staff's expectations regarding the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) in a school. An ethnographic case study approach was used,

referencing literature on the PBIS framework, implementation of PBIS, and the overall effects of PBIS on the culture in an elementary school setting.

My data collection and analysis were guided by steps described in this chapter in order to maintain the accuracy of the data and the validity of the study. Through strong research design and implementation, the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports was explored in depth within this ethnographic study. I was careful to follow research protocols to ensure the validity of the results.

Description of Next Chapter

In Chapter IV, findings from this case study will be presented and interpreted. Themes which emerged from the data collected will be discussed. The data is summarized in narrative form according to six themes identified during coding, processing, and analyzing of data.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study was to understand the role of an elementary school principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS by analyzing three types of data: transcripts from interviews, notes from observations, and documentation. After thorough data analysis and continual reflection, I captured perceptions, viewpoints, and understandings of both certified and classified staff in one North Dakota elementary school in the process of implementing PBIS. This section is organized by eight broad themes which emerged from the data, a result of the analytic process of triangulation: (a) school-wide cooperation; (b) consistency; (c) recognize, reward, and reinforce; (d) training and professional development; (e) whole school community; (f) concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods; (g) PBIS team; and (h) communication.

Thematic Findings

The findings from semi-structured interviews of both certified and classified staff consistently pointed to these eight themes identified in the previous paragraph. These findings were further validated during the analysis of observational data and authentic school documents. To examine each interview in depth and to determine whether or not a theme was evident within an interview, each of the eight themes were color coded and highlighted within each interview transcript. The illustration in Figure 8 provides an example of the color-coding technique used to represent emerging themes from each

interview. Each theme is represented by a different color: (a) school-wide cooperation – red; (b) consistency – lime green; (c) recognize, reward, and reinforce – light blue; (d) training and professional development – pink; (e) whole school community – dark blue; (f) concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods – purple; (g) PBIS team – yellow; and (h) communication – gray.

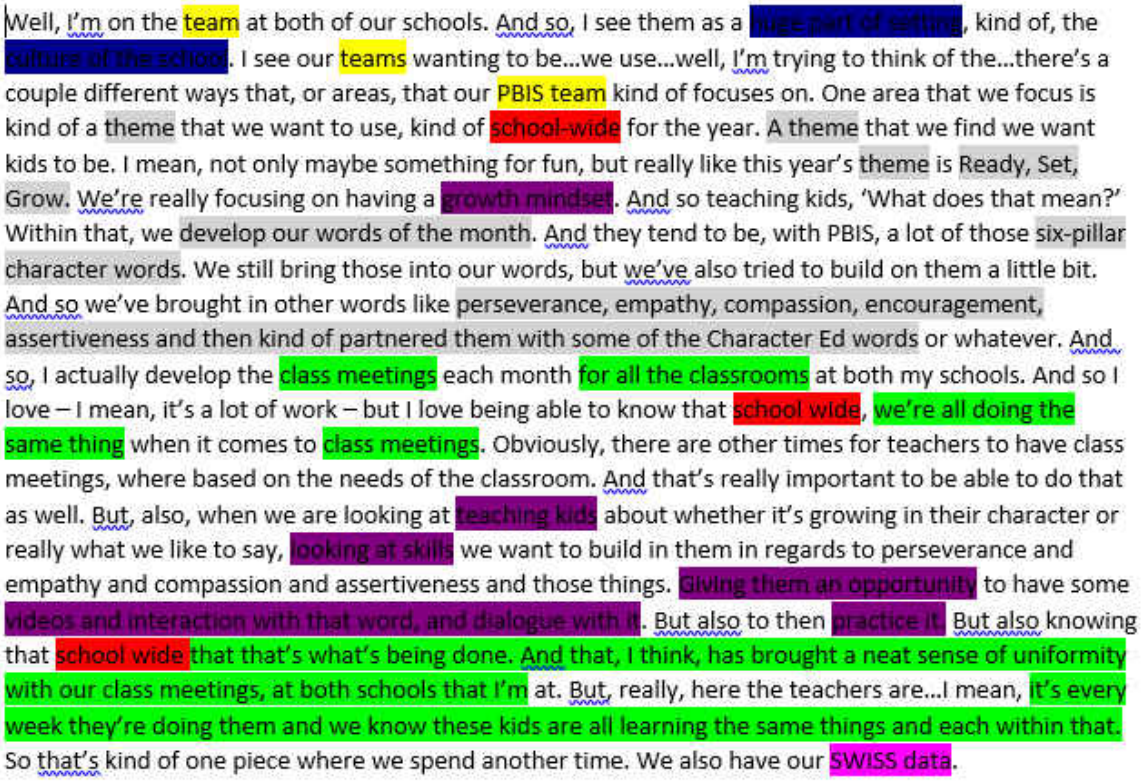

Well, I'm on the team at both of our schools. And so, I see them as a huge part of setting, kind of, the culture of the school. I see our teams wanting to be...we use...well, I'm trying to think of the...there's a couple different ways that, or areas, that our PBIS team kind of focuses on. One area that we focus is kind of a theme that we want to use, kind of school-wide for the year. A theme that we find we want kids to be. I mean, not only maybe something for fun, but really like this year's theme is Ready, Set, Grow. We're really focusing on having a growth mindset. And so teaching kids, 'What does that mean?' Within that, we develop our words of the month. And they tend to be, with PBIS, a lot of those six-pillar character words. We still bring those into our words, but we've also tried to build on them a little bit. And so we've brought in other words like perseverance, empathy, compassion, encouragement, assertiveness and then kind of partnered them with some of the Character Ed words or whatever. And so, I actually develop the class meetings each month for all the classrooms at both my schools. And so I love – I mean, it's a lot of work – but I love being able to know that school wide, we're all doing the same thing when it comes to class meetings. Obviously, there are other times for teachers to have class meetings, where based on the needs of the classroom. And that's really important to be able to do that as well. But, also, when we are looking at teaching kids about whether it's growing in their character or really what we like to say, looking at skills we want to build in them in regards to perseverance and empathy and compassion and assertiveness and those things. Giving them an opportunity to have some videos and interaction with that word, and dialogue with it. But also to then practice it. But also knowing that school wide that that's what's being done. And that, I think, has brought a neat sense of uniformity with our class meetings, at both schools that I'm at. But, really, here the teachers are...I mean, it's every week they're doing them and we know these kids are all learning the same things and each within that. So that's kind of one piece where we spend another time. We also have our SWISS data.

Figure 8. Partial Transcript of Interview Color-Coded by Theme.

Table 15 summarizes data from interviews of all certified and classified staff, as well as the principal who participated in this study.

Table 15. Common Themes Referenced Among Participants' Interviews.

Interview #	School-Wide Cooperation	Consistency	Recognize, Reward, & Reinforce	Training & Professional Development	Whole School Community	Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, & Methods	PBIS Team	Communication
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
7	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
9	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
12	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
13	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
18	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
19	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

"Horizontal analysis" took place by analyzing each interview looking for common phrases or words that represented the meaning of each theme, which corresponded to horizontal data as represented on each numbered interview in Table 15. For each theme, I determined whether that theme had been represented by phrases or words from an interview. If the theme had been addressed in an interview, that theme was assigned a "yes" response in Table 15. If a theme was not addressed in an interview, that theme was assigned a "no" response in Table 15. All "no" responses were noted by highlighting them in red. "Yes" responses showed which interviews represented each theme. When an interview transcript contained a significant number of "no" responses, I took time to reflect on that staff person's position within the participating school and years of employment that person had with their school or school district. This provided me with insight as to that particular employee's familiarity with PBIS and a principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS.

Interview Participant #11 and #18 each had five "no" responses. In analyzing interview responses and the position each participant had within the district, and years participants had worked within the participating school, results from Interviews #11 and #18 indicated the after-school coordinator and special education para might have been unfamiliar with PBIS.

A "vertical analysis" took place to analyze how many staff were familiar with each theme of PBIS. For example, for the theme of "PBIS Team," words or phrases often associated with this theme were "team," "committee," or "group." If these terms were not spoken or referenced at any point during an interview, or the principal's role was defined as "leader" with no further mention of a team, committee, or group, a "no" indicated the

theme of “PBIS Team” had not been mentioned during the interview. The theme “PBIS Team” had eight “no” responses indicating that 40% of staff (8 of 20 participants) were unaware a principal was part of a PBIS team, rather than just a school leader. Table 16 indicates number of times each theme was not mentioned during interviews.

Table 16. Number of Interviews Each Theme Was Not Mentioned.

Theme	Number of Interviews Theme Was Not Mentioned	Percentage of Interviews Theme Was Not Mentioned
Theme #1: School-Wide Cooperation	3	15%
Theme #2: Consistency	5	25%
Theme #3: Recognize, Reward, & Reinforce	5	25%
Theme #4: Training & Professional Development	2	10%
Theme #5: Whole School Community	5	25%
Theme #6: Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, & Methods	2	10%
Theme #7: PBIS Team	8	40%
Theme #8: Communication	0	0%

The most commonly mentioned theme, where *all* respondents mentioned words or phrases representing that theme, was communication. Communication was mentioned in some way at each interview. This meant that communication methods such as verbal and nonverbal communication were discussed during every interview indicating that one role of a principal in the implementation of PBIS is a communicator. Themes were found in

Table 17. Common Themes Referenced During Observations.

Subject(s) or Environment Being Observed	School-Wide Cooperation	Consistency	Recognize, Reward, & Reinforce	Training & Professional Development	Whole School Community	Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, & Methods	PBIS Team	Communication
Principal	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Students	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Staff	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Classroom Environment	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
School Environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
PBIS	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

one-on-one interviews, but were also apparent during observations (Table 17). During observations, I took detailed notes using adjectives and descriptive words on what certified and classified staff, as well as students, were doing and saying in all environments of the school. Attending a professional development session, class meetings, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings further validated evidence of the accuracy of emerging themes as staff and students were witnessed working together to maintain a collaborative school wide community.

A horizontal and vertical analysis took place to identify a consistent set of themes during observations. As noted in Table 17, students were not observed to be aware of trainings and professional development nor a PBIS team. Observations that took place within classrooms also did not indicate school-wide cooperation, trainings or professional development, evidence of a school wide community, or presence of a PBIS team. As noted in Table 17, the theme of "trainings and professional development" was consistently absent as no trainings or professional development sessions were observed during the research process. These findings reflect what was observed within one elementary school setting, which included classrooms, the main office, hallways, meeting rooms, the lunch room, and a gym.

To triangulate data, I also used authentic school documents as evidence to support what I was hearing through interviews and witnessing through observations. These documents were analyzed for content and meaning by reducing information and text to codes. In this case study, the documents contained evidence of themes found in interviews and observations (Table 18).

Documents containing PBIS information required PBIS to be used cooperatively amongst all staff school-wide. Trainings and professional development continued to teach staff necessary components of PBIS to ensure consistency and fidelity in use of research based PBIS approaches and techniques. Communication amongst staff, the PBIS team, and leadership was a key component to the establishment and maintenance of PBIS, therefore indicating PBIS information was consistent across all themes. School policy documents did not specifically state types of concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods schools have been required to establish and maintain PBIS; however, use of

PBIS is written in the school district's mission and vision statements and included within the school's handbook.

Table 18. Common Themes Referenced Within Authentic School Documents.

Documents	School-Wide Cooperation	Consistency	Recognize, Reward, & Reinforce	Training & Professional Development	Whole School Community	Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, & Methods	PBIS Team	Communication
PBIS Information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Curriculum	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Checklists/ Procedures	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student Expectations	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Forms/ Reporting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communication/ Notifications	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Schedules/ Scheduling	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Themes are explained in greater detail with evidence from each data source in the following sections.

Theme 1: School-Wide Cooperation

Table 19 shows how three different data types support the same theme – school-wide cooperation.

Table 19. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 1 – School-Wide Cooperation.

Theme: School-Wide Cooperation		
Interviews: "Everybody's willing to help." "Everybody's willing to work together for the betterment of the student." "Evident of how we treat each other, not only when situations are positive and negative but also during the aftermath and the support that's there." "I can count on teachers to have your back, which is important. Principal to have your back." "Everybody's on board with everything. We want to do what's best for kids. Everybody, you know, we're trying to do the right thing and the newest things-kind of those new things that are coming out."	Observations: Staff Meetings Hallway Responses from Staff to Staff Classroom Responses from Staff to Students Monthly Assemblies in the Gym Dialogue Body Gestures Language Spoken of Staff Procedures Verbal & Nonverbal Correspondence	Documents: Vision Statement: "[The school district] will be a place where all stakeholders collaborate to achieve academic and co-curricular excellence, providing an environment, which encourages productibity, diversity and global awareness." #2: Public School's Vision: "Teachers collaborate professionally and facilitate learning." #3: Leadership: "Leaders empower stakeholders and promote collaboration in an effort to facilitate the ongoing positive transformation of the school district."

The first theme that emerged from the data was "School-Wide Cooperation." Cooperation has been defined as "an act or instance of working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit" ("Cooperation," 2018, para. 1). Because of the frequency staff members reported on concepts relating to cooperation, and through triangulation of data, it was evident that one of the principal's roles was establishing cooperation school-wide, and this is a critical component to the establishment and maintenance of PBIS. One certified staff member reported:

> And really establishing that sense of unity where we're all kind of on the same page. And I feel like that is such a huge key of why I feel like being at [name of school] is successful because we're interacting with kids; we're all on the same page. We're really working on common language and a common understanding in that way.

Another staff member added that "everybody seems to just kind of mesh together." Within this theme, codes such as: *feelings, perception, community, cooperation, collaboration, trust* and *respect* were found across interviews, observations, and school documents.

In this theme of school-wide cooperation, *everyone*/*everybody*/*every person* was mentioned 16 times when asked to describe the culture of the school. This was also evident in observations, and in documents. Staff felt that everyone/everybody/every person "kind of knows each other" or "make the school feel a bit more personal." One teacher shared, "Everybody's willing to help. Everybody's willing to work together for the betterment of the student." This was also evident during observations where the principal engaged in dialogue with a staff member that involved specific ways to problem

solve for a particular student. Cooperative efforts were also witnessed during breaks in the teacher's lounge with staff engaging and interacting with each other via dialogue and in ways of cooperation through assistance with utensils, chairs, and beverages.

