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## Perceptions of faculty and staff of the positive behavior process utilizing team process and staff satisfaction survey

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PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY AND STAFF  
OF THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR PROCESS  
UTILIZING TEAM PROCESS AND STAFF SATISFACTION SURVEY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Resource Education  
and Workforce Development

by

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December 2011

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family who have continuously supported me in reaching this personal goal by being cheerleaders, listening, and watching my precious Luke! To my loving parents a special feeling of gratitude, Willis and Carol Poling, whose words of encouragement and support were present throughout this educational endeavor. I am grateful to my parents for instilling the importance of hard work and higher education.

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## **ABSTRACT**

There is a great need in education to find innovative ways to increase the amount of instructional time spent in classrooms. One way this can be accomplished is by improving the school climate through the use of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS). Teachers can improve upon their own behaviors towards students, so that student problem behaviors do not escalate to the point of suspensions and expulsions.

The PBIS philosophy embraces the idea that while humanistic values should not replace empiricism, these values should inform empiricism. Science tells us how we can change things, but values tell us what is worth changing (Carr, 1996; Carr & Durand, 1985). PBIS represents a melding of values and technologies which are judged not only with respect to efficacy (a technological criterion), but also with respect to their ability to enhance personal dignity and opportunities for choice (a values criterion). Thus, the approach eschews the use of strategies that members of the community judge to be dehumanizing or degrading (Horner et al., 1996).

The present study examines faculty and staff perceptions of the Leadership Team and the PBIS process as it functions in their school. Faculty and staff utilized for this study were employed in primary and secondary schools in Louisiana that had implemented PBIS at least six months prior to survey completion. The PBIS Staff Satisfaction Survey and the Team Process Survey are the two surveys utilized for the purpose of this study. Participants were surveyed about their satisfaction of school-wide positive behavior support on their school campus and the team process survey was given to all school-wide leadership team members to determine how their team is functioning as a school-wide positive behavior support team.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH**

Contemporary education structure continues to be modeled after the school system expansion that occurred in post-World War II America. The prosperity of the post-war era and subsequent baby boom resulted in the greatest increase in the number of new schools built in the United States. With this new development, educational objectives which emerged were designed to meet the education of the masses through the most consistent and efficient means possible. Class sizes were large, parents were very involved, and discipline was handled by utilizing corporal punishment and task-based assignments.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, good discipline was evidenced as students sitting quietly while they learned by rote. The conventional wisdom saw education as a process of controlling student behavior while information was transferred from teacher to student (Public Find Law, 2009, p. 1).

Student behavior remains a consideration in education delivery. Although the history of behavioral approaches have their roots in logical positivism and draw from the works of Thorndike (1911), Hull (1943), and Watson (1925), the current behavior practices were shaped by the works of B.F. Skinner. Skinner expanded the current study of respondent conditioning established by Pavlov and Watson by focusing on how consequences strengthened or weakened subsequent behavior. Most modern behaviorally-based practices are largely extensions of other basic behavioral principles articulated by Skinner and forming the basis for the development of applied behavior analysis.

In the past, school-wide discipline mainly focused on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Such techniques proved more effective

for short-term classroom management of behaviors than for a change in behavior of the student's overall performance. In an effort to impact lasting behavioral change at the student level, it became essential to re-shape teacher behavior in their response to student misbehavior. One approach to this problem was what has today evolved into Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a process that brings about school-wide systems change designed to transform the school climate by creating a positive learning environment. Research supported that the implementation of punishment, especially when inconsistently applied and without other positive strategies, is ineffective in shaping positive behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2008). Introducing modeling and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important step in a student's educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for displaying the appropriate desired behaviors is a more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The primary purpose sought of school-wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which desired behaviors are the norm.

In 1997, Congress amended the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to include a unique place for positive procedures and specific special education law (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 1997). Positive procedures and practices developed into what became known as the Positive Behavior Support Project (Delaware Department of Education, 2011). The emphasis in the law promotes utilizing functional behavior assessments and positive approaches to encourage good behavior. This remains in the current version of the law as amended in 2004. Congress' reasons for encouraging the use of PBIS stems from the historic exclusion of individuals with disabilities. While individuals were being excluded, nothing was being done to address behaviors. Based on unaddressed behavior

and the strong evidence base supporting the use of PBIS, Congress included this process in the legislation. Congress recognized in 1997 and 2004 the need for schools to use evidence-based approaches to proactively address the behavioral needs of students with disabilities. Congress explicitly recognized the potential of PBIS to prevent exclusion of students with disabilities and the improvement of educational results. Congress further recognized that, to encourage implementation of PBIS, funds needed to be allocated for training in the use of PBIS (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 1997). Thus, IDEA provides additional support for the use of PBIS in its provisions by authorizing states to use professional development funds to enhance “the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of educational programming for students” and provide training in methods of positive behavioral interventions and supports to improve student behavior in the classroom (Sugai& Horner, 2006, p. 1). Professional development is the key to proper implementation of PBIS and the improved behavioral outcomes that PBIS can foster. Congress provided for competitive grant funds that can be used to:

1. Ensure that pre-service and in-service training, to general as well as special educators, include positive behavior interventions and supports;
2. Develop and disseminate PBIS models for addressing conduct that impedes learning; and
3. Provide training and joint training to the entire spectrum of school personnel in the use of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports.

In 2003, the Louisiana Legislature passed the Juvenile Justice Reform Act 1225, which provides direction to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). The Education/Juvenile Justice Partnership Act enacted legislation with two main directives:

1. BESE would formulate, develop and recommend a Model Master Plan for improving behavior and discipline within schools that includes the utilization of positive behavioral supports and other effective disciplinary tools; and
2. Each city, parish, and other local public school board should be responsible for the development of school master plans for supporting student behavior and discipline based upon the Model Master Plan developed and approved by BESE (Louisiana Supreme Court, 2003).

To address educational issues within the state of Louisiana, Governor Bobby Jindal, in his opening address to the 2008 legislative session, stated the following:

Half of our new teachers are leaving Louisiana's public schools within five years of graduating. One of the top reasons they cite is the environment in the classroom.

Louisiana ranks second to last when it comes to discipline in our classrooms.

Significant numbers of Louisiana's students and teachers are dropping out of the public school system for the same reason: school discipline. Left with few alternatives for handling problems in the classroom, many schools employ discipline methods such as suspensions, expulsions, placements in alternative schools, and referrals to law enforcement. These methods are counterproductive and more likely to lead to student dropouts. School discipline issues are also a major factor in teachers' decisions to leave the classroom.

Fortunately, there are tools that teachers and administrators can use to return our schools to positive and productive environments for both teachers and students. Use of these tools will help keep students and teachers in school. "By implementing relatively simple and cost-effective evidence-based discipline practices such as PBIS, educators have the power to transform Louisiana's schools" (Louisiana School-To-Prison Reform Coalition, 2009, p. 1).

Comprehensive school discipline reform will require the commitment of, and cooperation among, diverse education stakeholders. These stakeholders include state lawmakers, the Louisiana Department of Education, local school administrators, school board members, teachers, parents, and students. Together the stakeholders can create orderly classrooms and ensure teachers can focus on teaching, thus preparing our children for the future.

As stakeholders, the teachers and staff at individual schools hold an important role in the successful implementation of PBIS and the ability to gain positive outcomes at the school. It is important to understand their perceptions of the process as it exists at their individual schools. Additionally, consideration must be given to the satisfaction of faculty and staff on the school climate and the leadership team (Sprague & Horner, 2006).

### **Rationale**

The Louisiana public educational system and the schools that comprise it continue to face challenges with attrition of both students and teachers. Budget cuts increasingly limit opportunities to implement initiatives aimed at improving learning outcomes. PBIS represents a mandated program to help overcome these very real educational challenges. In order to evaluate the current status of this program, perceptions of the staff participants and team members should be analyzed and compared using available survey data. This description and analysis will allow for improvements in the training modules. Further, data analysis will create an opportunity for improvements to the school-wide support of the process.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study will seek to describe the introduction and expansion of PBIS in Louisiana. It will describe and compare the perceptions of faculty members and staff of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support process in their school. Survey responses have been collected on

faculty member and staff satisfaction with school climate, the PBIS process, and the leadership team. The leadership team responses are based on the team process as it relates to PBIS. Further, comparisons will be made between cohort groups using each of the survey instruments.

### **Research Objectives**

1. Describe the introduction and expansion of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports initiative within Louisiana Schools for the years 2009 and 2010 based on Louisiana Department of Education data related to:
  - a) Type of school;
  - b) Parish or independent school district; and
  - c) Length of participation in PBIS process.
2. Describe the school-based PBIS leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process at primary and secondary schools as measured by responses on the Team Process Survey for 2009 and 2010.
3. Compare the school-based PBIS leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses on the Team Process Survey for 2009 and 2010.
4. Describe the perceptions of the staff satisfaction at primary and secondary schools and compare faculty and staff's perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the School-Wide PBIS process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses on the Staff Satisfaction Survey for 2009 and 2010.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited programmatically to public schools which have participated in PBIS implementation. The leadership team, faculty, and staff perceptions reported are further limited

by voluntary participation through submission of survey data on the Staff Satisfaction Survey and Team Process Survey. The surveys were completed anonymously; therefore, survey respondents may not be the same for either survey in subsequent years. The study is limited geographically to the state of Louisiana and is time-constrained to the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 for survey results.

### **Significance of the Study**

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports have been receiving increased visibility and use in schools nationally. Results of this study will reflect a state-wide picture of the current progress toward the legislatively mandated implementation of PBIS in Louisiana. In this study, faculty and staff perceptions are assessed on the PBIS team process along with staff satisfaction as it relates to the PBIS process at their individual school. Findings from this study may assist leadership teams across the state and nation to improve their implementation process at the school-wide level for PBIS. The study results may help faculty and staff in PBIS schools refine their implementation process at primary and secondary schools which would in turn improve the likelihood that a positive school climate is created and that faculty and student retention rates are impacted positively. Further, this outcome would thereby increase the implementation efforts, the organizational structure of schools, practices and processes of PBIS, and a system for ongoing evaluation.

### **Operational Definitions**

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE): The administrative and policy-making body for elementary and secondary schools established for the state of Louisiana in the 1973 Constitutional Convention; charged with providing a leadership agenda for improving

education in Louisiana as measured by school achievement (Louisiana Department of Education, 2011).

Cohorts: The years of the study that are 2009 and 2010 (researcher defined).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Specific educational law enacted in 1975 as the All Handicapped Children Act, later renamed and then amended in 1997, to better educate children with disabilities and ensure them access to quality education (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 1997).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): A process emphasizing four integrated elements: data for decision making, measureable outcomes based on data, evidence-based practices with achievable outcomes and efficient and effective implementation systems. The purpose is to bring about school-wide systems change designed to transform the school climate into a positive learning environment (OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2008).

Problem Behavior: The action(s) of students that individually or collectively are identified by school staff as detracting from the learning environment (Researcher defined, 2010).

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS): A system for establishing expectations and rules within all common areas which students access in a school building. Examples include, but are not limited to: hallways, restrooms, play areas, and cafeterias (OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2008).

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The review of the literature presents background on child development and expansion of behavior techniques in the educational setting. Further, literature is presented as a basis for understanding both Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) and school-wide use of this process. Background is provided on the introduction and development of PBIS in Louisiana and the leadership roles related to the project at the school-based level. Related literature on teacher perceptions of behavior management and intervention strategies and personal satisfaction related to team effectiveness is also presented.

### **Child Development, Behaviorism, and Education**

As an educator, it is important to be cognizant of the growth and development of children in respect to how they learn. Educators must have an awareness of where children begin in order to facilitate and guide their learning. Bronfenbrenner (1979) offered a theoretical perspective for research in human development. When introduced, the perspective was new in its conception of the developing person, of the environment, and especially of the evolving interaction between the two. Bronfenbrenner developed the ecological systems theory, which is also known as the bioecological systems theory, to emphasize that a child's own biology is a primary environment fueling his/her development (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory suggested that development is explained in terms of relationships between people and their environments (Boyd & Bee, 2006). Bronfenbrenner's theory consisted of four systems, or levels, that made up a person's surroundings, environment, and values. These four systems are the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. Paquette and Ryan (2001) described the microsystem as the closest layer to the child and it contained the structures with which the child has direct contact. Structures in the microsystem included family, school,

neighborhood, or childcare environments. Boyd and Bee (2006) suggested another part of the microsystem was the biological context of a child, which was described as the genetic makeup and development stage of a child. The second level in Bronfenbrenner's theory was the mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined the mesosystem as a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the developing person became an active participant. The third level of Bronfenbrenner's theory was the exosystem. Paquette and Ryan (2001) defined the exosystem as the larger social system in which the child did not function directly. To explain this further, Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined the exosystem as consisting of one or more settings that did not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occurred that affect, or are affected by, what happens in that setting. This system was also known as the socioeconomic context of a child (Boyd & Bee, 2006). The final level in Bronfenbrenner's theory was the macrosystem. This system was the outermost circle of this theory and contained the values and beliefs of the culture in which a child was growing up (Boyd & Bee, 2006). Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated the macrosystem referred to the consistency observed within a given culture or subculture in the form and content of its constituent micro-, meso-, and exosystems, as well as any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies. The way in which a culture values the importance of education was considered an example of the macrosystem. Paquette and Ryan (2001) stated that 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. As children get older, they may react differently to environmental changes and are able to determine how change will influence them.