Cooperation was also evident when the principal was observed in many situations assisting staff using positive dialogue and offering sentimental advice to specific staff members requesting further assistance for student behaviors. In response to a question to describe the culture of the school, the principal stated:

> I think, like frame wise, everyone lens wise, people see behaviors very similar. I think culture wise our district rate as, just as staff, we're really trying. We talked about words we don't say anymore. Like we don't say "naughty." We don't say "fit," or "time-out," even. We've had to say "reset in composure." "Dysregulated," instead of "fit," or sometimes there are rages with our ED kids, that [are] more appropriate sometimes.

She added to this concept of school wide cooperation, "There is a lot of common language. I didn't want kids hearing different things in different places. We have all these layers that make, I think, just a strong system inside." Both certified staff and classified staff shared the perception that cooperative efforts were currently taking place at the time of their interviews and were effective in the implementation of PBIS. As one teacher reiterated, "I feel like we all work together. . . . I can go ask one of the teachers for something and feel comfortable asking them, and same with the kids."

In reviewing school documents, the term "collaboration" was used in the school's vision statement. Although collaboration and cooperation are often used interchangeably, collaboration often refers to people working together towards a single goal, while

cooperation refers to people performing together towards a common goal. For this particular study, I used the term "cooperation" to describe a common theme, as I witnessed individuals performing in an elementary setting towards a common goal to improve student behaviors. However, the term collaboration is addressed in the district's vision statement as follows: "[The school district] will be a place where all stakeholders collaborate to achieve academic and co-curricular excellence, providing an environment which encourages productivity, diversity, and global awareness." According to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (n.d.), establishing commitment is one of four critical components of the "implementation with fidelity outcome" of PBIS, meaning the outcome of implementing PBIS is successful to the extent it was intended to be.

When triangulating data to determine emerging themes, one could confuse "school-wide cooperation" with "whole school community." The difference between the two is that school-wide cooperation refers to cooperative efforts on behalf of all members within one particular school working together. Whole school community addresses the concept that members of the school dynamic are working as a community, each doing their own part for the betterment of the group. For example: When analyzing interview data, I was looking to see if the term "cooperation" was being referenced versus "community." Does PBIS involve a whole school community? Or rather, is PBIS a function of school wide collaboration? It is important to elaborate on the difference between the two.

Theme 2: Consistency

Table 20 shows how three different data types support the same theme – consistency.

Table 20. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 2 – Consistency.

Theme: Consistency		
Interview: "We don't say, 'fit,' or 'time out' even. We've had to say 'reset in composure.'" "I think, like frame-wise, everyone lens-wise, people see behaviors very similar." "One thing I've noticed about [the participating schoo] is that everyone kind of speaks the same language, and I think that has a big part to do with like the PLCs that we've had, our leadership, the principal has a big part of that." "We speak the same language, that we have, benefits the kids."	Observations: Principal is visible in the hallways, classrooms, gym, and lunchroom on a daily basis for positive reinforcment. Students are active in current day-to-day activities that take place within the school. Staff responds to student comments. Staff responds to student behaviors.	Documents: Proactive systematic approach School Handbook: Promote practices, which attract and retain high quality staff. Reporting Techniques

The second theme that emerged was "Consistency." Throughout interviews and observations, another role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS that became apparent was establishing and maintaining consistency throughout the implementation process of PBIS. Merriam Webster gives one definition of consistency as "harmony of conduct or practice with profession" ("Consistency," 2018, para. 3b).

The concept of consistency defines the attribute that staff must adhere to certain expectations outlined in school policies and supported by administrators such as principals and superintendents. Concepts of common language and common procedures used on a consistent basis were known elements in this case study as language and communication were referenced frequently during interviews, but not observed consistently as being practiced by all staff. When reviewing school documentation, the term "consistency" was not used within the documentation. For example, the school's vision statement was written as follows: "In an exemplary school district, all K-12 students must have access to engaging curriculum that stimulates student thought inquiry. Where possible, it should be constructed and inspired collectively by teachers and students." The term "consistently" is not specifically included here. Therefore, the word consistently was not spoken, or read, but rather, the practice of doing things consistently was noted during observations, and a prevalent underlying concept within school culture. The theme of consistency emerged from codes which included *consistency, familiarity, expectations, routine, performance, priority*, and *procedures*.

Procedures using words like "Right On Target" to recognize positive behaviors and "Below the Line" to address negative behaviors were reported frequently during interviews. The desire to remain consistent in reporting behaviors was also addressed in

the school's handbook addressing the year's goals/initiatives. The handbook clearly stated, "Make sure you have self-control slips in your classroom, office or desk."

Further review of documentation revealed a PBIS Teacher Expectations Checklist was provided to all teachers to ensure consistency in following proper steps of reporting student behavior and in understanding a teacher's role in PBIS. Figure 9 outlines expectations of teachers to ensure consistency in reporting and coping with student behavior.

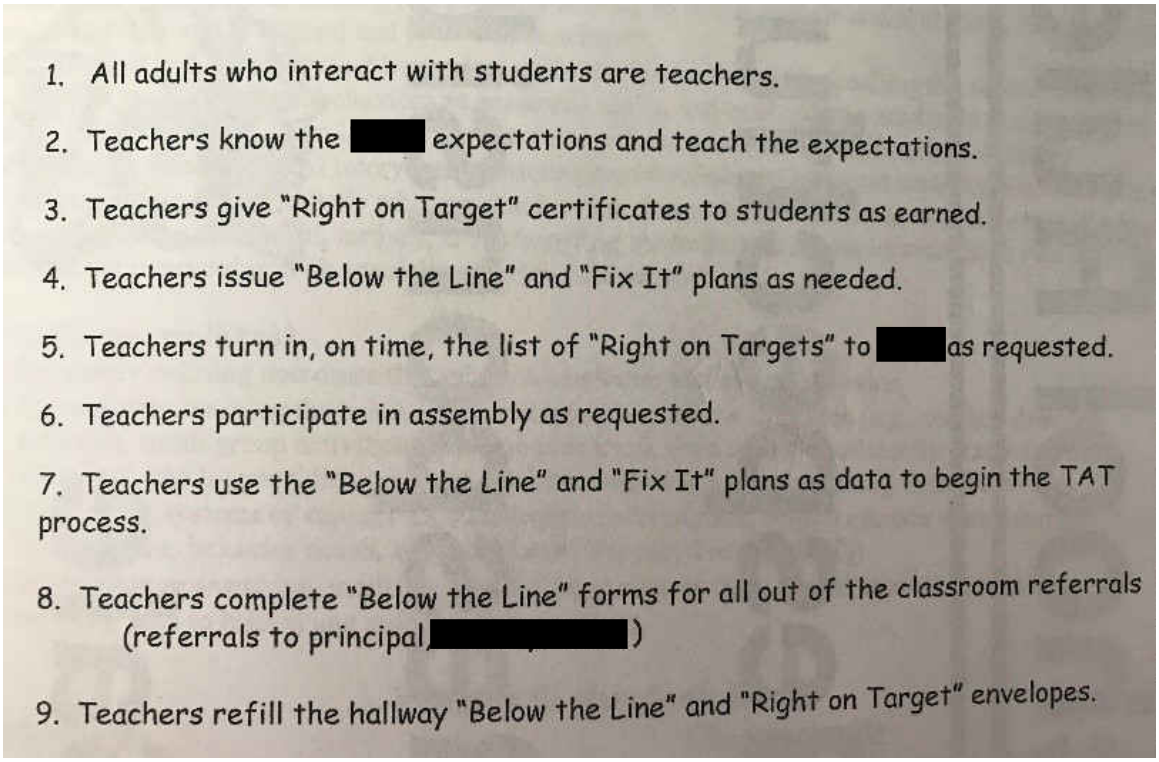


Figure 9. Picture of PBIS Teacher Expectations.

This desire to maintain consistency was evident during several one-on-one interviews. One classroom teacher stated:

> So we have our "Right On Targets" that we utilize with our PBIS. Every classroom has it, and it's really just looking for times that we see kids going

> above and beyond. Really what we want to do within the school is to encourage the positive behavior that we see in kids. Believing in that whole 4:1 ratio of the positive that kids need – we all need as human beings – in relation to the things that are said and done to us. We have "Below the Lines," which are basically a place to record negative behavior, and we use SWIS data for that."

Another teacher referenced consistency by stating, "The way we talk to the children. We do a lot of the positive reinforcement. We do the 'Right On Targets' for the kids that are going above and beyond." While another teacher added, "It's really just if we all use the same language, they'll be able to pick up on that and use that and be able to communicate better with each other."

Teachers in this case study felt strongly that supporting consistency through wording in procedural expectations and by using common language was critical in the maintenance of PBIS. The principal's role in establishing and maintaining this consistency was critical, and the principal agreed, "The school needs some consistency."

Theme 3: Recognize, Reward, and Reinforce

Table 21 shows how three different data types support Theme 3 – recognize, reward, and reinforce. According to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, one definition of recognize means "to acknowledge with a show of appreciation" ("Recognize," 2018, para. 2a). Reward is defined as "to give a reward to or for" ("Reward," 2018, para. 1). And, reinforce is defined as "to strengthen by additional assistance, material, or support: make stronger or more pronounced" ("Reinforce," 2018, para. 1).

Table 21. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 3 – Recognize, Reward, and Reinforce.

Theme: Recognize, Reward, & Reinforce		
Interviews: "Huge part of the setting." "Focus of a theme we want to use." "Ready, Set, Grow" "Love being able to know that school wide, we're doing the same thing when it comes to class meetings." "Looking at teaching kids about whether it's growing in their character or really what we like to say, looking at skills we want them to build in them in regards to perseverance and empathy and compassion and assertiveness and those things."	Observations: Language Spoken Verbal & Nonverbal Responses of Students & Staff Eye Contact Right On Targets posted Procedures Presentations Various staff interactions with students Classroom Decor Flexible Seating Conscious Discipline Reset Corner in Every Classroom (Purple Chair)	Documents: School Goals/Initiatives: Self-Control Slips (Below the Line Behavior), On Targets, Class Meeting Lessons (1x/mo) Members of PBIS Team meeting consistently once a month for data review and practices/procedures review. Vision #2: "Their on going education allows them to apply new and research-based methods of instruction and guides them in meeting the various learning needs of individual students." Vision #3: "Leaders empower stakeholders and promote collaboration in an effort to facilitate the ongoing positive transformation of the school district."

It was clear throughout interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of school documents that another role of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS is the ability to recognize, reward, and reinforce positive behavior.

During observations, staff were noted to recognize positive behaviors and give students affirmation of their good behavior through common use of language. Rewards were often noted to be given both verbally and nonverbally. Verbal rewards were positive words of affirmation, whereas nonverbal rewards were given through use of "Right On Target" certificates and school mascot awards given once a month during assemblies. During the course of the research, no assemblies were observed, so I could not confirm by observation that "school mascot" awards were given out.

It was noted during the vertical analysis that five interviewees did not reference Theme 3. An assumption could be made that these staff members were (a) aware of the methods of recognition, reward, and reinforcement and failed to mention it during their interview process; or (b) unaware of the methods used by the school to recognize, reward, and reinforce positive behavior. Staff that were aware of recognition, reward, and reinforcement practices school wide made comments such as:

> Really focusing on wanting to encourage and reward behaviors that we like to see. So we have our "Right On Targets." We have our "Right On Targets" that we utilize with our PBIS. Every classroom has it, and it's looking for times that we see kids going above and beyond.

Another staff member shared:

> The team, itself, does really good things with that. Pushing that into the classroom and class meetings every month and every week they do those. I see the paper side of the "Below the Lines" and the "Right On Targets," that's run by PBIS.

A classroom teacher added:

> There's different supports for, even within the school, we have the positive things for the "Right On Targets" that kids get recognized for. At assemblies, recognizing the kids that are doing the right thing. The expectations that we have that are throughout the whole entire school that everybody is expected,[to] learn the same things.

Recognition will look and sound different when given by different staff, but the goal of PBIS is to be consistent when providing positive recognition, rewards, and reinforcement. When understanding behavior modification, positive reinforcement techniques are meant to encourage or motivate students to continue to do well. One staff member shared with me how rewards and recognition should be administered.

> Even just celebrations, that you celebrate . . . instead of staying, "Oh, good job," but maybe being more specific on what you tell them. "I really notice how you did this," or "I like how you worked hard doing this, even though we know it was difficult for you."

Training for staff was provided on social emotional learning (SEL), and book studies were provided to help staff develop an understanding of concepts, strategies, methods, and techniques that could be used to recognize, reward, and reinforce positive behavior. As one staff member stated:

> That came from [the principal] last year when we took the social emotional classes. How to really get down to that kid's level and understand them and then help them to move on to . . . not to move on, but to cope so that they can start to learn again. Because until she copes with what she's feeling in that moment, she's not going to learn. I've recognized that with the student. Until she feels like her problem has been addressed, she's not going to move on.

The codes within this theme included: *recognition, reward, positive behavior, reinforcement, consistency*, and *expectations.* This reflects understandings in educational literature at the time of this study where the concept of providing a proactive systematic approach to behavior modification designed to be responsive and moving away from a punishment-based model leads to improvement of behavior – appropriate behavior.

One staff member shared:

> I have high expectations for kids, but I have sort of a calm, quiet demeanor, and kids know I have high expectations by treating them with kindness and respect, and I have a structured environment. We have the [name of school] award here where we're acknowledging those kids every month that are always doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. "Right On Targets" and acknowledge kids that are making smart choices in a given moment. Here, we focus more on the positives, the "Right On Targets," as opposed to thinking about saying any "Below the Line" slips.

Theme 4: Training and Professional Development

Table 22 shows how three different data types support Theme 4 – training and professional development.

Table 22. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 4 – Training and Professional Development.

Theme: Training & Professional Development		
Interviews: "Wednesday Early Outs" "Guest speaker, Bruce Perry" "Meet together and go through a checklist of what the student has difficulty with." "Focus on the biggest lagging skill." "Once more people got trained, it's easier to be maintained." "New staff coming in, make sure they're up to speed on all of those things." "Even though we're changing, I think people are constantly being trained and this is how we do things here." "Ross Greene" "Book studies"	Observations: No training or professional development sessions were observed during the course of the research.	Documents: School Goal/Initative: "[Name of School] is a PBIS school. All past staff members have been trained on the PBIS philosophy as well as the Olweus Bully Prevention Model. This model is framed around teaching all students our expectations from the very start of their days at [name of school]. In addition to teaching expectations, the PBIS model involves positive reinforcers to negative corrections on a 7:1 ratio. Students change behavior by being taught, follow through, and being recognized for making positive choices. New staff members and student teachers will take part in PBIS training from our district trainer and school."

The fourth theme that emerged during data analysis was "Training and Professional Development." Theme 4 was mentioned often during this case study. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, training is defined as "the skill, knowledge, or experience acquired by one that trains" ("Training," 2018, para. 1b); professional is defined as "characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession" ("Professional," 2018, para. 1c(1)). Overwhelmingly, teachers understand that to be more effective, one of a principal's roles is to provide training teachers need – to provide professional development opportunities for teachers. Professional development helps to maintain what is expected of staff – a level of expertise within staff that also helps maintain a PBIS effectively. One staff member shared:

> Since she [the principal] is very hands on, she is actively involved in anything that does arise within the building. She's constantly making that effort to continue to bring in new professional development for us, to continue to work on different things. If something's not working, she's finding a new one, and she's introducing it. She's teaching and reteaching. She's helping and intervening.

A continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behaviors, as well as, a continuum of procedures for discouraging inappropriate behaviors can be reviewed during trainings set up during professional development days planned and prepared by the principal. Procedures for on-going monitoring and evaluation can also be reviewed during training and professional development opportunities.

One staff member shared that she used a "Conscious Discipline" book.

> I did it more like a true class meeting in my opinion. We would do activities . . . talking about that. Now here, and I know a lot of teachers love it, our counselor does like . . . she makes a flip chart for us that has videos or has discussion questions. And it's great! Teachers love it because you just literally open it up and there you go.

Another staff member added since PBIS is a district-wide initiative, trainings and professional development have come directly at the expense of the school district itself.

> A lot of the direction too has to come from the district – where the district is going with this and what they want to do. Bringing in Ross Greene next year, is that going to change, not really the philosophy, but the direction on where everybody wants to go, and how it will change.

One staff member added to this same idea by sharing that "We've done some book studies, and we did a whole year last year on Social Emotional Learning."

A desire was shared by many teachers in the interviews, and it was also evident in classroom observations and school documents, that training opportunities create systems of support for staff. Training also provides staff with methods of using data to inform and guide further decision making by taking the time to review data and understanding what data indicates. Through training and professional development opportunities, this is possible.

When asked about types of training available to staff, common statements arose including: Olweus, SWIS data, Conscious Discipline, weekly class meetings, monthly assemblies, and Growth Mindset. One staff member shared:

> There's a couple of different ways that our PBIS team focuses on. One area we focus is on a theme that we want to use, school-wide, for the year. A theme that we find we want kids to be. This year's theme is Ready, Set, Grow. Focusing on having a growth mindset. Teaching kids, 'What does that mean?"

Another staff added that, "There are other times for teachers to have class meetings based on the needs of the classroom. And that's really important to be able to do that as well."

Reviewing school documentation revealed that the schools' PBIS system is accomplished by:

1. Clearly defining outcomes that relate to academic and social behavior;
2. Explicitly teaching the behaviors you expect for various activities (teacher directed activities, small group activities, physical education, field trips), consistently practicing these behaviors, and providing constant, positive feedback when practicing these behaviors;
3. Creating systems of support for staff (resource handbook, school climate team members, behavior interventions, behavior coach, and a Building Level Support Team or BLST);
4. Creating, researching, modifying, and using practices that support student success; and
5. Using data to inform and guide decision making.

Step 2 addresses the idea that explicitly teaching the behaviors you expect and consistently practicing these behaviors begins with training and professional development opportunities.

In the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's (n.d.) *Practice Profiles for ND MTSS PBIS*, it clearly indicates that classroom expectations are aligned to school wide/district wide expectations, engage learners, and establish environments conducive to learning. Being able to engage learners and establish environments conducive to learning can be done through use of professional development opportunities by inviting guest speakers and educational researchers to speak to teachers and focus on areas of behavior management and PBIS implementation. The principal in this study explained that engaging staff in reading opportunities that provide new knowledge and participating in staff book studies and discussion has provided exciting ways to add variety to staff training.

> This year we reviewed the brain. We had a great two sessions on empathy because people do not know the difference between empathy and sympathy. Then we found a video with this gentleman, Dr. Ross Greene. We loved what he said, his philosophy, "Kids do well if they can."

She went on to add, "This year we did the book, *The Power of Our Words*, which is a responsive classroom. We did a whole book study on power of our words and just about the language we use and how we say things."

The school's handbook clearly stated, "All past staff members have been trained on the PBIS philosophy as well as the Olweus Bully Prevention Model. This model is framed around teaching ALL students our expectations from the very start of their days at [Name of the school]."

One staff member agreed:

> It's a constant effort on everybody's part. I'd say through trainings, teachers, just having that partnership together, that teamwork, that being there for each other, that's a huge step. . . . We're constantly reflecting as a staff, and we're constantly meeting and discussing it. That's crucial. Everything needs to be evaluated all the time, and if you're not doing it, you can't move forward, and you can't move backward.

The codes within this theme were: *training, professional development, book studies, presentations/presenters/authors, meetings,* and *staff development.* These codes came together to form the theme of "training and professional development" as a way to develop the overall concept that PBIS requires teachers to understand what PBIS is, how it works, what their role in PBIS is, and what they can do to maintain PBIS and help their students be successful, not just academically, but behaviorally and socially as well.

Theme 5: Whole School Community

Table 23 shows how triangulating three different data types validates and supports Theme 5 – whole school community. The theme of a whole school community was apparent in all aspects of this case study. Merriam Webster has defined community as "a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society" ("Community," 2018, para. 1c). The community discussed in Theme 5 addresses individuals employed by the particular school district that participated in this study. Interviews, classroom and meeting observations, and school documents all supported a shared perception that school wide, there must be a common purpose and approach to discipline within the whole school community.

Table 23. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 5 – Whole School Community.

Theme: Whole School Community		
Interviews: "Culture is one of community." "Everyone kind of knows each other." Smallest elementary school in the district." "Very tight knit community." "Culture is supportive." "Fun group of kids and staff." "Relaxed from my perspective."	Observations: Flexible seating Collaboration Dialogue Smiles Tone of voice Body gestures Student to teacher interaction Teacher to teacher interaction Student to student interaction	Documents: Mission Statement: "[The school district] will provide an environment of educational excellence that engages all learners to develop their maximum potential for community and global success." Vision Statement: "[The school district] will be a place where all stakeholders collaborate to achieve academic and co-curricular excellence, providing an environment, which encourages productivity, diversity and global awareness."

A principal's role in developing a whole school community is created through positive expectations and routines taught and encouraged by the principal. A principal provides active supervision, pre-corrections and reminders, and also models positive reinforcement while being an active participant in the PBIS implementation process. Codes discovered within this theme were: *connections, understanding, expectations, common language, view of students, unity,* and *passion.* These codes came together to form the theme of whole school community as a way to develop the overall concept that PBIS requires a whole school to function as a community with a common goal, working together to maintain PBIS effectively.

During interviews, teachers shared their perceptions of their principal and the role she has played in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS. One teacher shared:

> She really connects with everyone where they're at. She's understanding, yet she has high expectations of how things are done in the building, the way kids are viewed, the way kids are treated, the language that we use within the school. We've done a lot of work.

Another teacher shared the importance of establishing community as:

> I can walk through the hall and I know every kid's name, and I could say good morning to them. A lot of us try our best to, when you walk by a student or staff, say, "Good morning, how are you?" Try to just start their day off really well. We're a good little community.

Within this theme of whole school community, it was very clear that developing the school as a community of learners has been important to all staff within the school. Another staff member shared:

> You have to have their backs because we are a family. I am big into saying, "Good morning," by their name, every morning. Say goodbye. Hugs, high fives, fist bumps, something. Just so they feel like they are part of something.

In the *Practice Profiles for ND MTSS PBIS*, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (n.d.) also has addressed establishing school wide expectations, providing a foundation for ND MTSS, establishing consistent school culture (common language, expectations, experiences, and values), contributing to grade level teaching matrices so the school achieves PBIS "implementation with fidelity," and instituting a teaching matrix, created and displayed. The district mission statement has also stated, "[The school district] will provide an environment of educational excellence that engages all learners to develop their maximum potential for community and global success."

Theme 6: Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, and Methods

Table 24 shows how three different data types support Theme 6 – concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods. In an effort to collect all topics into one theme, it was noted that the terms "concepts," "strategies," "techniques," and "methods" were used interchangeably, or were used to reference the same type of meaning. According to the Merriam Webster online dictionary, concept is defined as "something conceived in the mind" ("Concept," 2018, para. 1), strategy as "a carefully developed plan or method for achieving a goal or the skill in developing and undertaking such a plan or method" ("Strategy," 2018, Kids Definition of *strategy* section, para. 1), technique as "ability to treat such details or use such movements" ("Technique," 2018, para. 1); and method as "a way, technique, or process of or for doing something" ("Method," 2018, para. 1b(1)). In other words,

Table 24. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 6 – Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, and Methods.

Theme: Concepts, Strategies, Techniques, & Methods		
Interviews: "See it every day." See Right On Targets." "Data, Keep good track." "Constantly reflecting as a staff." "May look a little different at every school." "District wide teams meet." "Olweus committee, district-wide teams meet; half a day of planning and training."	Observations: Discussions between principal and counselor Communication Follow Through Professional Advice School Procedures Classroom Procedures Conscious Discipline Strategies	Documents: School district mission statement School district vision statement Right On Targets [School Mascot] Award Classroom rules Morning meetings Posters Below the Line behavior slips

the concept of PBIS is conceived in the mind; however, strategies (methods or skills) are used as a means of positive supports (common language, face-to-face interaction, conscious discipline strategies, Right On Targets, Below the Line Slips, etc.). Technique is the ability to be able to conduct strategies in a positive and useful manner, while methods also account for processes of engaging in positive reinforcement techniques. The purpose of including these four terms into one theme is because of the similarities that define each of these terms.

The theme of concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods continually emerged throughout each interview. Overall, staff agreed that positive concepts and effective strategies need to be maintained and utilized in the day-to-day functions of a school. The principal's role is to keep staff informed of PBIS concepts, effective strategies, techniques of common language, and methods of behavior management that can be used and practiced consistently. A principal accomplishes this role through the use of training and professional development opportunities. Codes that emerged in this theme included: *procedures, character words, curriculum, Nurtured Heart language, language, Right On Targets, Below the Line slips, monthly assemblies, weekly class meetings,* and *data*.

One teacher shared:

> We develop our words of the month. They tend to be, with PBIS, six-pillar character words of the month. We still bring those into our words, but we've also tried to build on them. We've brought in other words like perseverance, empathy, compassion, encouragement, assertiveness and then kind of partnered them with

some of the character education words. I actually develop the class meetings based on the needs of the classroom. We are looking at teaching kids about whether it's growing in character or looking at skills we want them to build.

Another teacher added:

> I have established a persona with the kids, which they enjoy. A little bit of a playful back and forth banter is fun especially in second, third, fourth, fifth grades. K-1, you have to be careful and make sure you're making sure that they learn their procedures and everything. When it comes to behavior issues, especially with the boys, being a male it's a little different – a lot different probably. I have more trouble talking and disciplining girls. For boys, I can do the "act like a man" and "be a man" and "be respectful" and "don't be childish". Then they think, "Okay, I don't want to be childish. I want to be a man." Right. That's the mindset.

During our interview, the principal shared:

> This year we did the Power of Our Words, which is a responsive classroom. We did a whole book study on Power of Our Words and just about the language we use and how we say things. We had to talk about the language that we use and what we're saying. Sometimes, when we're saying things, we don't realize the perception that kids are taking away from it. So we've got all of this going on.

A fourth grade teacher and member of the PBIS team added:

> I think we have a really positive culture. One thing that I've noticed about [school name] is that everyone speaks the same language, and that has a big part to do the PLCs that we've had, our leadership, [name of principal] has a big part of that. Everybody has a growth mindset and wants to do better and wants ultimately to know that you know when we work together and we speak the same language that it benefits the kids. It makes a better learning environment for ourselves, too.

Theme 7: PBIS Team

Table 25 shows how three different data types support Theme 7 – PBIS team. This particular theme emerged from interview data and school documentation. Observational data did not provide information in regards to the PBIS team, as team members were not observed working together as a team during the course of this research. Interviews and school documents all included information leading to the establishment and implementation of PBIS created at the core of the PBIS team. This theme indicated that not only is a principal a member of a PBIS team, but is often noted to be the leader, facilitator, decision maker, and organizer of the PBIS team.

Table 25. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 7 – PBIS Team.

Theme: PBIS Team		
Interviews: "The team members are the principal, the social worker, the counselor, and three classroom teachers." "There is a district team committee." "Take a half a day of planning and training." "Building principals continue to be maintained." "Usually the principal and the counselor at each building." "Meeting now for the next two Fridays in the morning." "Team will talk about next year's planning already; what our theme is going to be."	Observations: Principal and Counselor Counselor conducting monthly meetings Classroom teacher conducting classroom meetings	Documents: SWIS Data Below the Line slips Schoolwide interventions Classroom meeting - power point presentation Right On Targets

This particular theme developed from various codes that included the terms: *committee, group, team, leader, communication, performance, facilitator, mentor*, and *decision-making/maker*.

In the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's (n.d.) *Practice Profiles for ND MTSS PBIS*, it stated, "A staff person with expertise in positive behavior support strategies, functional behavior assessment and support is on the team. The person is available to respond to requests for assistance within 3 school days, throughout the school year" (p. 3). A staff person with expertise in positive behavior support strategies could include a principal, a social worker, or a school counselor.

In reviewing data from one-on-one interviews, it was apparent that many staff knew there was a PBIS leadership team, and the role of the team was to implement and maintain the functions of PBIS school-wide. Not all staff were aware of who was on the team, aside from the principal and the school counselor. Staff that were on the leadership team shared that they were a member of the PBIS leadership team, and they shared what their role on the team was.

> We meet once a month and have an agenda where we are going through data just to see, is there anything that's popping out? Is there a student that's a "high flyer," that we haven't addressed? So going through the data from the month before. We do an assembly once a month. But generally, look at what's going well in our school, what do we need to change, how can we make it better? There's usually a group of four or five of us depending on who's not at another meeting.

Another team member shared:

> Well, I'm on the team at both of our schools. I see them [PBIS] as a huge part of the setting, the culture of the school. . . . There's a couple different ways that, or areas that our PBIS team focuses on. One area that we focus on is a theme that we want to use, school-wide for the year. A theme that we find we want kids to be.

During one interview, one staff member verified:

> On our team here, we have [name of principal], our principal. Our social worker is on it, myself, [name of school counselor], and then we have a fourth grade teacher, second grade teacher, and third grade teacher. So we have three classroom teachers and then the principal, social worker, and counselor. So, at each building, it may look a little bit different.