Bronfenbrenner's model conceived of child and youth development as a function of interactions between individuals and the multiple contexts in which they live, including families,

schools, neighborhoods, and communities, as well as the broader contexts of cultures and societies. Review of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development, yielded several features of the model that were relevant to program design and implementation for child and adolescent health and well-being. Foremost, it focused on the importance of thinking about relationships — both the relationship of individuals to their larger contexts, as well as the relationships of those contexts to one another. Second, the model was developmental; it took into account the changing importance of different contexts as children grow. Third, the model enabled thinking in terms of reciprocal interactions. Finally, the model provided guidance for decision making in complicated situations. For example, it demonstrated that there are multiple opportunities to promote health and well-being.

Philosophies of education have existed throughout the history of formal intellectual development. The Socratic Method has persisted through the emergence of various educational philosophies and provides a framework for how the teacher guides the learner. Over time, the role of student behavior in learning became a greater consideration. Thorndike first used behavior modification in education in 1911. However, the use was limited and inconsistently applied. Based on the work of B.F. Skinner (1953), behavioral approaches required the demonstration of a change in behavior following the use of planned behavioral change techniques. Behavior modification provided a method for shaping individual's behaviors and reactions through a stimuli-response system using positive and negative reinforcement. Reinforcement works by increasing the adaptive behavior and/or reducing the maladaptive behavior through extinction, punishment, or therapy (Skinner, 1953).

As with behaviorism, behavior modification (Boghossian, 2006) emerged as a dominant educational philosophy during the later portion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Behavior

modification techniques became empirically based and were designed to improve behavior.

Boghossian (2006) noted that behaviorism's focus was on "the external observation of lawful relations between and among outwardly observable stimuli and the responses that follow" (p. 715). Additionally, Boghossian described the behaviorist teacher's ability to utilize the Socratic Method as a stimulus, in which learning is a dynamic process and the practitioner leads willing and active students in their own learning.

Ullucci (2005) observed that as the behaviorist model utilizes positive and negative reinforcement, students learn new behaviors through the consequences to their actions. Thus, noted Ullucci, "the challenge of creating a strong, nurturing classroom community is especially difficult" (p. 41). Therefore, traditional methods of discipline could result in short-term behavioral change, without teaching the student anything. If a community is created, then the learning environment could be controlled; thus, learning would be more likely to occur. In order to create this community environment, structure is necessary. While this began with establishing a routine to set the daily tone, it also involved behavioral changes by the teacher and prioritization of daily disruptions. The teacher's responses to student actions focused not on short-term behavioral changes, but on instilling in the student the ability to make better decisions and develop personal strengths.

A more complete description of the potential of behavioral science was offered by Baer, Wolf, and Risley (1968). In a seminal article on the creation of applied behavior analysis, they offer the criteria for the adoption and implementation of behavioral analysis. First, the approach must be "applied" that indicates that the behavior being changed has social significance. The behavior should have immediate importance to the individual? Second, the approach must be considered behavior in that the behavior being changed should be in need of improvement, be

able to be measured repeatedly and reliably, and to rule out alternative explanations for behavioral change. Third, the process should be analytic being able to clearly demonstrate the functional relationship between the behavior being changed and the manipulations responsible for the change. Fourth, procedures should be technological through a thorough and precise description of all procedure being employed. Fifth, the procedures should be conceptually systematic based upon the identified principles for behavior. Sixth, the procedures used must be effective in that the change in behavior must be clinically or socially significant. Finally, the changes in behavior should demonstrate generality, persisting over time and in other environments (Baer et al., 1968; Alberto & Troutman, 2008).

Over 40 years of research has demonstrated the strength and utility of applied behavior analysis across multiple settings, with a range of populations, and addressing a wide spectrum of behavior (c.f. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 1968-2011). Meta-analysis research has demonstrated consistently high effect sizes for behaviorally based interventions (c.f. Gottfredson, 1997; Lipsey, 1991, 1992; Lipsey & Wilson, 1993) indicating consistent impact on challenging student behavior. Behavioral interventions had large positive effect sizes as opposed to counseling, psychotherapy, or procedures based on punishment that had negative effect sizes.

Nelson and Polsgrove (1984) raised the question of whether behavioral principles in education were a “White Elephant or a White Rabbit” (Nelson & Polsgrove, 1984). They concluded that even though the impact of behavioral principles applied to education had been considerable, its potential had yet to be realized. This early recognition of the failure to reach the potential of behavior analytic procedures and principles demonstrated the need to design better procedures for its adoption and implementation in schools.

## **History of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support**

The process of PBIS was developed in the 1980s as a broad approach for organizing the physical, social, educational, biomedical, and logistical supports needed to achieve basic life-style goals of students while reducing problem behaviors that posed barriers to these goals (Dunlap & Carr, 2007; Koegel, Koegel, & Dunlap, 1996). The emergence of PBIS as a distinctive approach to behavior support materialized because of the strong commitment of educators to knowledge and values. PBIS values a strong commitment to helping individuals achieve a quality of life that is defined by their own personal choices. People behave in a way that affects how they live and how they in turn receive support from educators. “The basic foundation of PBIS presupposes that the valued elements of personal life, those things each of us hold as truly important, depend at some level on our ability to behave competently” (Sailor, Dunlap, Sugai, & Horner, 2009, p. 3). The process of PBIS is based on the scientific assumption that human behavior can change as a function of certain actions performed by others in a supportive, care giving role for people from all cultures, ages, and levels of competence. PBIS is about utilizing understanding of human behavioral science to organize supports that result in more productive, preferred, and healthy lives.

Positive behavior interventions and support is a skill set with four defining features:

1. application of research-validated behavioral science;
2. integration of multiple intervention elements to provide ecologically valid, practical support;
3. commitment to substantive, durable life-style outcomes; and

4. implementation of support within organizational systems that facilitate sustained effects (Carr, 1996; Durand, 1990; Horner et al., 1996; Sugai et al., 2000).

Together, these features comprise a commitment to empirically validated practices that are guided by the values, perspectives, and preferences of those receiving support and embedded in the organizational systems needed to make support comprehensive, durable, and effective (Sailor et al., 2009).

PBIS is defined by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2009), according to their website as:

an application of a behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the fit or link between research-validated practices and the environment in which teaching and learning occurs ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)).

Schools strive to implement PBIS as an effective and proactive process for improving social competence and academic achievement for all students. The antecedent-behavior-consequence contingency first described by Skinner (1953) is one of the central elements of PBIS.

Additionally, PBIS emerged from the behavioral sciences that utilized educational and systems change to enhance the quality of life and minimize problem behavior. PBIS evolved from special education and emerged from three major sources: applied behavior analysis, the normalization/inclusion movement, and person-centered values. Applied behavior analysis is the systematic extension of the principles of operant psychology to problems and issues of social importance (Baer et al., 1968). PBIS principles were based on the past 35 years of research in

applied behavior analysis and incorporated two major contributions. First, it provided one element of a conceptual framework relevant to behavior change. Of equal importance, it provided assessment and intervention strategies. With respect to concepts, PBIS relied on applied behavior analysis for the three-term contingency (stimulus-response-reinforcing consequence), the concepts of setting event and establishing operations, and the notions of stimulus control, generalization, and maintenance (Chance, 1998; Miltenberger, 1997).

PBIS supports the principle and ideal of normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972), namely, that people with disabilities should live in the same settings as others with access to the same types of opportunities (in terms of home, school, work, recreation, and social life). The normalization principle lends itself to the principle of inclusion. In the educational system, it embodied the trend towards placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Bricker, 1995) as opposed to segregated, special education facilities. Person-centered values supported the idea that humanistic values should not replace empiricism; these values should inform empiricism. Science tells us *how* we can change things, but values tell us *what* is worth changing (Carr, 1996). As a result, PBIS represented a combination of values and process in that strategies were judged not only with respect to effectiveness, but also with respect to their ability to enhance personal dignity and choice. Thus, the approach rejected the use of strategies that members of the community judged to be dehumanizing or degrading (Horner et al., 1990).

PBIS is an applied science that utilized educational and systems change methods to enhance the quality of life and minimize problem behavior (Carr, Dunlap, Horner, Koegel, Turnbull, Sailor, et al., 2002). One field that made contributions to PBIS was the ecological systems theory, which embraced the idea that people in community settings are interdependent and significant change occurred in social systems and not just in individuals (Bronfenbrenner,

1989). This manifested itself in PBIS with the idea that the focus of intervention must be on changing problem context, not problem behavior. Educators must move beyond blaming the student and instead hold certain societal contexts accountable. The embodiment of this idea to produce change required reallocation of the resources of time, money, and political power. Thus, administrative support, interagency collaboration, funding mechanisms, and commonality of mission and philosophy were critical variables in the change equation (Dunlap et al., 2000; Knoster et al., 2000; Sailor, 1996). Additionally, the idea that an individual's behavior, appropriate or inappropriate, was the result of a continuous process of adaptation reflecting the interface between competence (a property of individuals) and context (a property of environments) was integral in creating a process in which all students were included, or normalized. Therefore, a successful intervention modulated the goodness-of-fit between competence and context (Albin, Lucyshyn, Horner, & Flannery, 1996). This goal was achievable by promoting skill development in an integrated fashion with environmental redesign. Multi-component systems change constituted the heart of PBIS.

As a proactive approach to discipline, PBIS allowed all stakeholders to serve an active role in setting, teaching, and monitoring expectations. PBIS offered a proactive, systematic and data-based application of science with a value-based focus on behavioral change and quality of life. These principles were interwoven school-wide in classroom and non-classroom settings. Non-classroom settings included cafeteria, hallways, gym, playgrounds, and other common areas (Crone & Horner, 2003). The primary goal of PBIS allowed stakeholders to accept ownership for the PBIS process and its impact on school climate (Scott, 2003). A secondary goal, rendered problem behavior irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective by helping an individual to

achieve his/her goals in a socially acceptable manner. Episodes of problem behavior were reduced or eliminated altogether (Carr, Horner, & Turnbull, 1999).

Muscott, Mann, Benjamin, and Gately (2004) asserted that the PBIS model used a three-tiered approach. Primary prevention utilized strategies for teaching all students and staff behavioral expectations required for school success. Secondary prevention addressed at-risk groups by offering more intensive approaches to students who did not respond at the primary prevention level. These approaches were geared to help students avoid chronic antisocial behavior. Tertiary strategies involved collaboration between schools and social agencies to develop more comprehensive intervention strategies. When students were viewed as social deviants they were categorized by the potential social and behavioral issues they demonstrated. Acknowledgement was given to the need to consider environmental factors shaping behaviors, rather than continuing to focus on pathology within the child. Most students needed differing levels of support throughout their elementary and secondary educational experience (Muscott, et al., 2004).

As the model evolved, the three-tiered approach was redefined and the primary tier represented universal interventions that could be implemented school-wide. This represented behaviors that could be implemented in non-classroom areas school-wide and created specific and consistent behavioral expectations. Secondary support provided positive group-based strategies with repeated practice creating new social behaviors. Tertiary interventions created individualized approaches for few students (Crone & Horner, 2003).

Baker (2005) recommended changes to PBIS that standardized the language associated with the tiered approach and represented the behavioral movement along a continuum, rather than in a tiered format. It was recommended that a circular representation presented a more

reflective graphic by connecting all parts to the center. During the same time, significant strides were made in scientifically verified methods of treating severe behavior disorders. Sailor et al. (2009) stated:

“Behavior modification” researchers in the expanding field of applied behavioral analysis reported remarkable successes in a wide range of very debilitating manifestations of disability, including aggression, self-injurious behavior, sexually deviant behavior, and other problems that had been considered sufficient grounds to cause a person to be institutionalized or to remain a resident in an institution if such behaviors emerged in that context. Many of the published successes of behavior modification with institutionalized persons involved systematic applications of contingent punishers (later called “aversives”)” (p. 6).

Two developmental areas, deinstitutionalization and civil rights, and behavior modification and use of aversives formed a conceptual paradox that put these movements on a collision course. The result was controversial, both in the scientific community of behavioral researchers and in the professional community of educational practice. The community at large regarded the treatments as immoral and abusive. Sailor et al. (2009) noted the use of painful aversives on students with disabilities was not likely to be tolerated and a number of federal lawsuits (cf., *Beard v. Hissomin Oklahoma*) confirmed this public reaction (p. 6).

### **School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support**

At the school-wide level, primary prevention focused on monitoring and preventing problem behaviors across all students in the school (Scott, 2003). There were four major elements that comprised a school-wide process: data, systems, practices, and outcomes. These elements worked together to build a system that was sustainable over a period of time.

PBIS and its successful implementation and sustainability were guided by five components of effective systems and effective change. The components and their associated objectives included:

1. Practices – our interactions with our students and others which consisted of:
  - a) Systematically approaching the implementation of more advanced procedures and levels of behavioral support and
  - b) Developing and implementing training materials and approaches to support the implementation of behavioral support.
2. Data – procedures for the collection and use of information which encompassed:
  - a) Supporting the evaluation of behavioral support implementation through the coordination and collaboration of local school districts, regional coalitions, project staff, and external program evaluators.
3. Outcomes – the understanding of the results of our actions which included:
  - a) Supporting the collection, aggregation, analysis, and synthesis of data from a range of sources (academic, social behavior, school actions, family, personnel and student satisfaction, services provided, etc.) in the evaluation of the impact of behavioral support approaches and
  - b) Making outcome data available and accessible to a wide range of constituents to support the public and policy maker decisions regarding behavioral support approaches.
4. Systems – the organizational and communication structure of the project which included:

- a) Establishing an organizational and fiscal structure to support the implementation of behavioral support principles across the state and
  - b) Expanding the level of representation and involvement across stakeholder groups across the state.
5. Sustainability – how to maintain practices and outcomes across time;
- a) To establish a system for the ongoing planning, implementation and evaluation of behavioral support interventions at the state, regional and local levels that function as independently and autonomously as possible and
  - b) To maintain current political and financial support for practices that support students and their families, create predictable and positive environments, and produce valued academic and behavioral outcomes and
  - c) Target the implementation of Positive Behavioral Support models and procedures within personnel training programs in a variety of related disciplines (OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2008).