After asking one of the para educators at the school how she would define the role of a principal in maintaining PBIS, her response included, "She's the key person." There was no further indication of a team, committee or group indicating not all staff were aware of a PBIS team.

Theme 8: Communication

Table 26 shows how three different data types support Theme 8 – communication. Theme 8 was prevalent and mentioned in all 20 interviews. Merriam Webster has defined communication as "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior" ("Communication," 2018, para. 1a). Communication can take place through a verbal (spoken) or nonverbal (not spoken; action) method of delivery.

Table 26. Example of Triangulation of Data Validating Theme 8 – Communication.

Theme: Communication		
Interviews: "She's extremely easy to talk to." "I have no issues asking her any sort of question about anything." "Feel like I can come to her and talk to her if I need to about pretty much anything." "She's willing to listen to both sides of stories." "Meeting with teachers." "Using the same words that they use in the classroom." "Student who may not necessarily understand the concept." "The kindness chains and trying to promote good deeds and good acts and just making those bulletin boards so it's there for everybody to read all of the time and to be a part of."	Observations: Staff to staff interactions Staff to student interactions Student to student interactions Verbal and nonverbal communication Positive communication Negative communication Assemblies Phone calls Office visits Bulletin boards	Documents: MIssion Statement Vision Statement PBIS Expectations Posters Olweus Bully Prevention Model SWIS Data Right on Targets Below the Line slips Newsletter Letters home to parents Schedules Class meetings

One common theme heard from all staff members was the role of communicator. The most important role of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS appeared to be as a communicator. Codes that emerged in the theme of communication included: *feelings, perceptions, dialogue, common language, nonverbal communication, verbal communication,* and *responses.* One teacher shared, "She and I will partner together and talk about planning." Another staff member added:

> I really like [name of principal]. I could go in there and talk with her and give my opinion without being, "No, you can't say that to me." I feel safe walking in there and talking with her. She's open to ideas. She'll ask for ideas. She includes us with ideas, which is important. She has a lots of questions, but in a good way. So she's using information that she's getting to help us and to help her as a principal, also.

Communication is also presented to students in written form using posters of Right On Target expectations that include: arrival/dismissal expectations, bathroom, hallway, assembly, playground, gym, library, music, and lunchroom expectations. Schedules are also a written form of communication.

Many staff agreed that their principal has provided a means of professional development to teach staff a common language to use when interacting with students. One staff member shared:

> She's doing that. She has actually helped me personally to use language to understand what is expected from me as a staff, not just from the school, but what I can do. For her to want to take the time to do that. To be so clear and blunt, because sometimes I need that, too. For her as a principal to know what directions

> I need. She does make it personal and take the time to explain and always have a very good visual picture to paint with it, so we understand what it is – her expectations are.

Another staff member added:

> [The principal] is just very relatable and personable. Whether it's you're a staff member or it's from a parent she's talking with, or even connecting with the students, she's caring. She really connects with everyone, where they're at. She's understanding, but yet she has high expectations of how things are done in the building, the way kids are viewed, the way kids are treated, the language that we use within the school.

Non-verbal communication is also important within PBIS in how to develop classrooms that are conducive to learning and comfortable for students. One teacher shared:

> Personally, when I came over here to this school, I thought, I'm here in this room longer each day than I am at home. I want it to be when I walk in here, I want to be happy and comfortable, and I feel I want the kids to feel that, too. I want to be feeling comfortable here because I like to spend so much time here together and so wanting to make it, this classroom, a place where we want to be, and we feel comfortable.

The daily exhibition of nonverbal communication by teachers and a principal that occurs on a day-to-day basis sends a message to students about what is considered important. Students enjoy learning better from a teacher who is positive, optimistic,

encouraging, nurturing, and happy. This also stands true for a school principal and members of a school community (Kellough & Hill, 2015).

Summary

Chapter IV presented the results of the study that included eight themes that emerged from a triangulation of data. These eight themes included: school-wide cooperation; consistency; recognize, reward, and reinforce; training and professional development; whole-school community; concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods; PBIS team; and communication.

Description of the Next Chapter

Chapter V includes a summary of the findings and conclusions from this case study organized according to research questions, which guided the study. Research limitations and recommendations for educators and future research are explored. A few final thoughts are also shared.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using a triangulation of data, this qualitative case study examined "certified" and "classified" staff perceptions of the roles of an elementary principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS. The purpose of this study was to examine what role (or roles) a principal is responsible for in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS to gain a better understanding of the relationship between ideas from educational research and perceptions held by practitioners in the field.

The following research questions were developed to pursue the purpose of this research:

1. How do the expectations of certified staff and classified staff in one North Dakota elementary school define the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?
2. How does one North Dakota elementary principal define his/her role in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?
3. How does the role of one North Dakota elementary principal influence the climate in one school during implementation of PBIS?

Discussion and Conclusions

Research Question 1

How do the expectations of certified staff and classified staff in one North Dakota elementary school define the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?

In this case study, several themes emerged during data analysis concerning a principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS. During interviews, observations, and analysis of school documents, both classified and certified staff continually shared their views on the role of a principal in both establishment and maintenance of PBIS and the impact of their principal on school climate. Table 27 indicates the themes in order of most mentioned during interviews.

Table 27. Themes From Most Mentioned (Rank 1) to Least Mentioned (Rank 5).

Rank	Theme
1	Communication
2	(Two-Way Tie) Concepts, Strategies, Techniques & Methods Training & Professional Development
3	School-Wide Cooperation
4	(Three-Way Tie) Whole School Community Recognize, Reward, & Reinforce Consistency
5	PBIS Team

During interviews, one common theme emerged – communication. All participants mentioned communication, thus indicating that communication, whether verbal or nonverbal, is a significant component in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS. One staff member shared:

> In maintaining it, just continue to do the same. Just make sure she's touching base with us. We have meetings established in our calendar. We set them there on purpose, so we'd know that we have to meet. I think that's really important because we can say, "I'll meet with you." So once we are scheduled, we know we have to do it. There's tons of meetings. So, I think you're making it purposeful. That's what she does. She tries to make it purposeful for us."

The principal added:

> I'm walking in the hallway, and I hear one person say this to a kid and another person say this to a kid. PBIS always said its common language, common language. You can have common language. You can say, "Our expectations in the gym are right on target or below the line. There is a lot of common language.

During the establishment of PBIS, Baker and Ryan (2014) emphasized that an administrator should support any PBIS initiative using various forms of communication, making it evident as implementation continues, that communication is provided in verbal, written, and visual modes to the entire staff, district, all families, and the community. Baker and Ryan continued, "The building administrator also plays a key role in communicating success with PBIS to districts as well as the community" (p. 20).

Levels of communication refer to speaking at board meetings and written statements in a newspaper or on the district website. The level of communication identified in this study was limited to the scope of the research site as no methods to further investigate formal modes of communication on behalf of the principal, such as at school board meetings or in newspaper articles, were attempted. With this particular study, communication emerged as the number one role of a principal in the establishment

and maintenance of PBIS. This means that a principal openly communicates expectations of implementing change and communicates how PBIS is effectively led by a group of team leaders within a school, the PBIS team.

Themes emerged consistently suggesting staff were aware of "concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods" as well as "training and professional development" as being important aspects in the maintenance of PBIS. As one staff member shared:

> I see it being maintained because in this district – every single elementary and middle school with a PBIS team got a half day of planning and training. Our district team committee, PBIS/Olweus committee, …going to be maintained because district-wide, it's something that we are implementing. With the building principals and everything, it will continue to be maintained.

The principal added:

> PBIS has really got us started on a lot of this. . . . We're starting to go even deeper. But it always comes back, fits in the PBIS mold. Our Olweus is another. Olweus is very renowned. That's how all of our training came, it's all anti-bullying lists or bullying forms we have. We're following that model. So we use that on our PBIS team to plan things.

This case study took place in one elementary school located in eastern North Dakota. The evidence indicated staff openly shared their perceptions of their principal, the principal's role, and perceptions of their school climate. Three themes – school-wide cooperation; recognize, reinforce and reward; and whole school community – were discussed amongst many staff during interviews. One staff excitedly shared during her interview:

> We do it once a month, and what we try to think about as teachers is these kiddos that are always, so we have Right On Targets, which I catch you doing something good, or I catch you doing something nice or appropriate or kind or helpful. And so [name of school mascot] Award would go above and beyond. So say, I could give you a Right On Target every moment of every day, because there are kiddos like that. You really can acknowledge they are making smart choices all the time. They're intrinsically motivated to make smart choices all the time.

When reviewing observational data, it was noted that each teacher and various grade levels do things differently, but in accordance with PBIS strategies. As one teacher stated:

> So the Right On Targets, we do have them in our classrooms; and in fact, I wrote out two today. So what I do – different teachers do different things. Sometimes, they just walk them down at that moment. What I do is, we do it at stack and pack time, which is the very end of the day, and so they bring their Right On Target down, and they get an acknowledgement in the office, and they get a sticker and a "good job," and I think the office person will just make sure that they really read, "Oh, I noticed that you did this today. Good job. Good for you." And they get a little trinket; and in our classroom, they come back, and we give them a celebration, then finger "Ooh" or "Oh, ya" or "hot dog" or something like that, and then they get to take it home, and it's kind of cool because we had these take home folders, and they have like that plastic sleeve in there, and so often times, it's kind of caught on in my classroom where if they get one, they'll bring it home

and show it to mom and dad and instead of stick it on their fridge, they stick it in there.

One theme that emerged, but was the least mentioned during interviews, was the use of a PBIS Team. This would clearly indicate that eight staff members either were not aware their principal was a part of a PBIS team, or thought a principal is the sole person responsible for the establishment and implementation of PBIS. Some staff indicated that the principal played the role of leader. They appeared to think a principal was the communicator, and sole decision maker in the establishment and implementation of PBIS. When asked what a principal's role is in the establishment of PBIS, one staff indicated:". . . like the coordinating and the education on it. She does a lot of class trainings. Just her openness to things, I guess. And the want to implement a program like that, I guess." Another staff member shared:

> She's [a principal's] the one that keeps everything running. She's the one that decides what trainings that we need. She is always checking up to see how students are doing that are on behavior plans. And she's the one that correlates the meetings that we have for these students or one-on-one with parents or whatever needs to be done. She is the main point in the whole situation.

In addition, another staff member indicated:

> Well, I think if she gets the proper feedback from her teachers and paras, whoever is involved in the PBIS, I'm sure that she will continue going to whatever lengths she needs to go. I think she provides that for them now. She makes sure of it. Like I said, she's involved in several areas, and I know that's kind of one of her most important ones, I believe.

Staff that were aware of the existence of the PBIS team or were on the PBIS team made it evident that they were aware a principal's role included being a member of the PBIS team, and also in assisting in the decision making process of the PBIS team. One member's role was to input data into a SWIS (School Wide Information System) program. When asked how she has been identifying PBIS at her school, she stated:

> I was here when we first brought PBIS in. And it was more of a small behavior thing, I think, we looked at it as. You know, kind of on the spot, changing their behaviors and things like that. Where, you know, behaviors changed. I can even think back 5 years ago on how behaviors then seemed so big, and they are nothing compared to what they are now. So, it's been nice to kind of see, too. We've used it before to kind of pinpoint, you know, I enter in all the data. So, it's been to pinpoint, okay, this time of day is really bad consistently. Or you know, the lunch room was really a place where we had to hit hard. So, I think it's a great tool for us to kind of learn and adapt to what we needed here.

When asked about the establishment of PBIS, she later added:

> Well, it was something that was brought up by a smaller group. I think I was on a different committee at that time, and they, you know, had heard about it and went to training. And actually, as a staff, everybody was asked how they would feel about this because this would involve a lot more things. I think because it was a good program, everybody believed in it, and felt like there needed to be a change, because, you know, teachers and paras and staff were getting frustrated with things. So it gave us our clear expectations that are hung up all around the school.

So, that's where all of that came about. But it was a whole staff involvement thing so that was good.

Analyzing data from this study to compare overall staff knowledge of PBIS and its establishment and implementation process to knowledge of staff who had been at the school for longer than 2 years, or had positions where PBIS had been used, provided no equal comparison. Years in education was not a factor in knowledge of PBIS. Aside from the principal and counselor (who was new to the school), two classroom teachers on the PBIS committee had been employed at the school 13 years, and 24 years respectively; however, one employee was not familiar with full implementation details of PBIS.

In understanding the break down and rank of themes, I noticed that the top three mentioned themes: "communication"; "concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods"; and "training and professional development," as well as "school-wide cooperation" could be seen or visualized as occurring within the school. Whereas, themes of "whole school community"; "recognize, reward, and reinforce"; "consistency"; and "PBIS Team" were not as visual. Therefore, it can be theorized that much of the information obtained from interviews were comments on what staff saw happening within their school in regards to implementation and maintenance of PBIS. Staff expectations defined the role of principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS based upon what they saw, their perceptions, and knowledge of PBIS. The more knowledge a staff member had of PBIS, PBIS implementation, and maintenance of PBIS, the more apt they were to realize, understand, and see what was happening within their school community.

Implementing change in a school is a complex process, and in order for a school system to implement a systems change like PBIS requires advance planning and well

defined steps of implementation (Baker & Ryan, 2014). According to Baker and Ryan (2014), PBIS implementation is done in five stages. These stages are listed below:

"PBIS Stage 1: Exploration and Adoption" (p. 100) – In Stage 1, administrators learn more about PBIS and whether it would be a good fit for a school. Does the school need it? How could it be helpful?

"PBIS Stage 2: Getting Ready - Installing the Infrastructure" (p. 112) – This stage involves getting commitments from the district, school administration, and school staff; setting up a PBIS leadership team, and defining leadership and coach roles; setting up a data management system such as a School-Wide Information System (SWIS) or another way to track office discipline referrals; choosing a universal or school-wide social skills curriculum or other various teaching methods.

"PBIS Stage 3: Getting Going - Initial Implementation" (p. 123) – Stage 3 involves Training school staff and students, collecting baseline data, putting minimal features in place – such as teaching behavioral expectations school-wide and setting up the behavioral process. The PBIS leadership team collects baseline data and starts completing a team implementation checklist and begins setting in place action plan steps.

"PBIS Stage 4: Up and Running - Full Implementation" (p. 133) – All universal, or Tier 1, components are now operating completely. Behavioral expectations are taught school-wide and the PBIS leadership team meets on a regular basis. At this point, a school district may consider expanding PBIS to other schools.

"PBIS Stage 5: Sustaining and Continuous Improvement" (p. 141) – PBIS has become common practice, which is reflected in school or district policy and visibility. Schools have implemented systems that ensure continuous adaptation to fit local changes, while maintaining fidelity.