PBIS had six critical elements that encompassed school-wide positive behavior processes.

The critical elements included:

1. Establish school-wide expectations for specific settings in the school.
2. Establish rules that align with the expectations in the specific setting.
3. Model, teach, and monitor through lesson plans the expectations/rules.
4. Establish a reinforcement system that reinforces the desired behaviors based on the expectations/rules.

5. Establish a continuum of procedures for discouraging displays of rule-violating behavior.
6. Establish procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the discipline system on a consistent basis (OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2008).

An effective school-wide system of discipline or positive behavioral interventions and supports was dependent on the structures and processes that were in place to support schools' sustained efforts. When setting up a school-wide system of discipline or positive behavioral supports and interventions, the following six steps were recommended based on findings by developers of PBIS:

1. Establish a school-wide leadership team to guide and direct the process. The team should be made up of an administrator, grade-level representatives, support staff, parents, and students.
2. Involve an administrator as an active supporter and participant (this should be secured before the process begins).
3. Ensure that eighty percent of the staff are supportive of the process.
4. Conduct a self-assessment of the current school-wide discipline system.
5. Create an action plan that can be implemented that is based on data.
6. Establish a system to collect office discipline referral data on a consistent basis to evaluate the effectiveness of the PBIS efforts at the school (OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2008).

PBIS made valuable contributions to improving the quality of life for all people involved in the process, mainly the behavior of adults. School-wide positive behavior support was not a

quick fix to behavior problems, nor was it a one-year process for schools. A sound system was created by a group of individuals who worked together to achieve a common goal. The goal was to create a system that used best practices by individuals within the organization for collective use (Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project, 2011). The extension of PBIS represented part of a larger movement in the social sciences and education away from traditional models that emphasized pathology and toward a new positive model that emphasized a positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 a) with a view to improving quality of life and preventing behavior problems (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 b). Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai, and Bolland (2004) noted that schools that fully implemented PBIS reported 20% to 60% fewer office discipline referrals, improved academic performance, and improved school climate for all stakeholders.

One of our nation's top priorities was to keep schools safe by providing a place where students could learn and teachers could teach free from threats and harm. Although positive student outcomes were the intended benefits of implementing universal PBIS, achievement of those desired student outcomes required the practices and processes to be implemented with fidelity. Sustainability was reflected by the enduring implementation of a practice at a level of quality that ensured the production of valued outcomes (McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008; McIntosh, Bohanon & Goodman, 2010). The critical mechanism by which a practice sustained itself was fidelity of implementation (McIntosh, Reinke, & Herman, 2009).

Implementation of school-wide PBIS utilized evidence-based strategies and systems to improve student performance and decrease problem behaviors. Individual school efforts needed support to develop a team-based approach to develop expectations, establish a decision making process and implement a cohesive plan. In 2007, Kincaid, Childs, Blasé, and Wallace reported a

Florida-based study designed to identify barriers and facilitators to this school-wide implementation process. Participants were grouped according to the classification of their school as either high or low-implementing. The barrier themes generated by the study were categorized as 21 separate items. Top barrier responses related to: staff buy-in, use of data, inconsistent implementation, reward system, implementation issues, time, miscellaneous, staff and student turnover, philosophical differences, misperceptions of PBIS and district support. Top facilitator themes rated as important, according to ranking included: district support, PBIS project support, use of data, school-level team trainings, communication, plan implementation, team membership, and team process functioning (Kincaid et al., 2007).

Muscott et al. (2004) studied school-wide implementation of PBIS in New Hampshire and sought to determine whether implementation could be achieved through a training and technical assistance network. Through the use of the state PBIS support office, of the initial schools surveyed, 54% (n=15) were able to meet the standards within 56 months of training and three-to-four months of introduction to students. The researchers discussed issues that made state-to-state comparisons difficult, including differences in implementation features between states. The study reported that at least half of the schools at each instructional level, except high school were able to meet the scores required to demonstrate successful implementation. Findings indicated a trend favoring overall implementation at schools with younger students. Muscott, et al. (2004) further posited that school-wide discipline systems may be more difficult to implement and sustain at the high school level, as they represented more diverse and complex systems. Further, study recommendations included programmatic consideration for creating PBIS systems that included both training and on-site technical assistance by trained, experienced PBIS facilitators.

Educators and legislators recognized the need for schools to utilize evidence-based approaches to proactively address the behavioral needs of all students. Thus, PBIS was instituted because the process, if implemented appropriately, had the potential to prevent exclusion of students and could improve educational results as a whole. By providing incentives for whole-school approaches through PBIS, social and academic outcomes could be achieved. Each day the investment in behavioral support approaches added value to schools and students. Since 1993, over 1,000 Louisiana public schools have been represented in trainings for behavioral support through the Louisiana Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Project (LAPBIS) and the Louisiana Department of Education (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009). While it has been supported through policy and legislative foundations, participation in the training and adoption of PBIS was largely voluntary on the part of schools and districts and in large part locally supported.

Following the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools were required to prepare individual functional assessments and plans for each student with significant behavioral problems. This process was impacted by time constraints, philosophical orientation toward behavior management, lack of knowledge about assessment, and intervention planning. State educational agencies were directed to oversee positive behavioral support plans (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 1997). PBIS represented the application of a broad range of interventions focused on individuals and systems using positive behavioral interventions and supports to create social and learning outcomes to reduce or prevent problem behaviors. Killu, Weber, Derby, and Barretto (2006) conducted a study that compared the resources and standardization of practices across state educational agencies. Results indicated a lack of attention to developing broad-based plans, thus impacting the effectiveness of

educational outcomes. The current status demonstrated that schools continued in a reactive, rather than proactive mode.

According to Morrissey, Bohanon, and Fenning (2010), schools were under pressure to find effective strategies to support the growing diversity of student needs in general education classrooms. PBIS was one model that gained empirical evidence of success as a method for addressing school-wide behavioral issues, classroom management, and individual student supports. Teaching and acknowledging appropriate behaviors on a prevention-oriented basis, rather than reacting once a problem occurred, was the first step in making safer schools which helped students stay in school and experience success. The PBIS model provided a system-wide process that involved teachers, students, parents, administrators, community members, and other staff members at the school. Further, the authors discussed key elements of a successful school-wide PBIS system. Key elements identified included:

1. Commit to addressing behavior in the school.
2. Form a representative team.
3. Examine behaviors at a school-wide level using data.
4. Choose three-to-five behavioral expectations.
5. Provide a systematic direct teaching model of expected behaviors to all staff.
6. Clarify consistent procedures for responding to problem behaviors.
7. Be systematic about utilizing data to monitor progress and adjust interventions

(Morrissey et al., 2010, p. 28).

### **Community Involvement Related to Positive Behavior Interventions and Support**

PBIS should be community-based and the relevant stakeholder constituency diverse and inclusive of not only practitioners but also administrators, policy makers, families, friends,

individuals with disabilities, and teachers. Therefore, focus groups and other sources of multi-perspective, narrative data are needed to assess and identify the full array of stakeholder priorities, the structural and organizational barriers to success, feasibility of proposed solutions, and effective packaging of change strategies (Ruef et al., 1999).

While identified components were important to the successful PBIS process, further literature reviewed on the relationship between community involvement and sustainability of the program yielded relevant points for inclusion. Chiefly, little research evidence existed, and was sorely needed, to demonstrate the effectiveness of the community collaboration model (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Iachini, Flaspohler, Bean, & Wade-Mdivanian, 2010). These researchers noted the expansion of school planning using a community collaboration model that allowed expansion of traditional boundaries through partnerships with both business and faith-based sectors. By bridging these resources, overall school success was mirrored in student achievement and healthy community development. The descriptive study, which used mixed methodology, reported quantitative data that were favorable to improvements in teacher satisfaction. Additionally, qualitative data showed emergent evidence that was encouraging and supportive for both teachers and stakeholders. Pilot schools expanded processes more quickly and with improved student success, while stakeholders reported feeling satisfied and fulfilled with their roles and responsibilities at the schools.

Hands (2010) reported that for several decades researchers advocated promoting student achievement through partnerships between schools, families, and communities. The author noted limitations by districts, government policies, and leadership relative to partnership initiation and sustainability. Epstein (2010) described that “When schools form partnerships with families and the community, the children benefit” (p. 81). The challenge to research and practice was

acknowledged and development of an interdisciplinary field of inquiry was supported that would bring the identified groups together using caring as the core concept.

### **History of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support in Louisiana**

PBIS was introduced to Louisiana as an individual behavior approach for students with severe behavior issues in 1993. PBIS created training and technical assistance for school districts in the development and implementation of positive behavior supports at the school, classroom, targeted group, and individual student levels. In particular, School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (SWPBIS) sought to create an environment where appropriate behavior happens naturally so that optimal learning can occur. Interventions were the focus for creating and sustaining primary-level preventions, secondary-level preventions, and tertiary-level preventions that improve school and community life for all children and youth by making problem behavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and appropriate behavior more functional and rewarding (OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2008).

In 2001, school-wide PBIS awareness workshops were completed throughout the state. Training for implementation of school-wide PBIS began in 2002. In 2007-2008, LAPBIS project established eight regional coalitions in Louisiana to allow for more training and technical assistance to occur and to develop a support structure for the sustainability of PBIS. Each regional coalition covered the same geographic area as an Educational Regional Service Center. PBIS in Louisiana was supported through Federal Special Education funding.

The PBIS process was an educational discipline initiated and sustained by a partnership among state and national departments of education, K-12 schools, and universities. Due to the initiation of the formal process in schools, which was done on an individual school basis, each

school's behavior support elements were different. However, information about the elements of the process were in the literature for several years and every school was assumed to have a portion of them in place (Carr et al., 2002).

### **Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Program Development and Delivery**

Positive Behavior Support in Louisiana was in existence since the early 1990s. The Louisiana State University Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Project was a pilot program under the University of South Florida (USF). The training curriculum was adapted from USF's materials to train school personnel at the primary level. LAPBIS staff trained schools at the primary level. Technical assistance was provided to schools on as needed basis. Schools registered for this voluntary training. In 2003, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act 1225 which mandated that each public school implement a positive behavioral support process was passed by Louisiana Legislators (Louisiana Supreme Court, 2003).

According to the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Reform Act (1225) of 2003, the legislature declared that good behavior and discipline of students were essential prerequisites for academic learning, the development of student character, and the general and educational socialization of children and youth. Also, bad behavior and lack of discipline in many schools of the state were impairing the quality of teaching, learning, character development, and, in some schools, were creating real and potential threats to school and public safety (Louisiana Supreme Court, 2003).

In light of current research and this legislation, it was determined that Louisiana schools needed to refocus discipline procedures. The focus was on positive expectations and the teaching and reinforcing of those expectations. The school improvement process would be used to align school-level decision-making structures to support collaboration and data-based decision

making. Schools became more effective and efficient places in which appropriate behavior was the norm and challenging behaviors served no function.

By refocusing discipline procedures on positive expectations and systems that reinforced those expectations, school personnel shifted their focus from negative behavior to supporting positive behavior. Traditional behavior management viewed the individual as "the problem" and tried to "fix" the individual. A positively focused discipline system viewed the systems, settings, and lack of skills as "the problem" and worked to change those components. Also, traditional behavior goals were focused on eliminating challenging behavior (as quickly as possible), while positive behavior support (a long-term approach) strived to reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behavior. By teaching more appropriate behaviors and providing the necessary supports, students and staff benefited from safe and positive learning environments (Hemmeter, Santos, & Ostrosky, 2006).

PBIS was an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school's sense of safety, and support improved academic outcomes. More than 10,000 U.S. schools were implementing PBIS and saving countless instructional hours otherwise lost to discipline (Sprague & Horner, 2006). The premise of PBIS was that continual teaching, recognizing, and rewarding of positive student behavior would reduce unnecessary discipline and promoted a climate of greater productivity, safety, and learning. PBIS schools applied a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted, and individualized interventions and supports which improved school climate for all students.

PBIS began in special education settings over 20 years ago, and worked well in that setting, but when those students went to areas of school that did not utilize PBIS strategies, the

students were not successful (Sailor et al., 2009). Therefore, educators began with the bottom of the triangle, which is school-wide, so that it could be utilized in all common settings with all students. PBIS was a collaborative, assessment-based approach to developing effective interventions for problem behavior. It emphasized the use of proactive, educative, and reinforcement-based strategies to achieve meaningful and durable behavior and life-style outcomes. PBIS aimed to build effective environments in which positive behavior was more effective than problem behavior.

The PBIS process was delivered to school personnel through the LAPBIS project on a regular basis. Training at each level consisted of several days of fundamental training and technical assistance days to follow up the initial fundamental training. All training through the project was voluntary and was free of cost to each participant (LSU College of Education, 2007). The process began as soon as the school leadership team completed training and returned to their school campus. Crucial elements were membership of the team, meeting times and dates designated, an appropriate team leader selected, and team roles and responsibilities designated to each team member. Team members reviewed with faculty and staff behavioral principles either in a large or small group setting. The team reviewed office discipline referral data by problem behavior, location, time, student, grade, staff, and average referrals per day per month to determine what expectations to target for the school year. Based upon the school data, three to five expectations were selected by the team. These three to five expectations were positively stated and posted in all common areas. Specific rules were written for each expectation, but with no more than five rules per expectation. Rules were developed for each specific targeted setting in the school building. Lesson plans were developed for teaching the expectations and rules by the team or other staff members. A reinforcement system was established that answered what

behavior is being reinforced, when the behavior was reinforced, and how the behavior was reinforced. The team determined how they would involve the faculty in the process of implementation. The team considered strategies for sharing data, procedures on getting staff input and feedback on plans, and how to reinforce staff. The team and administration ensured that the existing data system provided meaningful information and that the data was entered weekly, and the data were analyzed on a regular basis. Discipline referrals were defined and categorized into minor and major behaviors. A minor infraction form was developed and was compatible with the Louisiana Department of Education mandatory form. The referral process was established and the flow chart was well-defined and developed by the team and approved by the entire faculty and staff. Interventions that were effective for rule violations were developed at a hierarchal level for classroom and office managed violations. Teams taught all faculty members and staff the protocol for handling rule violations that were established. Once all of these critical PBIS elements were implemented they were assessed and verified on an annual basis.