Data were analyzed to determine level of implementation the school in this case study was at. Table 28 clearly illustrates data supporting each level of implementation.

Table 28. Participating School's Progress in Implementing PBIS as Supported by Data.

PBIS Implementation Stage	Case Study School
1. Exploration and Adoption	-Administrators have identified that school is in need of PBIS or a similar behavior system. -PBIS is a district initiative – has district support. -PBIS could be helpful due to demographics of the student population in attendance.
2. Getting Ready – Installing the Infrastructure	-School administration and staff members have established a PBIS team. -Have been using SWIS data management system – Could be applied to PBIS system. -Have identified a curriculum and counselor has been developing lessons.
3. Getting Going – Initial Implementation	-Have set up behavioral referral process. -Team continues to collect and review data on a consistent basis for data-informed decision-making. -Some staff have been trained. -New staff not fully aware of processes and programming, so more training needed.
4. Up and Running – Full Implementation	-PBIS team meeting on a regular basis. -PBIS is being used in other schools in the district.
5. Sustaining and Continuous Improvement	-PBIS is a common practice. -Reflected in district policy. -School has not implemented continuous adaptations to fit local changes, therefore not maintaining fidelity. Indicates the school in this case study has not fully implemented Stage 5.

At the time of this study, the case study school would probably be considered at the full implementation stage (Stage 4). All components were fully operational. The PBIS team was meeting on a regular basis. Behavioral expectations were being taught school-wide with a counselor creating behavioral lessons for each classroom. I would not classify the case study school to be at Stage 5, Sustaining and Continuous Improvement. Though, PBIS was a common practice, and was reflected in district policy, and though the case study school had met some implementation requirements, some classified staff as well as new certified staff members were not fully aware of PBIS being implemented, what the school's behavior system was called, or that the school was required to implement continuous adaptations in order to maintain fidelity.

Research Question 2

How does one North Dakota elementary principal define his/her role in establishing and maintaining PBIS in one elementary school setting?

During an initial one-on-one interview with the principal, when asked about the establishment of PBIS, she indicated that it had already been established at the school prior to her arrival.

> I wish I would have found out for you the year it started in [name of participating school's city]. But, I want to say it's been 16 or some years since [another school] started. They were the first to go PBIS. And then slowly all the elementary schools came on board and went through training and got their teams and implemented all of this.

When asked more specifically about the establishment of PBIS at the participating principal's school, the principal stated:

> I think it was already established, so then it's coming in and just finding ways to tweak it, you know, too, and really meet the needs of our kids. You know. Um, a lot of these words, a lot of these terms that we're doing are things that they needed more than, you know, some of our words up there. We still talk about those words, and they all fit in, but our ones from Conscious Discipline fit so much on that needed, so I think it's watching our data and seeing what we need next, and kind of going to where the energy is for the people on the committee. I mean, if I came in and decided everything that we are going to do, "Okay, I guess we're doing this." You know, but when it's their idea, like on Friday when we start, you know, getting some of that in there, like I think mindfulness is great, but if someone else comes up with a different theme, that's what I do. I just run with wherever the energy, because I can't do all that with PBIS stuff. You know, keeping up on all that, so."

She also shared that she maintained PBIS at her school by checking data, talking with teachers, and talking with kids.

When analyzing transcripts of interviews with the principal, common phrases or words that the principal spoke of to define her role included: supportive, problem-solve, implement professional development opportunities, care-taker, communicate, approachable, non-judgmental, collaborator, and understanding.

> I think I try to be very understanding of everybody. You know, it's kids first, and I do want families to feel first, but I was want[ing] to take care of teachers. We just have a lot of things going on in our building with families and parents that

aren't understanding, and parents that aren't nice. Parents that put a lot of blame on school, sometimes, if their kids are not succeeding or something happens.

She also touched on consistency. "The school needs some consistency. . . . [describes staff] . . . so, it's like no consistency. So, that's really just some things we want to build at this team to stay." She further added:

> I guess really just trying to be supportive to everybody and helping them, like, though this. I mean, we say the people that come in. We just problem-solved this week. Go along. Approachable. I think a lot of people tell me that they, you know, they're just thankful they can come in and just say whatever, and not, you know, it's kind of like I don't judge type of thing. We're just here for the kids and here to get better, what we do. So, um, collaborative is a big one. Like, I don't just make decisions. I like to visit, with different teams, like our PBIS team. I like to have a dialogue and talk through things, and things just get refined and better and better.

Words that were not spoken directly but were referenced from the meaning of the text of the principal's interview were: listener, motivator, collaborator, and informant. The principal did not indicate she was a PBIS leader. She spoke of the PBIS committee, but not once did she use the term "leader of the committee" or "person in charge." That would indicate this principal saw her role as a member of the committee, rather than the person in charge. She talked about how she added in trainings and professional development, but she used the team's input before implementing any professional development courses or trainings.

> I want to do this girl stuff, so I get [person's name] and [person's name], and I'm like, "We need to do a class." We need to do a class because I'm walking in the hallway, and I hear one person say this to a kid and another person say this to a kid. And PBIS always said, "It's common language, common language."

During my study, I was not able to witness or be a part of a PBIS committee meeting, so I was unable to observe first-hand what was said during the principal's interview. I had no way to analyze or determine whether or not what the principal said happens during committee meetings actually happened. One thing I was able to observe were hallway conversations and interactions between the principal and students. Positive comments from the principal to students and nonverbal communication took place. When reviewing school documentation, information on PBIS policy followed by the school clearly stated that in a non-classroom setting, staff members must provide "active supervision by all staff – scan, move and interact." It was clear that the principal practiced active supervision; however, it was not observed to happen on a consistent basis. It's important that I clarify that it could be happening on a consistent basis; however, during my time at the research site, the principal was in meetings with me in the office, active within the school where I was not present, or absent from the school altogether.

When reviewing expectations on how PBIS was accomplished within the participating school, the principal was able to clearly identify her expectations and her role. The first way PBIS was being accomplished was by clearly defining outcomes that relate to academic and social behavior. These outcomes were defined for students using a Right On Target chant that was utilized at each monthly assembly. Target expectations

were posted in each distinct area of the school where students were reminded of behaviors expected in each of those settings. Target expectation posters were posted in 10 specific settings and reviewed with students often. Figure 10 is an example of a target expectation poster that was displayed in the participating school.

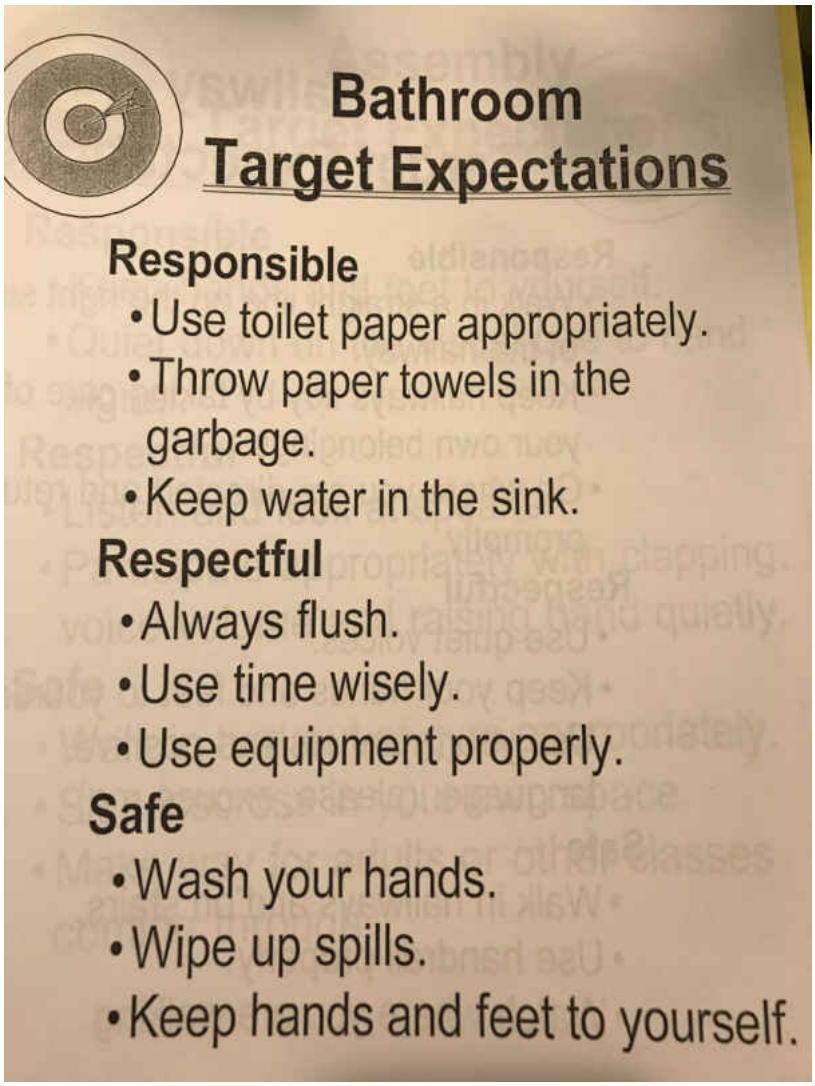
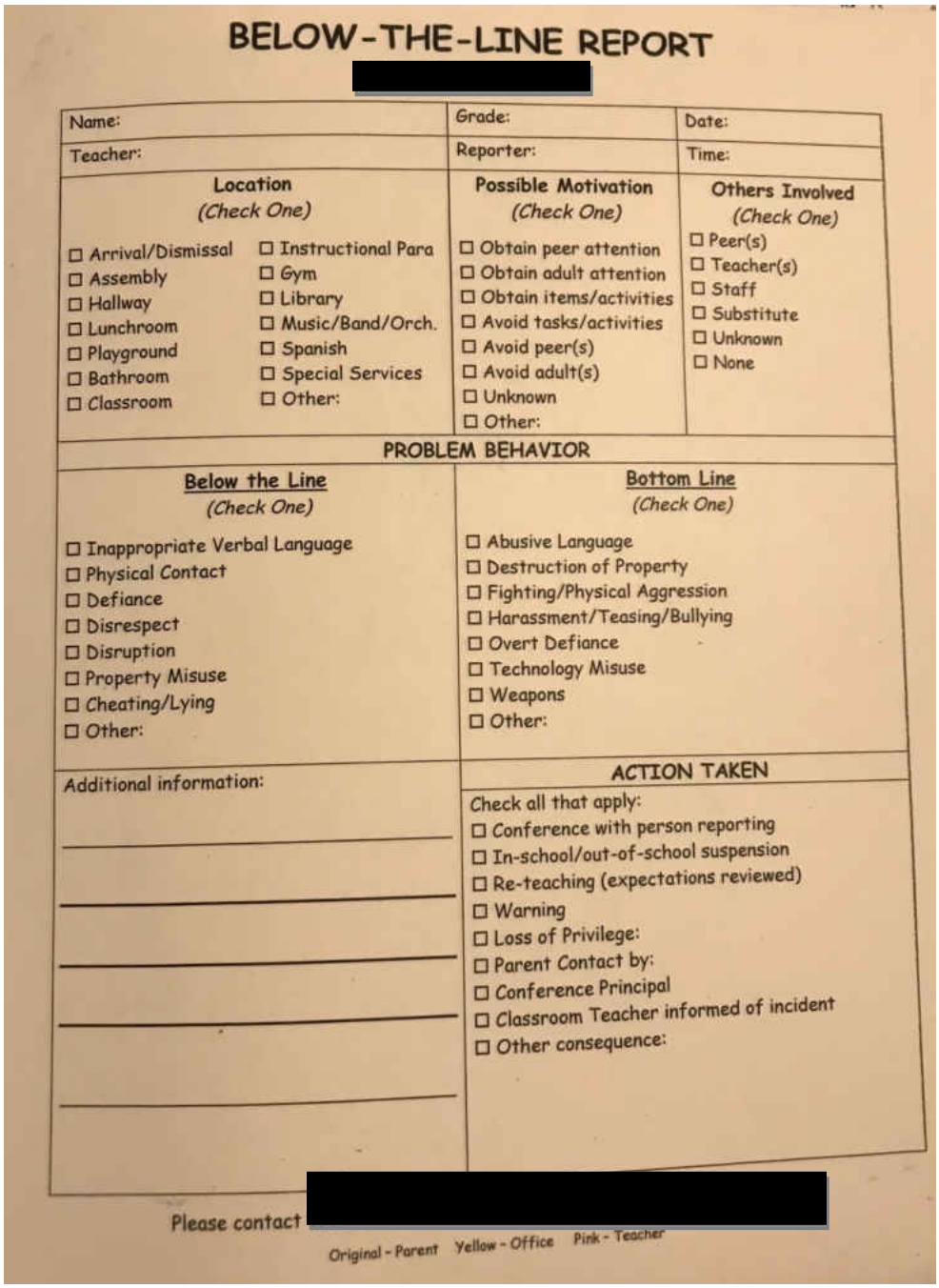


Figure 10. Target Expectations for a Bathroom.

In contrast to Right On Targets, there were Below the Line slips (Figure 11). When asked to further explain data collection, the principal stated:

Well, we have SWIS. We have the SWIS database. So, it all gets plugged in, so I could talk to [name of teacher] and say, "Could you pull up on [name of student]? So, tell me . . ." I'm going to know how many line slips he's had this year and



BELOW-THE-LINE REPORT

[redacted]

Name:	Grade:	Date:
Teacher:	Reporter:	Time:

Location *(Check One)*

- ☐ Arrival/Dismissal
- ☐ Assembly
- ☐ Hallway
- ☐ Lunchroom
- ☐ Playground
- ☐ Bathroom
- ☐ Classroom
- ☐ Instructional Para
- ☐ Gym
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Music/Band/Orch.
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Special Services
- ☐ Other:

Possible Motivation *(Check One)*

- ☐ Obtain peer attention
- ☐ Obtain adult attention
- ☐ Obtain items/activities
- ☐ Avoid tasks/activities
- ☐ Avoid peer(s)
- ☐ Avoid adult(s)
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ Other:

Others Involved *(Check One)*

- ☐ Peer(s)
- ☐ Teacher(s)
- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Substitute
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ None

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Below the Line *(Check One)*

- ☐ Inappropriate Verbal Language
- ☐ Physical Contact
- ☐ Defiance
- ☐ Disrespect
- ☐ Disruption
- ☐ Property Misuse
- ☐ Cheating/Lying
- ☐ Other:

Bottom Line *(Check One)*

- ☐ Abusive Language
- ☐ Destruction of Property
- ☐ Fighting/Physical Aggression
- ☐ Harassment/Teasing/Bullying
- ☐ Overt Defiance
- ☐ Technology Misuse
- ☐ Weapons
- ☐ Other:

Additional information:

ACTION TAKEN

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Conference with person reporting
- ☐ In-school/out-of-school suspension
- ☐ Re-teaching (expectations reviewed)
- ☐ Warning
- ☐ Loss of Privilege:
- ☐ Parent Contact by:
- ☐ Conference Principal
- ☐ Classroom Teacher informed of incident
- ☐ Other consequence:

Please contact [redacted]

Original - Parent Yellow - Office Pink - Teacher

Figure 11. A Below the Line Report Form.

> [the SWIS database] gives where it's happened and what time it was, what it was for, all that kind of stuff, so it breaks everything down and the bully thing is different. So all that data on bullying. That's where we're really finding that kids are, like they're kind of contradicting themselves inside the questionnaires. We say at every assembly that we have to help them learn that, so I think it's using that, and then perception. Our counselor has student leaders and student council things that they share, things that come up in class meetings, feedback from teachers. So, like my kindergarten teacher this weekend sent me a thing. You know, we thought it'd be fun to have more of these fun days next year type of thing and just adding in, you know, when it's the 50s day. They dress up in the 50s. You know, just a little bit of kind of to help create that culture type thing.

As a researcher, I was unable to review the SWIS data protocol or methods in which data for the SWIS database were collected and added into the database system. Had I had the opportunity to be at the research site for a longer period of time, I would have had more time to better understand the whole SWIS process. I do know Below the Line slips were used to collect data on bad behavior in students.

During our interview, the principal expanded on her additional roles. She mentioned she served on many committees. She assisted in creating an allergy handbook. She was also on a Marzano committee, and was also the chair of a math curriculum committee for the district. She helped start the Multi-tiered Systems of Support – Behavior (MTSS-B) district committee and was involved in leading book clubs across the district.

When asked about the maintenance of PBIS, the principal indicated:

> There is a lot of common language. I don't want kids hearing different things in different place[s]. So, we started a class. We were like; we are going to have common language. We are going to get people to understand how the brain works, understand social-emotional learning. My first year here, we did Conscious Discipline so that one's on here, too. Then we took Year 2 and went even farther with social-emotional. We had our sessions. We reviewed the brain. We did trauma. We did mindset. We did empathy. We had a great two sessions on empathy because people do not know the difference between empathy and sympathy. Then we found a video with this gentleman, Dr. Ross Green. We loved what he said. His philosophy, "Kids do well if they can." So, if they're not doing well, there's something in their way. So he talks a lot about lagging skills. So there's skills that a child needs and how are [we] going to teach them. And then we went to his conference – myself and [name of counselor] and [a] special education teacher.

In identifying how the principal in this study saw her role in the maintenance of PBIS, she continued to reflect on the idea that her main role was one of a supporter.

> We have teachers that are just dealing with tough kids, especially in the ED program, with compassion fatigue. Those types of things that our teachers are just kind of getting worn out, so I guess I try to be as supportive of them. I see kids in the hallway, but really it's my time to check in with the teachers. It's just getting you to be support for them.

The principal in this study saw herself as needing to also be supportive all around, To also be supportive not only of students and staff, but of parents as well.

> I just feel like there's such a different job for teachers today, and a lot of parents don't trust because things that happen, I mean even in our district where parents lose trust in teachers, you know. I just try to be supportive all around, supportive of kids.

I witnessed this supportive demeanor by the principal in many settings such as the hallway, office, lunchroom, and staff lounge. In the school handbook, it did not specifically state that a principal must be supportive; however, it did state in the school district's vision statement that the school district "will be a place where all stakeholders collaborate to achieve academic and co-curricular excellence, providing an environment, which encourages productivity, diversity and global awareness."

Another role of the principal identified by the principal was that of problem-solver.

> I really try to problem solve with kids. Eighty percent of your time is going to be with the naughty kids in your office, or whatever; and you know, it's the negative part, and that's the part I enjoy as problem solving. The counselor would help. The teacher would help. So, I guess there's a lot of thing[s] I'd like to do better as a leader, but in being in a small school where we only have a counselor twice a week, social workers, maybe a day if that, because she does many other jobs in the district. You kind of take on those things, too.

When comparing Research Question 1 to that of Research Question 2, staff expectations to the principal's expectations, I noticed some commonalities and some

differences. Staff saw their principal as a supportive leader, understanding and approachable, and the principal identified herself as a supportive leader as well. One staff member said:

> "[Name of principal] is just very relatable and personable. She's caring. She really connects with everyone. She's understanding, but yet she has high expectations of how things are done in the building, the ways kids are viewed, and the way kids are treated.

The principal shared that she implements professional development opportunities in a collaborative manner, such as book studies, presenters, and conferences. Another staff member added, "And then she's piloting the MTSSB behavior, so she's on the committee of that, which is phenomenal." This principal recognized that her involvement in district committees was benefiting her school and staff were noticing her district wide involvement in implementing new district initiatives.

The principal did not clearly state her role as being a "hard worker" or one that requires dedication, but it was very clear that the staff saw her as just that. As one special education teacher shared during an interview, "She's a hard worker. She's very dedicated to her job. I would say she puts her heart into everything she does." Another staff member added, "She's open to ideas. She'll ask for ideas. She's supportive."

During our interview, the principal did not state what specific role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS was most important. It appeared to me as a researcher each role was vitally important in successfully establishing and maintaining PBIS. Table 29 shows a comparison of the principal in this case study's perceived role in PBIS, and a principal's role in PBIS identified by five different groups of authors.

Table 29. Role of a Principal in PBIS – Comparison Between Study Results and Literature Review.

Role	AUTHORS					
	Case Study	Kellough and Hill (2015)	Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011)	Lampert (2003)	Baker and Ryan (2014)	Hannigan and Hauser (2015)
1	"run with wherever the energy"	Determine what community and supervisors want.	Standard 1: An educational leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.	Section A: Broad-based participation in the work of leadership (Assists in the establishment of groups, increases interactions amongst staff, shares authority, engages in leading opportunities.)	Actively supports PBIS	Administrator shares the research, purpose and goals of PBIS and the role of the PBIS team with the entire staff and asks staff members to state their interest in being a member of the team.
2	"checking data"	Curriculum experts	Standard 2: An educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and	Section B: Skillful participation in the work of leadership (develop a shared vision, facilitate group processes, communication, reflecting on	Publicly states support for PBIS with stakeholders: entire staff, district, and families and community	Administrator shows videos of a model of PBIS school during staff trainings to encourage staff members to be a part of the PBIS team

Table 29. cont.

Role	AUTHORS					
	Case Study	Kellough and Hill (2015)	Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011)	Lampert (2003)	Baker and Ryan (2014)	Hannigan and Hauser (2015)
2 (cont.)			instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.	practice, collaborate on Role #3 planning.)		
3	"communicate with teachers"	Caretakers	Standard 3: An educational leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.	Section C: Shared vision results in program coherence (participates with others in the development of a shared vision, asks questions, thinks about and aligns school standards, instruction, etc., review vision regularly)	Dedicates financial and practical resources to implementing and sustaining PBIS	Administrator assembles a team that includes five to seven diverse, positive and influential members who commit to implementing PBIS.

Table 29. cont.

Role	AUTHORS					
	Case Study	Kellough and Hill (2015)	Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011)	Lampert (2003)	Baker and Ryan (2014)	Hannigan and Hauser (2015)
4	"communicate with kids"	Change agents	Standard 4: An educational leader promotes the success of every student by collaboration with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.	Section D: Inquiry-based use of information informs decision and practice (engages with others in posing questions, discovers and interprets classroom and school data, communication of evidence, time for dialogue and reflection, uses evidence in the decision-making process)	Supports PBIS as a priority	Plan and attend monthly PBIS meetings for the entire school year, and the PBIS meeting adheres to the PBIS schedule.
5	supportive	Influence	Standard 5: An educational leader promotes the success of every student by acting	Section E: Roles and action reflect board involvement, collaboration, and	Identifies PBIS within the top three priorities for school improvement	Team members commit to establishing and following an agenda and norms

Table 29 cont.

Role	AUTHORS					
	Case Study	Kellough and Hill (2015)	Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011)	Lampert (2003)	Baker and Ryan (2014)	Hannigan and Hauser (2015)
5 (cont.)			with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.	collective responsibility (gives attention to classroom, encourages others to give attention to activities, attend to building relationships, encourages colleagues and parents)		for each meeting.
6	problem-solve	Instructional leader	Standard 6: An educational leader promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.	Section F: Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation (encourages reflection, uses reflective practices, demonstrates initiative, invites and supports, works with others)	Documents this priority in the written plan, newsletter, etc.	Creates a written purpose/mission statement focused on the criteria for operating PBIS.

Table 29 cont.

Role	AUTHORS					
	Case Study	Kellough and Hill (2015)	Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011)	Lampert (2003)	Baker and Ryan (2014)	Hannigan and Hauser (2015)
7	Implement professional development	Communicator		Section G: High or steadily improvement student achievement and development (works with members of the school community, teaches and assesses, provides feedback to children, talks with families, performs many roles of administrator, coach, advisor, and mentor, redesigned roles and structures to develop resiliency in children)	Attends PBIS Leadership Team meetings regularly	Select a PBIS Coach from amount the PBIS team members, making sure the coach helps facili-tate meetings, monitors the work of the team, making sure monthly meetings are being held, and follows up on commitments made by PBIS members during team meetings, researches fun ways to introduce PBIS to school staff, and provides on-going communication to the staff.

Table 29 cont.

Role	AUTHORS					
	Case Study	Kellough and Hill (2015)	Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011)	Lampert (2003)	Baker and Ryan (2014)	Hannigan and Hauser (2015)
8	caretaker	Facilitate			Shares leadership	Shares updates with the school staff at every staff meeting.
9	communication	Delegate responsibilities			Supports coach and others	
10	Approachable	Understand culture			Implements decisions	
11	Non-judgmental	Managing the school			Funds startup costs	
12	understanding	Lead the school			Ensures that the PBIS Leadership Team meets regularly	
13	Member of PBIS Team	Effective time management			Provides resources (release time, paid time, space and materials)	
14		Reflective			Encourages team to schedule meetings to present progress to others.	

Table 29 cont.

Role	AUTHORS					
	Case Study	Kellough and Hill (2015)	Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011)	Lampert (2003)	Baker and Ryan (2014)	Hannigan and Hauser (2015)
15		Recognize leadership style				
16		Lead by modeling				
17		Build and maintain a learning community				
18		Take care of support staff				
19		Create a positive work environment				
20		Collaborative leadership opportunities				

There are many similarities in the roles of a principal in general, compared to the role of a principal in establishing and maintaining PBIS. Some of the most notable similarities include:

1. Data-Based Decision Making
2. Providing Support

3. Sharing Leadership Responsibilities
4. Being Experts in Curriculum and Implementation
5. Attending Meetings
6. Sharing Visions
7. Modeling

In addition to understanding a principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS, essential components are required to implement a complete a PBIS system. In *The PBIS Team Handbook,* Baker and Ryan (2014) identified essential components of a complete PBIS system. During interviews with the principal in this study, some of these components were discussed, but not all. Each essential component is described below:

- **Funding** at the school and district level is critical. The PBIS Leadership Team develops a plan to ensure ongoing funding.
- **Visibility** is crucial to telling your story from beginning to end: to staff in your school; to your district administration; to the school board, PTO, community, and so on.
- **Political support** refers to embedding the PBIS framework into the structure of the school and district so that key stakeholders support it.
- **Policy** includes multiple levels, from revising local school policies around discipline and behavior to districtwide changes. . . .
- **Training** includes the installation of the framework initially, as well as the development of internal capacity to train new staff and students.

- **Coaching** is essential to ensure that the knowledge acquired through training is applied accurately. . . .
- **Evaluation** is a core feature of PBIS implementation and sustainability. Each school must ensure that routines for collecting and using data accurately in decision-making are established and that they become a permanent feature.
- **Behavioral expertise** is necessary; schools and PBIS Leadership Teams must have staff with the specialist knowledge and skill to apply to all tiers of intervention. (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 13-14)

Table 30 depicts the essential components of PBIS as outlined by Baker and Ryan (2014) and shows how the school in this case study utilized the eight essential components of PBIS as described by Baker and Ryan.

Table 30. Essential Components of PBIS.

Essential Components of PBIS	Case Study School
Funding	- Funding was not discussed during the interviews.
Visibility	- District administration is aware of PBIS implementation, but information provided to the school board, PTO, and community was not discussed.
Political Support	- PBIS framework has been embedded into the structure of the school and district, but not aware if stakeholders support it.
Policy	- PBIS is discussed in the district handbook. Included on the School Conduct section of the district elementary school handbook.

Table 30. cont.

Essential Components of PBIS	Case Study School
Training	- Training was discussed as professional development, but no specific reference to training new staff was said.
Coaching	- The counselor was described as the coach; the one to ensure that the knowledge applied was being applied accurately. The counselor taught lessons or created lessons for the teachers.
Evaluation	- Evaluation of staff in the implementation of PBIS was discussed during the interviews or observed.
Behavioral Expertise	- Behavioral expertise would be the counselor and the social worker. The principal discussed training sessions and books studies; attending conferences, but relies on the team (counselor and social worker) for behavioral expertise.

Research Question 3

How does the role of one North Dakota elementary principal impact the school climate during implementation of PBIS?

Using a triangulation of interviews, observations, and school documentation, the data clearly indicated that implementing PBIS in an elementary school setting impacts a school's climate. According to Loukas (2007), a school climate refers to the feelings and attitudes elicited by a school's environment that includes the following three dimensions: physical (appearance), social (quality of interpersonal relationships) and academic (quality of instruction). When interviewing 19 staff members to describe their principal, it

became apparent that positive attributes and comments from interviewees described positive relationships with their principal. Positive comments were consistently received in all 19 interviews. This would indicate that staff at this particular school felt supported by their principal in a collaborative setting that allows for various methods of expressive communication.

When asked to describe the culture of their school, comments such as, “I love it here,” “little, small school,” and “I think everybody’s on board with everything” were expressed. When looking to analyze the opposite reaction when asked to describe the culture of the school, and in conducting an in-depth review of interview responses, many staff reported only positive comments. The most noted code when analyzing these questions was “feelings.” As one staff member shared, “Evident of how we treat each other, not only when situations are positive and negative, but also during the aftermath and the support that’s there.” Another added, “I can count on teachers to have your back, which is important. And the principal to have your back.” A first year teacher shared:

> If a kid has a freak out, we’ve got staff on hand to nip it in the bud right away and procedures in place to where if it’s in the classroom and it’s happening, me and the kids just go somewhere else or exit as quick as we can if necessary. I’ve had zero complaints or negative thoughts about how things run here. It’s very smooth.