### **Types of Training**

Training was developed for public schools and districts across the state in PBIS and was a joint effort by the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE) and the Louisiana State University's Positive Behavior Support Project. As of May 31, 2009, 1,022 schools had received training in universal level PBIS implementation. Nine hundred thirty-nine of universal trained schools were implementing universal level PBIS. One hundred thirty-three had received secondary training and eight schools had received training in tertiary level PBIS. In addition, LAPBIS offered other types of training to schools, districts, and regions. Types of training included: team training, facilitator training, technical assistance training, School-Wide

Evaluation Tool (SET) training, and SET reliability training (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009).

As a state, Louisiana had promoted and supported the use of PBIS to provide schools and local education agencies with effective, proactive approaches to behavioral issues. Louisiana's Model Master Discipline Plan indicated that all schools would apply the essential elements of SWPBIS. One of the nation's top priorities was to keep schools safe by providing a place where students could learn and teachers could teach free from threats and harm (McIntosh et al., 2008; McIntosh et al., 2010).

Furthermore, Louisiana teachers and administrators were facing a variety of challenging behaviors on campuses throughout the state. The lack of positive discipline in schools and classrooms across the state was responsible for low-test scores, poor school morale, academic underachievement, and violence. According to *The Christian Science Monitor* (Coeyman, 2002), educators worried that the job of controlling their classroom was becoming more challenging as children came to school each day with additional emotional baggage.

As the research clearly indicated, effective academic success for students was not possible when there were significant behavioral challenges occurring within a school or classroom (Sailor et al., 2009). Louisiana teachers were facing many of these kinds of challenges which inevitably impeded the effective delivery of high quality instruction. PBIS offered a systematic program for helping educators address these challenges by individualizing a program for their particular school environment.

### **National and Louisiana Discipline Statistics**

During the 2007-08 school year, 25% of public schools nationally reported that bullying occurred among students on a daily or weekly basis and further, 11% reported that student acts

of disrespect for teachers, other than verbal abuse, took place on a daily or weekly basis. With regard to other discipline problems reported as occurring at least once a week, 6% of schools reported student verbal abuse of teachers, 4% reported widespread disorder in the classroom, 4% reported student racial/ethnic tensions, and 3% reported student sexual harassment of other students. Twenty percent of public schools reported that gang activities had happened during 2007-2008 and 3% reported that cult or extremist activities had happened during this period (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In 2007-08, nationally a higher percentage of middle schools than primary schools reported various types of discipline problems. For example, 44% of middle schools compared to 21% of primary schools reported that student bullying occurred at least once a week. Also, a higher percentage of middle schools than high schools reported daily or weekly occurrences of student bullying. A greater percentage of high schools than middle schools reported any occurrence of gang activities or cult or extremist group activities during the school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

With this, national educators faced insurmountable issues in 2007-2008, the percentage of schools reporting discipline problems were generally smaller for schools where 25% or less of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch than for schools where 76% or more of the students were eligible. For example, 13% of schools where 76% or more of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch reported the daily or weekly occurrence of student verbal abuse of teachers, compared to 3% of schools where 25% or less of the students were eligible. The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs was a proxy measure of school poverty (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In 2007-2008, a greater percentage of national city schools than suburban schools, town schools, or rural schools reported student verbal abuse of teachers, student acts of disrespect for teachers other than verbal abuse, widespread disorder in the classroom, and gang activities. For example, 8% of city schools compared to 2 to 3% of suburban, town, or rural schools reported widespread disorder in the classroom. During the same school year, in general, the percentage of schools reporting discipline problems was higher in larger schools than in smaller schools. For example, 52% of schools with 1,000 or more students reported that gang activities occurred during the school year compared to 10 to 22% of schools with less than 1,000 students who reported this discipline problem (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In facing this national problem, the percentage of schools reporting that student verbal abuse of teachers occurred at least once a week was 6% in 2007-2008, lower than the percentage in 1999-2000 (13%). There were some measurable changes in the percentage of schools reporting selected discipline problems between the two most recent data collections, 2005-2006 and 2007-2008. A smaller percentage of schools reported cult or extremist activities in 2007-2008 (3%) than in 2005-2006 (4%). However, a larger percentage of schools reported widespread disorder in the classroom in 2007-2008 than in 2005-2006 (4 vs. 2%, respectively) and a larger percentage reported gang activities in 2007-2008 than in 2005-2006 (20 vs. 17%, respectively) (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In Louisiana, there was an inverse relationship between suspension rates and student performance. The 2004-2005 Louisiana State Education Progress Report indicated that on average higher performing schools had 10% fewer student suspensions than lower performing schools. Most educators agreed that most of the students removed for disciplinary infractions were the same students who needed more instructional time. In addition, there was a consistent

pattern of disproportional representation across ethnic and gender subgroups in the performance on state academic standards, the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices, and the identification of disabilities (specifically emotional and/or behavioral disorders and specific learning disorders). Specifically, black males tended to have lower academic performance, were more likely to be removed for disciplinary reasons, and were likely to be identified as having an emotional and/or learning disability (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009).

Statistics obtained from the Louisiana Student Information System (SIS) indicated a growing trend in the number of suspensions and expulsions across Louisiana's schools. There were a high number of Louisiana students who were removed from classroom instruction as a disciplinary action. In the 2004-2005 school year there were 79,133 In-School Suspensions (ISS), 92,193 Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS), 4,143 In-School Expulsions (ISE), and 3,933 Out-of-School Expulsions (OSE). While some expulsions were necessary for the protection of the general student body, many students were removed from school for repeated minor (i.e., non-life threatening) violations. The use of removals as a disciplinary action in Louisiana consistently increased over the past five years. From 2000 through 2005, there was an average annual increase in the percentage of students receiving ISS, OSS, ISE and OSE of 4.9%, 5.0%, 15.7% and 6.0%, respectively. These increases in the use of exclusionary practices indicated that removal was not effective in addressing (i.e., decreasing) challenging behaviors in the schools. It was necessary for schools to adopt more proactive, educational, data-driven approaches that were effective in reducing the need for reactionary, exclusion-based approaches to rule violations. This resulted in increased instructional time for all students (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009).

## **The Role of Leadership in the PBIS Process**

In order to ensure that classrooms used behavioral supports and effective disciplinary tools, each PBIS public school (PK-12) identified data-driven academic, career and technical, and discipline/behavioral performance results in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Throughout the process of positive behavior support, a team approach was crucial to ensure stakeholder input and ownership. Each school established and used a school-based leadership team which met on a regularly scheduled basis to review data and guide the positive behavior process. This leadership team, to the extent possible, included representatives of the school administration, both regular and special education teachers, parents, guidance counselors, and school bus operators (it may have included other groups, e.g., food services workers) (LSU College of Education, 2007).

Administrative support and leadership were essential for the success of PBIS. At the district level, administrators were active participants in the leadership team, providing political and fiscal support for the initiative, and ensuring resources were allocated. At the school level, administrator involvement was “non-negotiable” and ensured the success of PBIS efforts. Based on the literature regarding effective school administrators, Colvin (1999) identified 10 principal leadership strategies related to PBIS:

1. Maintaining standards regarding which innovations their school would employ.
2. Making a public statement of support once the faculty selected an innovation.
3. Establishing a representative leadership team to lead the process of implementing the innovation.
4. Supporting the team members to have the time and resources to accomplish the task.
5. Guiding rather than dictating decision making.

6. Taking a leadership role to model and reinforce implementing the innovation with fidelity.
7. Regularly attending and participating in team meetings.
8. Providing recognition to faculty and the team for their hard work.
9. Serving as the spokesperson to community stakeholders about the worth and importance of the innovations.
10. Establishing objective means to monitor and provide feedback to all staff about the effect of innovation (Colvin 1999, pp. 5-6).

As schools began the process of establishing a school-wide leadership team, the stakeholders committed to a systematic process that would take three-to-five years to be fully implemented. Two types of leadership teams were established at the school-wide level. A core team with three-to-seven participants was established at the school level. The stakeholders included but were not limited to: an administrator, special education representative, regular education representative, counselor, and a behavior specialist. A peripheral team was established as needed to increase input. Staffs included, but were not limited to: support staff such as bus driver, secretaries, custodians, and cafeteria workers. Support stakeholders were included, who were parents, students, and community members. The responsibilities of the team were to develop an ongoing school-wide action plan, assess and monitor behavior management, obtain staff commitment in the process of PBIS, and hold at least monthly team meetings. The PBIS team's main purposes were to oversee, monitor, and evaluate all planned objectives and activities. Team members held different roles through the course of the school year. A team leader facilitated meetings by reviewing the purpose and keeping the team focused on the action plan. A recorder transcribed the team's responses on the agenda or action plan at each team

meeting. The timekeeper monitored the amount of time available and ensured that the team was aware of time limits. The data specialist was trained in entering and accessing data from the discipline data system. A behavior specialist was needed who was competent in behavior principles and was able to assist in analyzing the discipline data. The facilitator was a school-based (internal) or district-level (external) individual who facilitated the team through the PBIS process and was the main contact person for the schools (LSU College of Education, 2007). All roles, responsibilities, and activities were associated with the prevention of the development and occurrence of problem behavior, development and maintenance of behavior, and management and evaluation of resources related to the provision of behavioral supports.

### **Critical Features of the Project Approach**

The approach of the Coalition for Behavioral Support was congruent with the recommendations, guidelines, and technical requirements of the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Implementer's Blueprint and Self-Assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The SWPBIS Implementer's Blueprint provided a rationale and a process for moving to scale with behavioral support practices. Nine critical features of a "state-wide," regional and district implementation were identified (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). They were considered the building blocks of all levels of behavioral support intervention. They were:

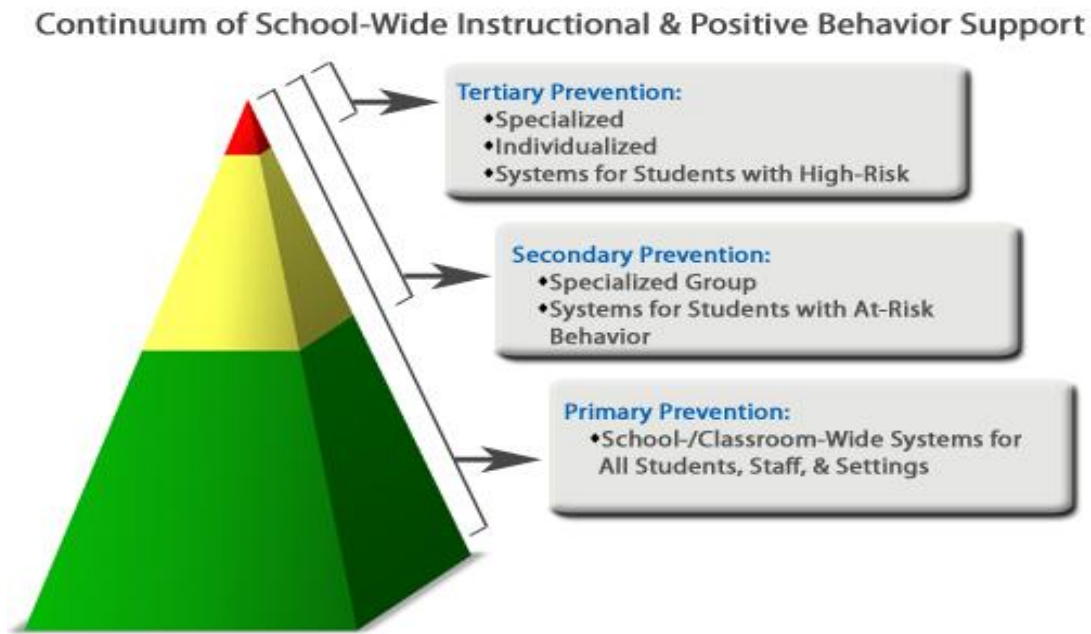
1. Leadership Team – A representative team of stakeholders that set the parameters of the efforts (e.g. how many regions or schools). Self-assessed the current state of practice and procedures. Developed a prevention and performance-based plan of action.
2. Coordination – Identified individuals to manage day-to-day operations and link agencies, schools, and resources.

3. Funding – Funding is secured for at least three years.
4. Visibility – Disseminated intent, purposes, activities, and outcomes.
5. Political Support – The emphasis was on student behavior as a valued and important outcome, along with the processes for assuring continued support.
6. Training Capacity – Leadership and teams are available at all levels of implementation.
7. Coaching Capacity – Availability and access to support for building and maintaining a PBIS network were evident.
8. Demonstrations – Successful schools and districts were used for demonstrations of the processes and outcomes of PBIS.
9. Evaluation – Developed processes for addressing the level of implementation, impact and outcomes, and the fidelity of the action plan. Data systems were developed and put in place and data were used for decision making at each level.

In addition, several features were assessed as emerging (demonstration, evaluation, visibility) or in place (e.g. funding, political support, initial training capacity) through the previous and ongoing efforts of the Louisiana Department of Education and the LAPBIS project, their partners, and dedicated trainers and schools. The level to which administrators accepted “ownership” of the change process was a critical variable in implementation and sustainability of an innovation. The closer the administrative structure was to the actual adopters of the innovation, the more likely ownership occurred.

### **Conceptual Framework**

School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (SWPBIS) was a three-tiered Model for behavior support. Figure 1 depicts the three levels of intervention.



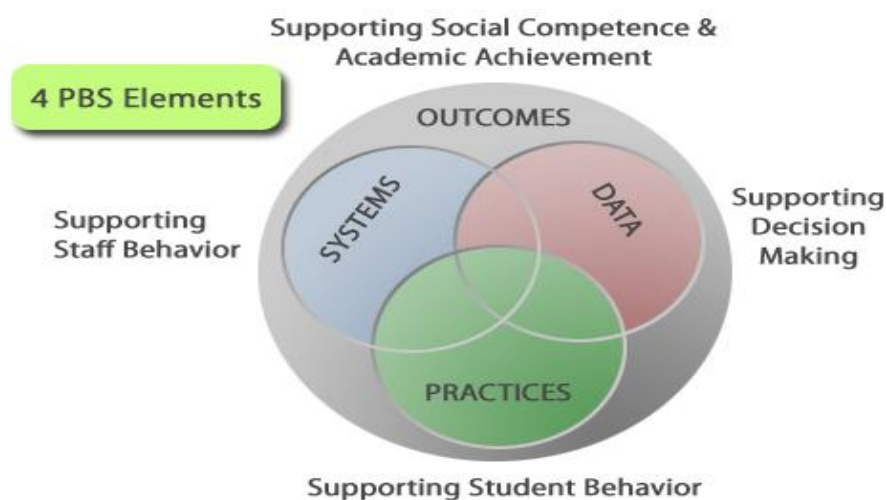
**Figure 1 OSEP Continuum of School-Wide Instructional and Positive Behavior Support**

The lower (green) section represented universal supports and interventions that were designed to support up to 85% of all students. Typically, when these interventions were in place up to 85% of students responded positively to them. However, some students needed additional support.

The middle (yellow) section of the triangle represented 5%-10% of students who needed additional more specialized interventions. Students in this area required small group interventions, such as counseling or conflict resolution. Finally, the upper (red) zone identified the top 1%-5% of students on campus who required the most intensive supports and interventions (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Intervention, & Supports, [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org), retrieved on December 6, 2008). These students required an Individualized Education Plan and/or a Behavior Intervention Plan (Sugai & Horner, 2006).

Louisiana trained schools on the school-wide level (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009). Figure 2 presents the relationships and interactions among the essential PBIS elements

(OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Intervention, & Supports, [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org), retrieved on December 6, 2008). There were supports in place in the form of technical assistance and training opportunities to support schools at more individualized levels.



**Figure 2** OSEP Model for Supporting Social Competence and Academic Achievement

Schools that implemented systems focused on positive behavior supports created more proactive, supportive solutions to the challenging behaviors on campus. This shift placed responsibility among all stakeholders; not singling out individuals to handle certain discipline problems. The sharing of responsibility underpinned the need for collaboration among stakeholders to make effective decisions on campus.

School teams were most effective when all stakeholders were collaborating, sharing responsibility, and making decisions based on data. School level data helped school teams determine an average of suspensions, what problem behaviors were most frequent on campus, where they occur, what time during the day they occur, and by which student and referring teacher. School-wide data helped teams identify where their needs were and what were the most appropriate interventions to put into place. Ongoing data collection and analysis determined

which individual students and/or staff were in need of additional support and necessary interventions. Individual student data analyses guided teams in determining what interventions worked, whether or not to continue with an intervention, maintain it, modify it, or terminate it and introduce something new (LSU College of Education, 2007).

As a collaborative effort among the SWPBIS trainers throughout the state, more than 1,000 schools were trained in the SWPBIS process. Districts saw the need for all of their schools to be trained in SWPBIS, and made efforts to provide this training district-wide. This district-wide effort included district-level planning to ensure successful implementation across all schools. There was a focus to build on positive efforts. Training continued to be provided along with technical support for schools as they moved along through the SWPBIS process (Louisiana Department of Education, 2009).

A combination of shifting focus, aligning school improvement efforts, collaboration, and data-based decision making were key to successfully changing the climate of the schools. The process was systematic and took three-to-five years for change to occur. There was a clear need in Louisiana to support appropriate behaviors on school campuses as PBIS moved forward with innovative instructional practices, as the behavioral component was a necessity for success. In order to ensure safe and positive learning environments that supported increased student learning and achievement, schools used research-based tools and practice to create a positive school culture. The three-tier model for creating academic and behavioral success was a complementary system. Providing schools access to research-based behavioral support strategies to meet the diverse behavioral needs of students was an important complement to the research-based strategies for academic interventions.

Investing in SWPBIS led to improvements in student learning and social behavior. Engaging in a process of data-based decision making to identify research-based practices and to build the systemic supports for educators along a continuum, allowed schools to create environments that prevented problem behavior and increased the likelihood that students engaged in appropriate behavior. Critical to success was the administrator's active role in supporting the school-based team process.

### **Teachers' Perceptions of Behavior Management and Intervention Strategies**

"Problem behaviors in children become more entrenched in a student's repertoire over time, early identification and treatment is necessary to ensure positive future outcomes" (Forness et al., 2000, p. 340). In order to ensure that teachers met the challenge of prevention and early intervention, an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions of behavior was crucial. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was a logical model for delivering behavioral support to all students (Sprague & Horner, 2006). Understanding teachers' perspectives about behavior was an essential element of implementing prevention focused initiatives because their perspectives likely influenced their choice of behavior management strategy. Limited knowledge and training in classroom management, combined with ineffective school discipline policies, led to misconceptions about behavior and the use of unsuccessful and even harmful practices, such as inadvertent reinforcement of the problem behavior, which maintained a cycle of negative interactions (Anderson-Ketchmark & Alvarez, 2010; Myers & Holland, 2000). Traditionally, many schools relied on punitive discipline practices to reduce problem behavior (Crone & Horner, 2000; Skiba & Knesting, 2001; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, and Gottfredson (2005) examined methods employed by school personnel to respond to problem behaviors and confirmed that schools relied on suspension and surveillance

cameras. They also reported that schools implemented strategies to reinforce appropriate student behavior, though neither disciplinary actions, nor reinforcement strategies, were regularly implemented with consistency or predictability. Instead, the strategies were applied in a reactionary fashion as opposed to following a preventive plan (Gottfredson et al., 2005).

### **Personnel Satisfaction and Team Effectiveness**

The relationship between staff attitudes in the workplace and team or organizational productivity dated at least to Depression-era America. Studies presented both qualitative and quantitative methods. The Post-war America economic boom provided an instrument for researching this topic. Judge (2001) described the 1955 study by Brayfield and Crockett as a classic work in this field that shaped the organizational understanding until at least 1985. Their qualitative review established at least a minimal relationship between the variables of job satisfaction and job performance. Judge further reported continued research in this area by 1985 showed a moderate correlation ( $r = .30$ ) between these concepts. Using a Five-Factor Model of Personality, Judge, Heller, and Mount (2002) expanded job satisfaction research to include the influence of individual personality. The most significant traits were shown to be neuroticism and extraversion. Thereby, neurotic individuals experienced more negative life events and selected job situations that promoted a negative effect. On the positive side, extraverts are likely to experience and select positive situations which promoted job satisfaction.

As the American workplace moved from the Depression-era to the post-industrial age, the work place expectations moved from individual task-oriented roles to dynamic, team production models. This team approach led to research to determine the relationship between satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). Citizenship behaviors were described as helping, sportsmanship, and similar concepts necessary to promote positive

team behaviors and outcomes (Yun et al., 2007).

While team approaches in education are not new and are essential features within special populations (e.g. students with disabilities), only recently has the attention focused on the role of teams in the implementation and sustainability of evidenced based educational interventions. Fixen, Blasé, Timbers, and Wolf (2001), utilized Implementation Teams to support Teaching Family couples, over 80% of the implementation sites were sustained for 6 years or more (up from 30%), and the time for them to achieve mastery of skills was reduced to 3.6 years. When an innovation is implemented using an implementation teams as infrastructure, the success rate was 80% after three years. This research supports that “how” innovation is delivered is critical to the success of the intervention.

Assuring that interventions are implemented is a core concern for diverse services in education such as consultation, pre-referral intervention, assessing response to intervention, and special education. Intervention implementation is necessary to assure that students come into contact with elements of the intervention plan presumed to influence their behavior (Noell&Gansle, 2006). Within prevention models such as PBIS, the integrity of implementation has relevance to both implementation of the planned interventions and the PBIS process itself by which those interventions are devised and evaluated (Burns &Ysseldyke, 2005; Gansle&Noell, 2007; Noell&Gansle, 2006). Although there is considerable variability in PBIS implementation efforts, most use some form universal school based team to engage in planning and problem solving. These problem solving teams (PSTs) (Burns &Ysseldyke, 2005) are commonly multidisciplinary work groups of teachers and administrators that use assessment data to develop PBIS plans for the school and use data to evaluate the efficacy of those interventions (Burns,

Wiley, & Viglietta, 2008). The team format is critical to PBIS implementation because it serves as the vehicle to design and implement universal intervention.

Although commonly used in practice, little is known about the implementation of PBIS teams except what can be extrapolated from research about pre-referral intervention team (PIT) models, which are similar in that they are multidisciplinary, collaborative efforts used to increase teacher effectiveness and support students experiencing difficulties (Graden, Casey, & Christenson, 1985). Meta-analytic research found large effects for PITs for both student outcomes ( $d = 1.43$ ) such as increased reading scores and decreased behavioral difficulties and systemic outcomes ( $d = .90$ ) such as reductions in referrals to and placements into special education. PITs started by university faculty for the purposes of conducting research resulted in a mean effect size that was more than twice as large as the mean effect size from research with teams that already existed in the field ( $d = 1.32$  and  $d = .54$  respectively), which was tentatively attributed to the implementation integrity of those teams (Burns & Symington, 2002). This attribution was supported by previous survey research that found inconsistency of PIT implementation, which suggested that the PIT model was “one of the most inconsistently applied processes in education” (Buck, Polloway, Smith-Thomas, & Cook, 2003, p. 350). Further research into why potentially poor team based implementation occurred found several reasons, including unfamiliarity with problem solving procedures and the perception that the process was too complex and inefficient (Doll et al., 2005). In addition, relationship of the duration of implementation to team functioning remains largely unaddressed.

These findings may suggest that equally important to the effectiveness of a particular practice is the framework by which an innovation is introduced into the organization. Utilizing implementation teams may well improve the chance of adoption as well as the sustainability of

the practice over time (Fixen, Blasé, Timbers, & Wolf, 2001). A third component, the social acceptability of the practice (Wing Institute, 2007) is frequently mentioned but seldom researched in the literature. How participants view the innovation over time remains a critical question in our understanding of the change process as well as factors related to the long-term sustainability of educational change. Therefore, the questions related to the functioning of implementation teams over time, their perceived needs and the social acceptability of PBIS as a school-wide intervention should be addressed as a critical area of research.

After the examination of PBIS and its emergence from numerous theories and philosophies, teacher perceptions are a critical factor that should be examined further to create the desired outcomes for schools. It is important to consider the type of school, location in Louisiana, and the number of years implementing the PBIS process. The current study sought to describe the expansion of PBIS in Louisiana, as well as to describe and compare the perceptions of PBIS by faculty members and staff at the school level through the use of two surveys. One survey investigated the team processes and practices and the second survey was designed to determine staff satisfaction regarding PBIS school-wide interventions.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **Population and Sample**

The target population for this study was defined as school personnel in Louisiana public school settings of PK-12 participating in school-wide positive behavior support who received training from the Louisiana School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Project or another entity, such as University of South Florida staff trainers and other educational consultants, or were self-taught in the PBIS process.. These survey participants are members of 811 schools that are implementing some or all portions of school-wide positive behavior support. These participants were identified by the Louisiana School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Project and were solicited to participate based on data that they submitted to the project staff.

The two-year sample selected reflects all school personnel who responded to the survey and the results were collected using the electronic survey tool – Survey Monkey®. The school personnel voluntarily responded to the surveys and the individuals that responded varied from year-to-year. The survey results represent individual surveys that were collected anonymously and the school name was retained and used to categorize results.

Within the two-year sample, the number of parishes represented for 2009 and 2010 were 46, and 32 respectively. These values were consistent for both the Team Process Survey and Staff Satisfaction Survey. The representation of primary schools for the Team Process Survey for the two consecutive year period was 1,157 and 612, respectively. The secondary school population was 692 and 514 for the corresponding time periods. On the Staff Satisfaction Survey primary school respondents were represented by 4,027 and 3,564 for the 2009 and 2010 year periods respectively. Secondary schools comprised of 2,596 and 2,076 respondents for each of the successive survey years.

## **Ethical Considerations and Study Approval**

Using established research protocol, prior to implementation of this study; appropriate forms were submitted to the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board. An Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight was filed, requesting the exemption based on the study's use of anonymous secondary data. The project, therefore; did not present physical, psychological, social or legal risks to participants and did not involve any protected health information. The research represented a study involving evaluation of normal educational practices using research data that could not be traced back to an individual participant. This protected the confidentiality of all participants who responded to the two surveys. The request for exemption was granted by the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board as IRB #E5465 (Appendix A).