Implementing systems change by incorporating PBIS requires extensive work initially by the building principal. According to Baker and Ryan (2014),

> Building administrators are key to successful implementation of PBIS. Research clearly demonstrates how important administrative support is for implementing and sustaining PBIS. What’s more, new research on staff investment in PBIS tells

> us that administrator influence is essential if we want staff to adopt PBIS initiatives. (p. 19)

Schools trying to implement PBIS without the assistance of a building administrator would find it difficult to implement the essential components required of PBIS. Commitment and support from an administrator is the backbone needed to engage staff in using PBIS and related procedures. Administrators can show a commitment to change by implementing PBIS and emphasizing the initiative as top priority. As a member of a PBIS team, an administrator's involvement in PBIS keeps implementation flowing in regards to decision-making and day-to-day processes of effective implementation. Successful implementation relies on a building principal. "The principal guides the school in meeting yearly improvement plans and district level initiatives. Principals inevitably face teachers and other staff members who have philosophical objections to PBIS or who wonder if PBIS is even necessary" (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 20).

Challenges during implementation of PBIS often point back to a principal, rather than a PBIS team, which requires a principal to take an active leadership role in PBIS implementation. Principals need to be committed to the vision of PBIS, and openly communicate and model their commitment to staff members. Principals also need to hold staff accountable for implementing interventions, and staff members need to hold their principal and their PBIS team accountable for implementation of PBIS.

The ideal size and length of service of a PBIS team, according to Baker and Ryan (2014), is based upon an organization. It is recommended that team members be a part of the PBIS team for at least 3 years, long enough to be effective and fluent with practices, training, and decision making. A principal should be proactive in determining who, how,

and when members should assume training to keep up with changes in student behaviors, school environment, and student demographics.

Baker and Ryan (2014) also stated who should be on the team. In their *PBIS Team Handbook,* they stated:

> Because PBIS is a true schoolwide initiative, the team should be made up of a cross-section of school personnel and community members, including:
>
> - general and special education teachers
> - behavior specialists
> - paraprofessionals
> - school psychologists and social workers
> - counselors
> - office staff
> - hall monitors
> - librarians and media specialists
> - athletic coaches and directors
> - custodians
> - food service staff
> - bus drivers
> - students
> - parents and guardians. (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 23)

For the school participating in this case study, members of the PBIS team were: the principal, the counselor, the social worker, and three classroom teachers. In this case

study, the administrator took on the role of inviting staff interested in being a part of the PBIS team to be on the team. The administrator helped identify who would qualify to effectively represent the school and who would work well together. It is also important that someone on the team possess the ability to provide behavioral expertise for purposes of moving through the three tiers (primary – schoolwide, secondary – more intensive, and tertiary – individualized behavior plan) of a PBIS system. A PBIS team should identify someone who will take on the responsibility for entering data and handling data tasks, such as a PBIS assessment coordinator. The case study school did have someone assigned to enter data and collect data reports for their monthly meetings.

PBIS meetings should start and stop on time, and the facilitator of a PBIS team runs the meetings. Notes should be taken on action steps needed. Everyone should feel they contribute to the team, and each member should get a turn to speak. Items discussed at PBIS monthly meetings should be confidential – not shared outside the PBIS team. During the duration of this case study, I was not able to witness a PBIS team meeting. According to Baker and Ryan (2014), "PBIS team members model respect, model learning, and model responsibility" (p. 25). The Florida PBIS information systems network has a whole set of resources to help PBIS teams. Baker and Ryan recommended 10 tasks for a successful PBIS team.

1. "Develop Norms and Decision-Making Procedures" (p. 24).
2. "Establish Team Roles and Responsibilities" (p. 26).
3. "Schedule Regular Meetings" (p. 26).
4. "Establish a Meeting Agenda" (p. 26).
5. "Effectively Facilitate Meetings" (p. 27).

6. “Use Data-Based Problem Solving at Each Meeting (p. 27).
7. “Develop an Action Plan and Meeting Summary” (p. 27).
8. “Evaluate Team Meetings and Functioning” (p. 33).
9. “Follow-up and Next Steps (p. 34).
10. “Celebrate and Share Successes” (p. 34).

Theoretical Framework

PBIS is based upon a theoretical approach grounded in behaviorism with research supported from areas of education, psychology, and other related fields. PBIS is about building effective supports in classrooms, based upon the understanding that behavior in a classroom is functional. This functional behavioral relationship in a classroom is described as when one event happens, another event happens because of the first event occurring.

As educators, we cannot make children learn. However, we can establish classrooms that promote a positive culture to engage students in learning using effective PBIS management practices to establish functional relationships within an environment. “It is essential that everyone within the school or program understands the basic premise that behavior is functionally related to the teacher environment” (Stormont, Lewis, Beckner & Johnson, 2008, p. 112). Although there are many theorists who have studied behavior, for this particular case study, Skinner and Bronfenbrenner’s theories of behavior were used.

When we think about the function of a behavior, and the correlation of Skinner’s (1938) work to that of PBIS, Skinner focused on behavior that essentially acts on an environment to produce consequences or involuntary behaviors. Skinner discussed his

theory of operant conditioning where consequences, in a functional behavioral relationship, will either increase (reinforce) or decrease (deter) behavior. Behaviors are learned, and an individual may choose to engage in a specific behavior based on a known consequence. Skinner's work on behaviorism introduced us to two new concepts: contingency – the relationship between a behavior and its consequence, and reinforcement – the idea that behavior can be strengthened with use of contingent reinforcers. He established that the probability of a behavior occurring was also based on the availability of a reinforcer. In other words, in a classroom setting, as students engage in a behavior that results in a specific consequence within a particular setting, and this happens repeatedly, students will assume that the specific consequence will occur again if a student uses the same type of behavior in the same setting. The result is students will increase a desired type of behavior as long as the consequence is positive (reinforces the behavior) and occurs consistently as a result of that behavior. This is the basis for PBIS systems.

In a school implementing PBIS, students will choose to engage in desirable behaviors if those behaviors are based on the consistent use of contingent reinforcers. Skinner's (1938) ideas are much like Pavlov's work on conditioned responses. Pavlov theorized that individuals are conditioned to respond when presented with a conditioned stimulus (Lumen Learning, n.d.). For example, if this conditioned stimulus (consistent praise) is provided, a student's behavior will be conditioned to respond to the consistent praise provided by a teacher; this is one technique utilized in PBIS. In reviewing both reinforcement (Skinner) and classical conditioning (Pavlov), we have established a

functional behavioral relationship, which will increase the likelihood that students will behave.

In an environment where effective instruction through the implementation of PBIS is provided – where behavior is consistently paired with a stimulus that provides reinforcement for good behavior, the likelihood of increased academic knowledge paired with an increased use of prosocial behaviors will maintain a continued positive school climate. When staff members, both certified and classified, observe an increase in appropriate behavior and provide direct, positive, and personal feedback to students to reward good behavior, they are developing an understanding of how behavior is functionally related to their school environment.

Behaviorism and applied behavior analysis (ABA) both provide an empirical foundation for PBIS; both provide the bases of what PBIS is built upon.

> ABA is an approach to addressing socially important (*applied*) problems by (1) implementing theoretically sound interventions (grounded in *conceptual systems*), which are described in replicable detail (*technological*), to alter observable and measurable actions of individuals (*behavioral*); and (2) demonstrating that the selected intervention is functionally related to the behavior change (*analytic*), producing change that is both meaningful (*effective*) and lasting across contexts (*generality*)" (Simonsen & Myers, 2015, pp. 11-12).

PBIS uses applied behavior analysis on a group of students in a school. The approach of PBIS is to implement interventions at three levels or tiers to alter observable and measurable behaviors of students. The goal of PBIS then, like ABA, is to select interventions that relate to specific behavior as a means to teach behaviors or alter

behavior that will ultimately change negative behavior to more positive behavior, and to be effective in all settings. Understanding Skinner's approach to operant conditioning, in correlation to Pavlov's theory of classical conditioning, in relation to behaviorism and applied behavior analysis underpins the theoretical framework of PBIS.

Limitations of the Study

This case study shed light on the topic of a principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting. Results of this case study have the potential of impacting: (a) establishment of PBIS in elementary schools that have not yet incorporated PBIS into their culture, (b) effective maintenance of PBIS in elementary school settings, and (c) creating school-wide visions of improving student behaviors in elementary schools across the state of North Dakota.

Limitations to this study relate to the setting, scope, and diversity of the study. Research was conducted in a single elementary school located in eastern North Dakota. Findings may have a tremendous impact on the increasing implementation of PBIS in elementary schools nationwide. However, findings from this study apply to the setting in this case study only and cannot be assumed to hold true in other school systems, as expectations of certified and classified staff and principals in other elementary schools, even similar ones, will vary. The population of this city (approximately 57,000) and the size of this school (164 students in grades Early Childhood Special Needs to 5th grade) may have affected data gathered. It would be interesting to replicate this study in similar size towns and schools and compare results obtained.

Due to my own personal and professional time constraints, the scope of this case study was limited to expectations of certified and classified staff and the principal within

this school. Outside of this particular setting, results may be different. Replication of this study in smaller or larger schools in other parts of the state or country could have an impact on the field of education, especially for educators and principals seeking to implement PBIS in an elementary school setting. Although the sample size is too small for generalizing to larger populations, there is still much we can learn about the expectations set upon a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting.

Within this study, there was limited diversity among staff in the school being studied and within participants themselves. Expectations held about the establishment and maintenance of PBIS were limited to those included in this study. An increase in participant diversity and familiarity would impact the results and generalizability of this case study. Additionally, I was not able to observe the PBIS Team in action or conducting a meeting.

Qualitative studies often enable researchers to dig deeply into a topic. During interviews, participants responded in a positive manner. They were open to the questions asked and often elaborated to provide more information than I was initially seeking. Conceivably, participants may have attempted to state answers I was seeking or respond in a certain manner, knowing who the intended audience would be. In addition, during observations, staff may have inadvertently changed their behavior because they were participating in the study and knew a researcher was present. School documents obtained were provided by the secretary, the principal, or found on the district website. Although these limitations may have impacted this study, findings still have relevance for educators today.

Recommendations to Improve the Establishment and Maintenance of PBIS

This study provided insights into expectations of certified and classified staff in regards to their principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting. In the end, I learned as much about myself and the type of work I want to do as a special educator and future educational leader as I did about this school, its principal, and the participants. There are three recommendations I would like to propose: (a) seek to understand expectations all (certified and classified) staff have of PBIS implementation and show staff how they can become more involved in trainings and professional development opportunities, (b) create a collaborative vision based on this knowledge, and (c) share this vision often and in many different ways.

Although common themes were found in the data, participants did not consistently identify common understandings of PBIS leadership. In this particular study, some staff were unaware that PBIS leadership and decision-making came from a team, rather than from the sole leadership of their principal. School leaders understand staff expectations during the maintenance of PBIS in order for a PBIS system to continue in an effective manner. Continued trainings and professional development are important to continued maintenance of a PBIS system, and a top down approach to decision-making where staff have buy-in (staff are consulted and have a say) in creating further strategies that work, as individuals working directly with the students.

PBIS implementation can take 3-5 years (Baker & Ryan, 2014) and sometimes even more to fully implement the features of PBIS with fidelity. PBIS follows a three-tiered model of prevention that suggests a systematic use of effective practices at each tier to reduce the occurrence of social behavioral problems.

Primary prevention refers to those practices recommended for the general population of students to avoid development of social behavioral problems. This level is the bottom tier, where all students and staff are involved, using a comprehensive and consistent set of universal interventions applied school-wide. Most activities are behavioral reinforcement activities to assist in recognizing how students' behaviors impact those around them in a school community.

Tier 2 represents interventions for those students who need more support beyond basic school-wide interventions provided in Tier 1. This most often takes the shape of small social skills groups most often directed by a school counselor, a social worker, or a behavior specialist. Strategies for Tier 2 may include behavior plans, and teaching more specifically pro-social behaviors that benefit all students in a general school community.

Tier 3 represents activities designed to reduce the severity and frequency of social behavior problems among a small sector of the student population, those students who most often exhibit social behavior issues. This level focuses on specialized programming using functional behavioral assessments, and individualized behavior plans. Some students at this level receive special education services and are most often at high risk of exerting challenging behaviors in a school setting. PBIS is designed to redesign a school environment to teach and reinforce social skills to students wherever they are at in regards to their tiered level of social behaviors.

For this particular study, specific Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions being used were not explained to me, nor were they discussed during any of the interviews, observations, or written in any documents I observed. I was able to observe Tier 1 interventions as being taught by a counselor in one of the general education classrooms.

When looking to further understand the components of sustainability, sustainability to establishing and maintaining PBIS, I noted it requires a commitment of time, money, resources, and support. Sustainability can only happen with a thorough understanding of PBIS combined with continual efforts of planning for the future (Baker & Ryan, 2014). Two critical issues necessary for maintaining the sustainability of PBIS is implementation and fidelity. "Implementation means that practices are being done with integrity as they are defined" (Baker & Ryan, 2014, p. 143). In other words, PBIS practices are being practiced with the intent they are meant to be used. Fidelity means that "practices are true to their original design" (p. 143). In short, fidelity means that practices are being done the way they are intended to be done.

Fidelity and implementation go hand in hand. Without one or the other, the desired outcomes are unlikely to occur. When fidelity decreases, the preferred outcome will decrease or the expected outcome may not be the desired outcome. In PBIS, the PBIS leadership team coach is assigned the duty of ensuring that fidelity sustainability in PBIS practices is occurring. In this particular study, the concepts of fidelity and implementation were not referenced as mirror images of each other; however, the principal did recognize in one interview that PBIS practices should be done with fidelity and consistently.

In order to maintain the sustainability of PBIS, a school-wide community under the direction of their PBIS leadership team, must have ideals of collective efficacy to realize that together, things can happen. Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) defined collective efficacy as "the belief that, together, we can make a difference to the students we teach, no matter what" (p. 111). With this mindset, teachers and administrators

implementing PBIS believe that together, they can produce a greater impact on their student population school-wide. PBIS serves as a means to routinely explore what is happening within a school population, addressing social problems facing students, other issues, or differences in opinions to improve what is done. PBIS is meant to change an environment to improve social behaviors in students. Collaborative action with collective responsibility, mutual obligations to help one another in an organization, is about helping all students rather than focusing on individual students. PBIS is all about collaborative professionalism, where teachers are stepping forward by being empowered and inspired to engage students and ignite their passions for learning.