## **Data Collection Instruments**

Using surveys adapted from the National Positive Behavior Support website, the researcher made editorial changes not substantive changes. There were two surveys used to collect data – PBIS Staff Satisfaction Survey (Appendix B) and PBIS Team Process Survey. The PBIS Staff Satisfaction Survey is designed for faculty/staff at PBIS schools to answer questions regarding the PBIS process and to gauge the understanding of PBIS concepts. The processes and concepts focused on how well the staff was informed on decisions made by the PBIS Leadership Team, how staff implemented the decisions made by the PBIS Team, the level of awareness each staff member had regarding the team's implementation process, and the impact that it had on each staff member to teach, re-teach, and evaluate the process throughout the entire school year. Each survey instrument consisted of 20 items. The Positive Behavior Support Team Process Survey is designed for PBIS team members to answer items regarding the functioning and

effectiveness of the team throughout the school year. The items focused on how well the PBIS Leadership Team on each campus functions. It incorporated how frequently the team met, how conflicts were handled, and how decisions the team made were implemented among the staff. The survey recorded responses regarding the common goals and vision of the leadership team per campus. The instrument used in the present study to measure leadership at the campus level is called the Team Process Survey. The Team Process Survey is a survey that analyzes the functioning and effectiveness of the PBIS Team throughout the school year.

### **Research Design**

As a baseline description for the presence of PBIS within Louisiana schools the Department of Education data will be used and analyzed as it relates to schools who have implemented this initiative. This is an ex post facto study with the data having been collected from 2009 to 2010. In order to determine the effectiveness of the implementation process of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports at the school level, two 20-itemed surveys were distributed – PBIS Staff Satisfaction Survey and the PBIS Team Process Survey. Responses to the surveys were anonymous and voluntary. The PBIS Staff Satisfaction Survey captured the respondents' level of understanding of PBIS concepts related to the individual school. The PBIS Team Process Survey recorded the respondents' perception of the function of the PBIS leadership team and the dissemination of information to the entire faculty. Each survey was collected annually for two years. Collecting data over a series of timed-intervals allowed for measurement of changes in staff ratings as it relates to the function of the leadership team and the implementation of the PBIS process.

The data were collected once during each program year. The surveys were available for a three-month period and the first collection was May 2009 and the subsequent year. The surveys

were e-mailed to each PBIS district contact in the state and the district contact was to disseminate to each school. Schools received the survey links through the district contact only, if the school had attended PBIS training at the school-wide level. The researcher was unaware of the total number of schools who received the survey links; therefore, the response rate was unable to be calculated.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected in this study were statistically analyzed, summarized, and reported according to each objective. Objective one was to describe the introduction and expansion of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports initiative within Louisiana Schools for the years 2009 through 2010 based on Louisiana Positive Behavior Project data reported by the Louisiana Department of Education related to:

- a) Type of school,
- b) Parish or independent school district, and
- c) Length of participation in PBIS process.

Objective one is descriptive in nature and represents data reported at the nominal and interval levels. Description was made relative to type of school as early learning, elementary school, middle school, high school or K-12 school. Parish or independent school system is designated by the civil parish distinction within the state of Louisiana or the independent school system established by the state government. Length of participation in PBIS was reported according to academic school-year calendars and was reported in whole numbers based on participation at the beginning of the academic year.

Objective two sought to describe the school-based PBIS leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process at primary and secondary schools as measured by responses

on the Team Process Survey for 2009 and 2010. This survey used a 5-point Likert-type scale to generate interval data for statistical analysis.

Objective three compared the school-based PBIS leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses on the Team Process Survey for 2009 and 2010. For this purpose, the interval data available from the Team Process Survey were used to compare means between groups. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to compare the means between the group cohorts. Use of the ANOVA allowed the examination of differences among several group means. Homogeneity of variance (Levene's test) is an assumption of ANOVA and if the data shows that this assumption has not been violated then the researcher will analyze the data using a Welch test that is appropriate when sample sizes are unequal. The test for homogeneity of variance will be examined for violation prior to analyzing any data using ANOVA.

Objective four described the perceptions of the staff satisfaction at primary and secondary schools and compared faculty and staff's perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the School-Wide PBIS process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses on the Staff Satisfaction Survey for 2009 and 2010. For this purpose, ANOVA was used to analyze the interval data available from the Staff Satisfaction Survey to compare means between groups.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to describe the expansion of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support program within Louisiana and to explore the perceptions of PBIS team members, faculty, and staff through the use of two surveys. The Team Process Survey and the Staff Satisfaction Survey were the two instruments utilized in this survey. The findings are reported in this chapter with respect to the four study objectives.

### Objective One

Objective one described the length of participation and expansion in the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports initiative within Louisiana Schools for the years 2009 and 2010 based on Louisiana Department of Education data related to:

- a) Type of school,
- b) Parish or independent school district, and
- c) Length of participation in PBIS process.

**Type of School.** For purposes of this study, type of school was categorized into five groups, as: early learning, elementary, middle, high school or other. The other category contains schools which represent overlapping grades according to the delineated groups. For example, kindergarten through grades 6, 8, or 12 and charter schools are classified as other for reporting of results.

The implementation and expansion of PBIS during the Spring Collection of 2009 and 2010 indicated the greatest number of schools participating were elementary schools ( $n = 196$ , 38.7%) and the other school category ( $n = 158$ , 31.2%), see Table 1. High Schools ( $n = 78$ , 15.4%) represented a slightly higher component than Middle schools ( $n = 60$ , 11.9%). Early learning centers represented the smallest portion ( $n = 14$ , 2.8%) of schools trained in PBIS

and this finding is consistent with the fact that this type of school represents the smallest portion of overall schools in the state.

**Table 1**  
**Louisiana Participation in Positive Behavior Interventions and Support by School Type from Spring Collections 2009-2010**

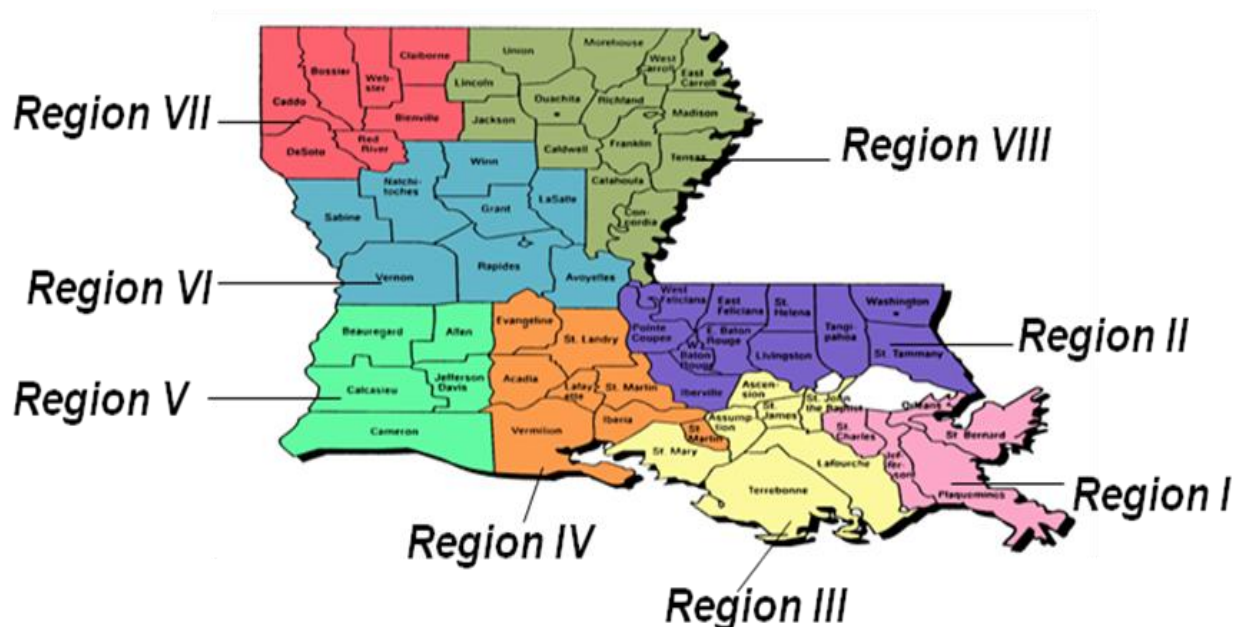
School Type	n	Percentage
Early Learning Center	14	2.8
Elementary School	196	38.7
Middle School	60	11.9
High School	78	15.4
Other <sup>a</sup>	158	31.2
Total	506	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Other indicates schools with K-6, K-8, K-12, or charter schools.

**Parish or Independent School District.**For purposes of this study, data analyzed by parish and independent school district yielded no significant descriptive information. Therefore, in order to relate the information to the expansion of the PBIS process across the state, the data output was grouped according to the regional designations utilized by the Louisiana Department of Education (see Figure 3).

Within this context, Region 2, demonstrates the greatest number of schools trained ( $n = 172$ , 34.0%) and therefore the highest level of participation in PBIS implementation. This finding is consistent with the geographical boundaries of the region containing the greatest number of total schools. The complete regional results are presented in Table 2. Three regions combine to account for the majority of all schools trained. Regions 2 ( $n = 172$ , 34.0%), region1 ( $n = 93$ , 18.4%) and region 4 ( $n = 61$ , 12.1%). Regions 2 and 1 represent the greatest urban and populous areas within Louisiana. Region 8, although mostly rural, comprises 14 parishes. Therefore, Region 8 represents the most significant number of schools within the state. Results indicated

more constrained participation from the following regions: Region 5 ( $n = 19$ , 3.8%), Region 3 ( $n = 47$ , 9.3%), and Region 7 ( $n = 41$ , 8.1%).



**Figure 3**  
**Regional Designations Utilized by the Louisiana Department of Education**

**Table 2**  
**Louisiana Participation in Positive Behavior Interventions and Support by Region from Spring Collections 2009-2010**

Region	n	Percentage
1	93	18.4
2	172	34.0
3	47	9.3
4	61	12.1
5	19	3.8
6	15	3.0
7	41	8.1
8	58	11.3
Total	506	100.0

**Length of Participation in PBIS.**For purposes of this study, the academic year-end data from school years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 were utilized. Study results yielded 423 PBIS schools did not receive training from LAPBIS project. This may indicate that these schools were either trained by an outside entity, such as University of South Florida staff trainers and other educational consultants, or were self-taught in the PBIS process. Within the total cohort of 811schools, 172 schools had at least three years of training. This early involvement may indicate that the school’s leadership valued best practice, research based strategies, and a systematic approach to handling behavior issues. See Table 3 for results related to length of participation in the PBIS process.

**Table 3**  
**Length of Participation in Louisiana Positive Behavior Interventions and Support from Spring Collections 2009-2010**

<b>Number of years</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
3 years	172	44.3
2 years	133	34.3
1 year	83	21.4
*Never Trained	423	52.1
Total	811	100.0

\*These schools were not trained by the LAPBIS Project.

## **Objective Two**

Objective two described the school-based PBIS leadership teams’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process at primary and secondary schools as measured by responses on the Team Process Survey for spring collections from the 2009 and 2010 school years. This survey used a 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The responses generated interval data for the statistical analysis. The objective being descriptive in nature was analyzed and reported using means and standard

deviations. The mean score for all items on all years of the Team Process Survey was 4.14 ( $SD = .635$ ). The majority of the participants surveyed had an overall positive response to report. The reliability analysis of the Team Process Survey was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha and the score was .948 (based on 19 items analyzed).

Respondents from primary schools completed 1,769 surveys which were submitted over the course of two years. Respondents were directed to rate the extent of their perception of the team process as it functions on their own campus. The items on the team process survey assessed how the school-based team implemented the PBIS process. This included internal and external factors that all public schools are asked to face each school year.

The mean and standard deviation of the participant responses to each item in the Team Process Survey were calculated. The survey item that received the highest level of agreement from respondents was "The team has a common vision" across both years with an overall mean 4.49 ( $SD = .807$ ). The survey item that received the second highest level of agreement from respondents was "Team has common goals" with a mean of 4.48 ( $SD = .813$ ). The item with the lowest level of agreement for the survey years was "There has been an increase in the number of community entities that support the school" with a mean of 3.29 ( $SD = .963$ ). The survey item with the second lowest level of agreement was "I would like more training about PBIS strategies" with a mean of 3.78 ( $SD = 1.033$ ). Overall, most of the responses fell within the "agree" range on the interpretive scale. Table 4 illustrates the mean score and standard deviation for each survey item representing primary school respondent's level of agreement with their perception on the team process survey over two years. Table 4 further illustrates the overall mean and standard deviation cumulatively for both spring collection years for primary schools.

Respondents from secondary schools completed 1,206 surveys which were taken over the course of two years. The mean and standard deviation of the responses to each item in the Team Process Survey were calculated. The item that received the highest level of agreement from respondents was “A school-based administrator is an active member of the team” for two years with an overall mean 4.54 ( $SD = .757$ ) and the seconded highest mean score item was “The team has a common vision for the school” with an overall mean 4.52 ( $SD = .722$ ). The item with the lowest level of agreement was “There has been an increase in the number of community entities that support the school” with a mean of 3.31 ( $SD = .930$ ). The item with the second lowest level of agreement was “Family support for the team and school has increased since program implementation” with a mean of 3.50 ( $SD = .985$ ). Overall, most of the responses fell within the “agree” range on the interpretive scale. Table 5 illustrates the mean score and standard deviation for each item representing secondary school respondent’s level of agreement with their perception on the team process survey over two years. Table 5 presents the overall mean and standard deviation cumulatively for two spring collection years for secondary schools.

**Table 4**  
**Description of Perceptions from Louisiana Primary School Respondents on the Team Process Survey for Spring Collection Years 2009-2010**

Team Process Survey Items	2009 N=1157		2010 N=612		Overall		Overall Category
	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	IS <sup>b</sup>
Team has common goals	4.48	.025	4.48	.844	4.48	.813	SA
Team has a common vision	4.49	.025	4.49	.836	4.49	.807	SA
Team members actively participate	4.11	.030	4.11	.024	4.14	.997	A

**Table Continued**

Team member's goals are recognized throughout the process and planning	4.19	.027	4.19	.923	4.21	.886	A
Team members share thought/concerns	4.41	.026	4.41	.869	4.40	.869	A
Team is able to resolve conflicts effectively	4.27	.025	4.27	.864	4.28	.845	A
Team facilitators are effective in guiding the team through the process	4.32	.027	4.32	.928	4.33	.897	A
Family support for the team and school has increased since program implementation	3.49	.029	3.49	.994	3.49	1.000	A
Team members are accomplishing goals within the identified timelines	4.09	.026	4.09	.890	4.10	.880	A
Team is able to agree on strategies identified for the school	4.31	.024	4.31	.804	4.32	.794	A
School-based administrator is an active member of team	4.45	.026	4.45	.890	4.47	.854	SA
District-based administrator is available for team support	4.14	.026	4.14	.900	4.14	.891	A
Degree of local control over settings and resources is adequate to support the process	3.97	.027	3.97	.932	3.97	.927	A
Systems issues in the school or district do not impede the team structure and functioning	3.94	.028	3.94	.965	3.96	.933	A
School policies and procedures support the PBS process	4.34	.026	4.34	.893	4.35	.860	A
Agencies agreed to work with team to meet school's needs to continue to be involved	3.84	.027	3.84	.906	3.84	.897	A
There has been an increase in the number of community entities that support the school	3.29	.028	3.29	.959	3.29	.963	NS
My vision for a positive future for this school has improved	4.12	.028	4.12	.956	4.12	.941	A

**Table Continued**

I would like more training about PBIS strategies	3.78	.030	3.78	1.027	3.78	1.033	A
Overall Mean Scores	4.12	.668	4.14	.618	4.13	.651	

<sup>a</sup>Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree

<sup>b</sup>Interpretive scale: <1-1.44 = SD, 1.45-2.44 = D, 2.45-3.44 = NS, 3.45-4.44 = A and >4.45 = SA

**Table 5**

**Description of Perceptions from Louisiana Secondary School Respondents on the Team Process Survey for Spring Collection Years 2009-2010**

Team Process Survey Items	2009 N=692		2010 N=514		Overall		Overall Category
	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	IS <sup>b</sup>
Team has common goals	4.50	.756	4.50	.768	4.50	.761	SA
Team has a common vision	4.53	.683	4.51	.773	4.52	.722	SA
Team members actively participate	4.15	.978	4.15	.961	4.15	.970	A
Team member's goals are recognized throughout the process and planning	4.28	.836	4.30	.837	4.29	.836	A
Team members share thought/concerns	4.44	.825	4.42	.880	4.43	.849	A
Team is able to resolve conflicts effectively	4.30	.839	4.30	.850	4.30	.843	A
Team facilitators are effective in guiding the team through the process	4.39	.820	4.35	.843	4.37	.830	A
Family support for the team and school has increased since program implementation	3.49	.972	3.51	1.003	3.50	.985	A
Team members are accomplishing goals within the identified timelines	4.12	.828	4.12	.870	4.12	.845	A

**Table Continued**

Team is able to agree on strategies identified for the school	4.37	.717	4.39	.769	4.38	.739	A
School-based administrator is an active member of team	4.54	.743	4.53	.775	4.54	.757	SA
District-based administrator is available for team support	4.10	.928	4.14	.857	4.12	.899	A
Degree of local control over settings and resources is adequate to support the process	4.02	.867	4.02	.900	4.02	.881	A
Systems issues in the school or district do not impede the team structure and functioning	3.98	.880	3.96	.912	3.97	.894	A
School policies and procedures support the PBS process	4.40	.769	4.39	.795	4.40	.780	A
Agencies agreed to work with team to meet school's needs to continue to be involved	3.87	.863	3.84	.872	3.86	.867	A
There has been an increase in the number of community entities that support the school	3.29	.929	3.34	.930	3.31	.930	NS
My vision for a positive future for this school has improved	4.20	.844	4.14	.862	4.18	.852	A
I would like more training about PBIS strategies	3.79	1.057	3.69	1.083	3.75	1.069	A
Overall Mean	4.16	.597	4.15	.632	4.15	.612	

<sup>a</sup>Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree

<sup>b</sup>Interpretive scale: <1-1.44 = SD, 1.45-2.44 = D, 2.45-3.44 = NS, 3.45-4.44 = A and >4.45 = SA

### Objective Three

Objective three compared the school-based PBIS leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses

on the Team Process Survey for 2009 and 2010. The interval data available from the Team Process Survey were used to compare means between the two groups as determined by each school year that the data were collected. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was utilized to compare the means between the groups. Use of the ANOVA determined differences among several group means for the spring collections of 2009 and 2010 school years.

There was no statistically significant difference between the overall primary schools team process score compared to the overall secondary schools team process score ( $F_{1,2973} = .108, p = .743$ ). The Levene's statistic was not statistically significant ( $p = .909$ ). An ANOVA test was utilized to compare the overall mean score of the primary school Team Process Scores to the secondary schools overall Team Process Scores in the year 2009. The analysis showed no statistically significant between the two school types within the year 2009 ( $F_{1, 1848} = 1.519, p = .218$ ). The Levene's statistic was not statistically significant ( $p = .860$ ). The research also examined the comparison of the 2010 overall Team Process Scores between the primary and secondary schools. The ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant difference between the Team Process Scores of the primary and secondary schools in 2010 ( $F_{1, 1124} = .115, p = .734$ ). The Levene's statistic was not statistically significant ( $p = .860$ ).

#### **Objective Four**

Objective four described the perceptions of the staff satisfaction at primary and secondary schools and compared faculty and staff's perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the School-Wide PBIS process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses on the Staff Satisfaction Survey. To address the descriptive component of the objective, the Staff Satisfaction Survey for spring collections from the 2009 and 2010 school years were utilized. This survey used a 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and

5 = strongly agree. The responses generated from the interval data for statistical analysis was reported using means and standard deviations. The mean score for all items on both years of the Staff Satisfaction Survey was 4.04 ( $SD = .68$ ). The majority of the participants surveyed had an overall positive response to report. The reliability analysis of the Staff Satisfaction Survey was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha and the score was .934 (total of 19 items on the analysis). To address the comparative intent of the objective, ANOVA was used to analyze the interval data available from the Staff Satisfaction Survey to compare means between groups for 2009 and 2010.

Respondents from primary schools completed 7,592 surveys which were submitted over the course of two years. Respondents were directed to rate the extent of their perception of the level of satisfaction with the School-Wide PBIS process on their own campus. The items on the staff satisfaction survey assessed how satisfied the faculty and staff members were with the PBIS process.

The mean and standard deviation of the responses to each item in the Staff Satisfaction Survey were calculated. The item that received the highest level of agreement from primary school respondents was "I have positively stated classroom rules that align with the school-wide expectations posted and visible in my classroom" for two years with an overall mean 4.60 ( $SD = .710$ ). The item that received the second highest level of agreement from primary school respondents was "School-wide expectations are posted and visible within my classroom" with a mean of 4.55 ( $SD = .806$ ). The item with the lowest level of agreement was "I would like more training about PBS strategies" with a mean of 3.52 ( $SD = 1.085$ ). The item with the second lowest level of agreement was "School rules are consistently applied to everyone" with a mean of 3.71 ( $SD = 1.263$ ). Overall, most of the responses fell within the "agree" range on the

interpretive scale. Table 6 illustrates the mean score and standard deviation for each item representing primary school respondent's level of agreement with their perception on the staff satisfaction survey over two years. Table 6 also illustrates the overall mean and standard deviation cumulatively for both spring collection years for primary schools.

Respondents from secondary schools completed 4,672 surveys which were taken over the course of two years. The mean and standard deviation of the responses to each item in the Staff Satisfaction Survey were calculated. Two items received the highest level of agreement from secondary school respondents. They were "I have positively stated classroom rules that align with the school-wide expectations posted and visible in my classroom" and "School-wide expectations are posted and visible within my classroom" with means of 4.44 ( $SD = .846$ ). The item with the lowest level of agreement was "School rules are consistently applied to everyone" with a mean of 3.31 ( $SD = 1.335$ ). The item with the second lowest level of agreement was "I would like more training about PBS strategies" with a mean of 3.41 ( $SD = 1.124$ ). Overall, most of the responses fell within the "agree" range on the interpretive scale. Table 7 illustrates the mean score and standard deviation for each item representing secondary school respondent's level of agreement with their perception on the staff satisfaction survey over two years. Table 7 also illustrates the overall mean and standard deviation cumulatively for both spring collection years for secondary schools.

The findings illustrated in Table 8 indicate a statistically significant difference in the overall scale score ( $F_{1, 12262} = 85.478, p = >.001$ ) for overall scores between year 2009 and 2010 based on the Staff Satisfaction Survey. The Levene's statistic was statistically significant at  $p = .022$ . Given the significant Levene's finding the researcher used a Welch score ( $F_{1, 12005.476} =$

120.949,  $p = >.001$ ). The 2010 mean score was 4.11 compared with the 2009 mean score of 3.98; indicating that the staff satisfaction score was higher for the 2010 year cohort.

**Table 6**  
**Description of Perceptions from Louisiana Primary School Respondents on the Staff Satisfaction Survey for Spring Collection Years 2009-2010**

Staff Satisfaction Survey Items	2009 N=4027		2010 N=3565		Overall		Overall Category
	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	IS <sup>b</sup>
At least 80% of the faculty use PBS strategies on a regular basis	4.22	.958	4.34	.902	4.28	.934	SA
I am aware of the activities of the PBS team	4.34	.867	4.42	.864	4.38	.866	SA
I regularly receive information about behavior concerns across campus	3.93	1.088	4.00	1.095	3.96	1.092	A
Adequate time and preparation was given to teaching the school-wide expectations	4.20	.938	4.34	.853	4.27	.902	A
School-wide expectations are posted and visible in my classroom	4.49	.831	4.61	.773	4.55	.806	A
I have positively stated classroom rules that align with the school-wide expectations posted and visible in my classroom	4.57	.706	4.62	.712	4.60	.710	A
Consequences are posted and visible in my classroom	4.26	1.015	4.33	1.010	4.29	1.013	A
I find it easy to follow the school's referral process	3.93	1.085	4.08	1.047	4.00	1.070	A
I have received sufficient training on how to appropriately handle problematic students	3.79	1.111	3.91	1.076	3.85	1.096	A
School rules are consistently applied to everyone	3.62	1.277	3.81	1.241	3.71	1.263	A

**Table Continued**

Our school-wide reinforcement system allows for sufficient incentives to recognized appropriate student behavior	4.12	1.000	4.26	.961	4.18	.984	SA
I feel that students are reinforced for good behavior at an appropriate rate	4.04	1.023	4.14	1.010	4.09	1.018	A
Our school has been clear about emergency procedures during a crisis	4.25	.913	4.39	.885	4.32	.903	A
Families regularly receive information about our school's PBS process	3.70	1.034	3.85	1.018	3.77	1.029	A
My district supports my school with the PBS process	4.07	.901	4.20	.876	4.13	.892	A
The atmosphere of the school is positive	4.05	1.024	4.13	1.019	4.09	1.022	A
Overall, I feel the initiatives of the PBS team have had a positive impact on student behavior	4.00	1.008	4.13	.976	4.06	.995	NS
Our school principal is a vital part and supports the PBS process	4.23	.967	4.03	.957	4.26	.963	A
I would like more training about PBS strategies	3.53	1.083	3.52	1.087	3.52	1.085	
Overall Mean Scores	4.07	.668	4.17	.667	4.12	.669	

<sup>a</sup>Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree

<sup>b</sup>Interpretive scale: <1-1.44 = SD, 1.45-2.44 = D, 2.45-3.44 = NS, 3.45-4.44 = A and >4.45 = SA

**Table 7**  
**Description of Perceptions from Louisiana Secondary School Respondents on the Staff Satisfaction Survey for Spring Collection Years 2009-2010**

Staff Satisfaction Survey Items	2009 N=2596		2010 N=2076		Overall		Overall Category
	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD	IS <sup>b</sup>
At least 80% of the faculty use PBS strategies on a regular basis	3.81	1.033	3.96	1.020	3.88	1.030	SA
I am aware of the activities of the PBS team	4.13	.933	4.26	.901	4.19	.921	SA
I regularly receive information about behavior concerns across campus	3.69	1.136	3.96	1.095	3.81	1.126	A
Adequate time and preparation was given to teaching the school-wide expectations	3.91	1.010	4.16	.934	4.02	.984	A
School-wide expectations are posted and visible in my classroom	4.32	.904	4.57	.744	4.44	.846	A
I have positively stated classroom rules that align with the school-wide expectations posted and visible in my classroom	4.37	.848	4.53	.726	4.44	.800	A
Consequences are posted and visible in my classroom	3.90	1.168	4.06	1.119	3.97	1.149	A
I find it easy to follow the school's referral process	3.82	1.141	4.04	1.039	3.92	1.102	A
I have received sufficient training on how to appropriately handle problematic students	3.73	1.084	3.93	1.049	3.82	1.073	A