In an effort to further understand how collaborative professionalism and PBIS coincide, I will answer the following three questions as proposed by Hargreaves and O'Conner (2018) in *Collaborative Professionalism: When Teaching Together Means Learning For All*.

1. What should we stop doing?
2. What should we continue doing?
3. What should we start doing? (p. ix)

What We Should Stop Doing

Hargreaves and O'Conner (2018) recommended data teams such as PBIS leadership teams not dominate what teachers do. In other words, educators should be able to inquire into what they are doing and use the data they gather to inform the decision-making process with their collective input. The research of Susan Moore Johnson (2006) showed teachers are more likely to stay in their schools if their work occurs in a culture of collaboration. PBIS implementation is led by a PBIS leadership team. To avoid having

a leadership team dominate what teachers do, a review of team members could be conducted yearly and an exchange of one staff member per year could be part of PBIS maintenance. Introducing "new blood" into a PBIS leadership team might help develop new ideas rather than maintaining the same staff members on the team and working with the same ideas from year-to-year.

What We Should Continue Doing

Hargreaves and O'Conner (2018) stated there is a need to continue to build relationships over time, and to move into deeper professional collaboration. Formal and informal activities can become more complex over time, so providing a venue where staff are allowed to accept and provide feedback amongst everyone involved is necessary to keep complex issues in check. Developing levels of trust by allowing staff to get to know one another better can occur through various staff development activities during after school hours that will assist in development of establishing and building relationships in order for staff to interact as a collaborative and professional unit.

What We Should Start Doing

Hargreaves and O'Conner (2018) recommended PBIS administrators start involving students. Students have a right to express and share their ideas and to have the same kind of transformative experiences as teachers. In PBIS, students could be involved in assisting in the planning process of monthly meetings and assembly activities. Due to confidentiality reasons, a student could not be a member of a PBIS leadership team as a review of confidential data sometimes takes place within the team. However, involving students as much as possible may assist in effective implementation of PBIS.

Recommendations for Further Study

The purpose of this case study was to understand the role (or roles) of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting. During the research process, several areas were identified for further investigation: (a) student expectations of their principal's role in maintenance of PBIS, (b) parent's expectations of a principal's role in maintaining PBIS, (c) degree of consistency in using concepts, strategies, techniques, and methods of PBIS, (d) a principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS at the middle school level, (e) a principal's role in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS at the high school level, and (f) how to further develop collaborative professionalism while sustaining PBIS in the elementary school setting.

Communication emerged as a theme in this case study. All participating staff and the principal agreed that communication is the main component in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting. Some staff were able to define the role of a principal based on what the principal had done in her day-to-day work and actions; not necessarily all she had said. So therefore, another important theme that emerged from this study was school wide cooperation. Cooperative efforts from all staff combined with actions of a principal maintain effective PBIS under the direction of a PBIS team or committee; PBIS is not maintained through just the principal as leader.

Final Thoughts

This qualitative study was designed to better understand staff expectations of the role of a principal in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting. Exploring this topic using an in-depth case study method allowed me to gather

rich data from which themes emerged. These findings have the potential to impact a further understanding of the roles principals have in the establishment and maintenance of PBIS in an elementary school setting. This study made the beliefs and work of certified and classified staff of this particular school, as well as the principal, visible. I feel honored and grateful for the trust given to me by the participants in this study. Their words and work will continue to inspire me to seek knowledge and skills for improving the establishment and effective maintenance of PBIS in future elementary schools.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) set out to create and identify a "Fourth Way Alternative" to define education reform based on studies done in different countries, districts, and networks of schools. In this Fourth Way of recognizing and defining educational reform, they idealized that the purpose of Fourth Way is to inspire, be inclusive, and be innovative. Students are highly engaged with a voice where learning is personalized and differentiation is done using responsive teaching based on data-driven decisions. Leadership is sustainable and systematic, and a school network is one with a focus on community. Teachers are highly qualified in addition to a high level of retention.

So what is the purpose of today's schools, and how does PBIS correspond to the direction of educational reform in today's schools? It is difficult to change traditional methods of schooling. It is even more difficult to convince policy makers and leaders to change to a new idea for educating children when they have already experienced so many past changes. Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) argued, "Our current challenge is to find ways to develop innovation within schools, while continuously improving them" (p. 27). In other words, in the past, many national education reform policies have failed to

improve education. Under the Obama administration, the No Child Left Behind Act (NLCB) of 2001 continued, which led to further emphasis on standardized testing and increased government funding in schools.

At the time of this study, students were becoming more connected to phones and social media outlets, and were less likely to engage in personal endeavors. The need to improve education reform is what Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) stated as "a national teaching force that is rich in what we now call professional capital" (p. 49). Professional capital refers to teachers' skills and assets that have developed through years of teaching. Professional capital accumulates, circulates, and is invested in order to produce high quality student learning and high quality teaching. Professional capital consists of five other types of capital – human, social, moral, symbolic, and decisional. Human capital consists of the knowledge of an individual, the skills that individual obtains, and the qualifications, training, and capabilities one has for a particular job. Social capital is the collaborative efforts of colleagues, mutual efforts and degrees of support, the ability of individuals to come together in a work environment and make things happen. Moral capital refers to a person's power to perform for others, while symbolic capital is recognized as signs of an activity that attracts one to perform that activity. Decisional capital is the ability to make good decisions in complex situations. Although all five means of capital are discussed, in PBIS the focus is on social capital and how a school-wide community can collaboratively develop behavior interventions to support and create a community conducive to learning for both staff and students. In a social capital situation, teachers and students work together in communities with trust where everyone

is a valued member of a school-wide community, each feeling empowered and qualified to perform their required specific duties.

Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) described the Global Fourth Way of Educational Change in 5 ways:

1. Teach less, learn more.
2. Transform your professional association.
3. Promote collective autonomy.
4. Become a mindful teacher with technology.
5. Be a dynamo.

(Hargreaves and Shirley, 2012, p. 193)

The one most important area to focus on when reviewing PBIS is the idea of collective autonomy. Much of education in the past focused on individual autonomy. Teachers were left alone to teach using their own judgement, without interference, and they taught in how they determined to be the best way. Collective autonomy is about working with others in a school community with a collective responsibility to not only collaborate professionally with one's colleagues, but to do what is needed to better individual student learning needs.

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) argued that change in education is difficult to sustain, and sustainable improvement in schools depends on successful leadership. However, the challenge for educational leadership is to not dismiss practices in the business world, but rather, to learn from those that are most successful and sustainable. A PBIS team exemplifies leadership that emerges from individuals who work collectively as a group, seize the initiative to inspire and take up opportunities to move in new directions.

Emergent leadership ”comes forward from staff in ways that are unanticipated and even surprising” (p. 122). A coach from a PBIS leadership team may serve many purposes. An example of an emergent leader may be the coach who works with staff to maintain the sustainability of PBIS implementation. Emergent leadership ”may emerge across a whole school or in a department, grade level, or small teacher team, but its effects are real and potent” (p. 123). Emergent leadership can come from any individual; however, sustainability in PBIS requires an emergent leader to maintain effective sustainability. Educational leadership is not limited to a principal, but can be individuals, communities, and networks of organizational layers (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012).

In Fullan’s (2008) book, *The Six Secrets of Change*, Fullan addressed the We-We Commitment, which focuses on and advises leaders to create conditions for effective interaction, provide direction, and intervene when things are not working well. With the We-We Commitment, the organization becomes effective in part due to the investment by the leader in its employees and the collective commitment to work. Three things happen in the We-We Commitment, which encompasses the purpose of PBIS in a school-community. Moreover, PBIS follows the following three ideas:

1. All stakeholders are rally around a higher purpose that has meaning for individuals as well as the collectivity;
2. Knowledge flows as people pursue and continuously learn what works best.
3. Identifying with an entity larger than oneself expands the self, with power consequences. “When teachers within a school collaborate, they begin to think not just about ‘my classroom’ but also about ‘our school’” (Fullan, 2008, p. 49).

APPENDICES

Appendix A
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DATE: October 22, 2018

TO: Angela Wanzek
University of North Dakota
3701 Campus Road Stop 7053
Phone: 701-777-3000

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The PBIS Team Handbook: Setting Expectations and Building Positive Behavior

Author(s):
Beth Baker, M.S.Ed and Char Ryan, Ph.D.
Selection:
Figure 1.1 on Page 10, Figure 1.2 on Page 11, Figure 2.2 on Pages 17-18, PBIS Leadership Team Members on Page 23.

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Ann Salt

Ann Salt

October 22, 2018

Date

Appendix B
Approval From School District to Conduct Study

Request to Conduct Research in the Grand Forks Public Schools

Date:	Name:	Phone:
3-31-2017	Angela M. Wanzek	701-269-6178

Fax or Email:	Research Advisor:
Address: Angela.Wanzek@k12.nd.us; 1420 Hwy 20, Courtenay, ND 58426	College or Dept.: Dr. Pauline Stonehouse; UND

Research Title:
The Role of the Principal in Establishing and Maintaining Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS): An Ethnographic Case Study

Give a brief description of your research. Attach additional papers if necessary. Please attach sample copies of assessment instrument, tests, or communications to be used:

The researcher for this ethnographic case study will investigate the role of the principal in establishing and maintaining positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) at West Elementary School in Grand Forks, ND to determine how PBIS impacts one's school culture. How to clearly define this role will be conducted through semi-structured interviews with key informants such as the principal, general education teachers and special education teachers who are currently employed with the school district. More specifically, this study will explore the PBIS framework implementation, how one principal implements the PBIS framework within an elementary setting, and steps that are taken to maintain the successful implementation of PBIS.

Number of students needed for research:	Number of teachers needed for research:	Grade Level or Dept.:
0	5-10; general and special education teachers & the principal.	Elementary; Grades PK - 5

What schools are you interested in conducting the research in?
West Elementary School, Grand Forks, ND

Will confidential records be required? (If yes, indicate type.)	Length of time required to complete the research:
No	One full week; May 1-5th, 2017

To be completed by School District Official:

Approved: ~~Not Approved:~~

Assistant Superintendent Signature: J Thompson **Date:** 4-3-17.

Approved to conduct research in the following schools: West.

Send completed form to: Grand Forks Public Schools, Box 6000, Grand Forks, ND 58206-6000
Attn: Assistant Superintendent's Office

Appendix C
Interview Guide

1. Tell me about yourself personally and professionally.

2. Explain the culture of your school.

3. Are you familiar with PBIS? How would you describe how you see PBIS being implemented in your school?

4. How has PBIS been established in your school? How is it being maintained?

5. How would you describe the role the principal plays in the establishment of PBIS? How would you describe how the principal has maintained PBIS in the school?

6. Anything else I should know about this school?

Appendix D
Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE:	*The Role of the Principal in Establishing and Maintaining Positive Intervention Supports (PBIS): An Ethnographic Study*
PROJECT DIRECTOR:	*Angela M. Wanzek, Graduate Student of the University of North Dakota*
PHONE #	*701-269-6178*
DEPARTMENT:	*Educational Leadership*

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

A person who is to participate in research must give his or her informed consent to such participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research projects include only subjects who choose to take part. Please take your time in making your decision as to whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are invited to be in a research study examining the elementary school principal's role in establishing and maintaining positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS). Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) are key strategies that aim to prevent disruptive behavior problems and promote a positive school climate through the application of practices and system consistent with the three-tiered public health prevention framework. You are invited as you are utilizing PBIS within your elementary school and may have opinions or knowledge about this process. Your participation is voluntary. The purpose of this research study is to examine the perceptions of staff regarding the principal's role in establishing and maintaining PBIS. As the principal investigator, I will use this information to write and share scholarly articles regarding the elementary school principal's role in PBIS.

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

Approximately 30 people will take part in this study at West Elementary School in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in the study will last the duration of the interview of approximately thirty (30) – ninety (90) minutes in length. You will need to visit with me as the researcher one time for one in-depth interview. Each visit will take about 30 – 90 minutes/1 ½ hours.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

If you decide to participate in this study, you may be interviewed about your knowledge, experiences, or opinions on the elementary school principal's role in establishing and maintaining positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS). These interviews will typically last thirty (30) minutes to ninety (90) minutes. You will be asked if digital voice recordings may be made of your interview. Such recordings will be used only for writing down exactly what you say. Your name will remain secret. Digital tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet after use. Being recorded is voluntary. You may still participate without being recorded.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

The risks involved with this study include the possibility of loss of confidentiality. Though I will take many steps to ensure secrecy, the identity of the participants might accidentally become known. This may cause embarrassment or discomfort. Some questions I will ask about your experiences and opinions might cause worry, embarrassment, discomfort, or sadness. You may choose not to answer such questions. Referrals to counseling will be available should you experience bad feelings, but no money is available from the study to pay for such services. Another drawback for you might include the amount of time spent in interviews or answering questionnaires.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

No direct benefit is guaranteed to you from participating in this study. Your participation in this research, however, may benefit you or other people in the future by helping us learn more about the elementary school principal's role in establishing and maintaining positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS).

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

No participants will receive pay for taking part in the study.

WHO IS FUNDING THE STUDY?

The University of North Dakota and the research team are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified. Your study record may be reviewed by Government agencies and the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Any information that is obtained in this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child, or you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of by assigning a number instead. Interviews, notes, and any video or audio recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet when not in use. Any information from the data that could identify you will be removed. If I write a report or article about this study, I will describe the study results in a summarized manner so that you cannot be identified.

IS THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of North Dakota.

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS?

The researcher conducting this study is Angela Wanzek, a graduate student of the University of North Dakota. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Angela Wanzek at (701) 269-6178 during the day and after hours or Dr. Pauline Stonehouse at (701) 777-4163 during the day.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at **(701) 777-4279** or **UND.irb@research.UND.edu.**

- You may also call this number about any problems, complaints, or concerns you have about this research study.
- You may also call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone who is independent of the research team.
- General information about being a research subject can be found by clicking "Information for Research Participants" on the web site: http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.cfm

I give consent to be audio recorded during this study.

Please initial: ____Yes ____No

I give consent for my quotes to be used in the research; however, I will not be identified.

Please initial: ____Yes ____No

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Subject's Name: _____

Signature of Subject Date:

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, with the subject's legally authorized representative.

Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent Date:

Date: _____
Subject Initials: _____

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