**Table Continued**

School rules are consistently applied to everyone	3.22	1.340	3.43	1.318	3.31	1.335	A
Our school-wide reinforcement system allows for sufficient incentives to recognized appropriate student behavior	3.85	1.050	4.03	1.013	3.93	1.037	SA
I feel that students are reinforced for good behavior at an appropriate rate	3.72	1.071	3.89	1.046	3.80	1.063	A
Our school has been clear about emergency procedures during a crisis	4.16	.951	4.31	.867	4.23	.918	A
Families regularly receive information about our school's PBS process	3.42	.997	3.57	1.019	3.49	1.009	A
My district supports my school with the PBS process	3.85	.952	4.05	.911	3.94	.939	A
The atmosphere of the school is positive	3.85	1.051	4.02	1.011	3.93	1.037	A
Overall, I feel the initiatives of the PBS team have had a positive impact on student behavior	3.73	1.039	3.86	1.035	3.78	1.039	NS
Our school principal is a vital part and supports the PBS process	4.03	1.024	4.16	.980	4.09	1.006	A
I would like more training about PBS strategies	3.45	1.102	3.35	1.150	3.41	1.124	NS
Overall Mean Scores	3.84	.678	4.00	.665	3.91	.677	

<sup>a</sup>Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree

<sup>b</sup>Interpretive scale: <1-1.44 = SD, 1.45-2.44 = D, 2.45-3.44 = NS, 3.45-4.44 = A and >4.45 = SA

**Table 8**  
**One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing the Differences in Overall Staff Satisfaction Perceptions Scores from Louisiana Respondents for Spring Collection Years 2009-2010**

	df	SS	MS	F <sup>a</sup>	P <sup>b</sup>
Between Groups	1	37.989	37.989	85.478	>.001
Within Groups	12262	5619.235	.458		
Total	12263	5674.533			

<sup>a</sup> One-Way Analysis of Variance

<sup>b</sup> .05 Alpha Level for the Two-Tailed of Significance

The findings illustrated in Table 9 indicate a statistically significant difference in the overall staff satisfaction scale score ( $F_{1, 6621} = 183.907, p = >.001$ ) for year 2009 between primary and secondary schools. The Levene's statistic was statistically significant at  $p = .043$ . Given the significant Levene's finding, the researcher used a Welch score ( $F_{1, 5476.160} = 182.721, p = >.001$ ). The 2009 staff satisfaction scale mean score for the primary school respondents was 4.07 with the secondary school respondent score of 3.84; thus indicating that the staff of primary schools were more satisfied with PBIS process.

The findings illustrated in Table 10 indicate a statistically significant difference in the overall staff satisfaction scale score ( $F_{1, 5639} = 85.478, p = >.001$ ) for year 2010 between primary and secondary schools. The Levene's statistic was not statistically significant with a  $p$  value of .529. The 2010 staff satisfaction scale mean score for the primary school respondents was 4.17 with the secondary school respondent score of 4.00; thus indicating that the staff of primary schools were more satisfied with PBIS process. This result was also congruent in the 2009 staff satisfaction scale score between primary and secondary schools.

**Table 9**  
**One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Differences in Perceptions from Louisiana**  
**Respondents on the Staff Satisfaction Score between Primary and Secondary Schools for Spring**  
**Collection Year 2009**

	df	SS	MS	F <sup>a</sup>	P <sup>b</sup>
Between Groups	1	83.108	83.108	183.907	>.001
Within Groups	6621	2992.024	.452		
Total	6622	3075.132			

<sup>a</sup> One-Way Analysis of Variance

<sup>b</sup> .05 Alpha Level for the Two-Tailed of Significance

**Table 10**  
**One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Differences in Perceptions from Louisiana**  
**Respondents on the Staff Satisfaction Score between Primary and Secondary Schools for Spring**  
**Collection Year 2010**

	df	SS	MS	F <sup>a</sup>	P <sup>b</sup>
Between Groups	1	37.989	37.989	85.478	>.001
Within Groups	5639	2506.115	.444		
Total	5640	2544.103			

<sup>a</sup> One-Way Analysis of Variance

<sup>b</sup> .05 Alpha Level for the Two-Tailed of Significance

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Purpose of the Study**

The overall purpose of this study was to examine faculty and staff perceptions of the Leadership Team and the PBIS process as it functions in their school. Specifically, the study addressed the following objectives:

1. Describe the introduction and expansion of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports initiative within Louisiana Schools for the years 2009 and 2010 based on Louisiana Department of Education data related to:
  - d) Type of school;
  - e) Parish or independent school district; and
  - f) Length of participation in PBIS process.
2. Describe the school-based PBIS leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process at primary and secondary schools as measured by responses on the Team Process Survey for 2009 and 2010.
3. Compare the school-based PBIS leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses on the Team Process Survey for 2009 and 2010.
4. Describe the perceptions of the staff satisfaction at primary and secondary schools and compare faculty and staff's perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the School-Wide PBIS process between cohorts and type of school as measured by responses on the Staff Satisfaction Survey for 2009 and 2010.

## **Procedures**

This study targeted team members implementing the PBIS process and staff members who were employed by primary and secondary schools in Louisiana that had implemented PBIS at least six months prior to survey completion. However, the accessible population was individuals that completed the survey who are employed by PBIS schools.

The PBIS Staff Satisfaction Survey and the Team Process Survey were the two surveys utilized for the purpose of this study. The researcher administered the two surveys via an online survey system (Survey Monkey ©) to each district contact and asked them to disseminate the survey links to school personnel in their own districts. The links were also posted on the Louisiana Positive Behavior Support Project website ([www.lapositionalbehaviorsupport.com](http://www.lapositionalbehaviorsupport.com)). A total of 2,975 team members responded to the Team Process Survey over a two-year period and a total of 12,264 staff responded to the Staff Satisfaction Survey over a two-year period.

There were 1,849 responses representing 48 districts in 2009, and 1,126 responses representing 34 districts in 2010 that were collected on the Team Process Survey. There were 6,623 responses representing 45 districts in 2009 and 5,641 responses representing 45 districts which were collected on the Staff Satisfaction Survey. The team process survey was given to all school-wide leadership team members to determine how their team was functioning as a school-wide positive behavior interventions and support team. Participants were surveyed about their satisfaction of school-wide positive behavior interventions and support on their school campus.

## **Summary of Findings**

Overall, the team process surveys indicated that the PBIS teams were functioning collaboratively and effectively as indicated by the responses to the questions presented. Areas of

concern that emerged from the responses were: family engagement and community involvement with the PBIS process.

Overall, the staff satisfaction survey responses indicated that staff were satisfied with the PBIS process and felt comfortable with the implementation process. Areas of concern that emerged from the responses on the questions were: school rules were not consistently being applied, lack of interest in further training about PBIS strategies.

**Objective One.** Objective one described the length of participation in the PBIS process as it relates to each school who reported to the Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana State University PBIS project. Based on the following characteristics:

- a) Type of school,
  - b) Parish or independent school district, and
  - c) Length of participation in PBIS process.
- Type of school – Elementary schools participated in PBIS implementation ( $n= 196$ , 38.7%) and the lowest number of participating schools were Early Learning Centers ( $n= 14$ , 2.8%).
  - Parish or independent school district – these results yielded no significant descriptive output so therefore, for use of analysis, data were grouped according to regional designations within the confines of the Louisiana Department of Education. Region 2 demonstrated the largest number of schools trained ( $n=172$ , 34.0%) and therefore, accounted for the highest level of participation of PBIS implementation. Three regions combined accounted for the majority of all schools trained in Louisiana. Region 2 ( $n=172$ , 34.0%) Region 1 ( $n=93$ , 18.4%) and Region 4 ( $n=61$ , 12.1%).

- Length of participation in PBIS process – Of the 811 schools who reported there were 133 schools who had implemented the process for 2 years. Of the 811 schools who reported there were 423 schools who had never received training from the Louisiana Positive Behavior Support Project.

**Objective Two.** Objective two described the PBIS Leadership teams' perceptions of the effectiveness of the team process at their particular school. The item that received the highest level of agreement from primary schools was "The team has a common vision" with a mean of 4.49 which fell in the strongly agree range on the interpretive scale. The item with the lowest level of agreement reported from primary schools, "There has been an increase in the number of community entities that support the school" with a mean of 3.29. The items that received the highest level of agreement from secondary schools were "School based administrator is an active member of team" with a mean of 4.54 and "The team has a common vision" with a mean 4.52. The item that received the lowest level of agreement was "There has been an increase in the number of community entities that support the school" with a mean of 3.31.

**Objective Three.** Objective three compared the perceptions of effectiveness of the team process by determining the participants' ability to strongly agree with each survey item between cohorts across years and school type. The findings for all schools and all years indicate no statistically significant difference in overall team process scores between the primary schools team process score compared to the secondary schools team process score ( $F_{1, 2973} = .108, p = .743$ ). In 2009 ( $F_{1, 1848} = 1.519, p = .218$ ) and 2010 ( $F_{1, 1124} = .115, p = .734$ ).

**Objective Four.** Objective four described the perceptions of the staff satisfaction at primary and secondary schools and compared faculty and staff's perceptions of the level of satisfaction with the School-Wide PBIS process between cohorts and type of school as measured

by responses on the Staff Satisfaction Survey for 2009 and 2010. Overall, most of the responses fell within the “agree” range on the interpretive scale. Two items were consistently ranked highest by both primary school and secondary school respondents. These items were: “I have positively stated classroom rules that align with the school-wide expectations posted and visible in my classroom” and “School-wide expectations are posted and visible within my classroom.” Two items ranked consistently lowest among both primary school and secondary school respondents. These items were: “I would like more training about PBIS strategies” and “School rules are consistently applied to everyone.” When comparing the perceptions of level of satisfaction between cohorts and type of school, ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference in the overall scale score ( $F_{1, 12262} = 85.478, p = >.001$ ) for overall scores between year 2009 and 2010 based on the Staff Satisfaction Survey. The Levene’s statistic was statistically significant at  $p = .022$ ; secondary to the significance of Levene’s statistic was a Welch score ( $F_{1, 12005.476} = 120.949, p = >.001$ ). The 2010 mean score was 4.11 compared with the 2009 mean score of 3.98; indicating that the staff satisfaction score was higher for the 2010 year cohort. ANOVA for primary and secondary schools for 2009 indicated a statistically significant difference in the overall staff satisfaction scale score ( $F_{1, 6621} = 183.907, p = >.001$ ). The Levene’s statistic was statistically significant at  $p = .043$ ; secondary to the significance of the Levene’s statistic was a Welch score ( $F_{1, 5476.160} = 182.721, p = >.001$ ). The ANOVA indicated that the staff members of primary schools were more satisfied with PBIS process. ANOVA comparing primary and secondary schools for 2010 indicated a statistically significant difference in the overall staff satisfaction scale score ( $F_{1, 5639} = 85.478, p = >.001$ ). The Levene’s statistic was not statistically significant with a  $p$  value of .529. The 2010 staff satisfaction scale indicated that the staff members of primary schools were more satisfied with PBIS process.

## **Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations**

This study sought to determine if perceptions of school personnel on two surveys had an impact on the implementation of PBIS. If schools have been implementing three or more years, there was evidence of systems change within the structure of their schools. Schools that can create change in the way they operate have the greatest potential to create an environment where challenging behavior serves no function. In this changed environment, students should be more motivated to learn; faculty and staff should communicate more effectively; and the community, families, and schools should collaborate to form a lasting, respectful relationship.

Bronfenbrener's ecological theory explained child development in terms of relationships between children and their environments (Boyd & Bee, 2006). The learning environment therefore must consider family, school, and community. The implementation and sustainability of PBIS equips the educator and school staff with tools and processes to first change their own behavior and then change the control within the classroom. Change takes a long time; and while evidence of change can be seen externally in schools, it also has to be practiced consistently by the school and personnel. PBIS training is done extensively in Louisiana; but, if the training is not practiced consistently by teachers and then transferred to students, the training only becomes the "train and hope" model.

Changes in adult and student behavior, decreases in office discipline referral data, and positive changes to the climate or culture are viewed as outcomes reflecting the internalization of training on campuses across the state. As seen by the utilization of the Socratic philosophy, it is important that the teacher remains the facilitator of learning in order to ensure that students are guided in their learning. Teachers who change their behavior and guide and shape student behaviors by increasing positive feedback statements made to students and other PBIS

techniques will have the foundation for change within the classroom. When teachers adopt a philosophy which values the competence and goodness of students, teachers will begin to see the classroom transformed. Behaviorism is founded on conditioning and modification of behavior. Within the context of PBIS, teachers should be clear about what behavior is and how it is measured. A student's correct answer cannot be the only measurement of a change in behavior. The manner in which a student participated and responded must also be evaluated as part of the behavioral change. Further, teachers must have insight sufficient to acknowledge that they can only influence the student and the classroom environment, not control them. The only true control the teacher has in the classroom is of their own behavior and response.

Therefore, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development functions well as a theoretical model to transform and sustain development for children and adolescents. The model focuses on the importance of thinking and subsequently responding in terms of relationships. As a developmental model, it provides adaptation relative to the growth of children and their interactions within the various environments of influence. This also promotes the need for community involvement with the learning environment to foster and reinforce guidance and involvement of community-based organizations and individuals. For the PBIS approach to yield the greatest level of success, emphasis must be placed on the role of the school-based team. This work group bears responsibility for implementation and sustainability. Implementation addresses core concerns, promotes consistency, and provides support for the team. Further research should focus on the implementation teams with respect to their understanding of process methodology, problem solving skills, and ability to engage in change intervention.

A weakness revealed by the survey data analyzed was the need to increase community entities to support PBIS at the school-level. If this is done appropriately, the gap would begin to

diminish between the community and schools. The PBIS training should encompass a variety of ways that a school could get the community involved in the process. Also, community training would need to be developed to train the community entities in what their roles and responsibilities should be relative to support of the school through the implementation process.

If educators view students as children, the educator is more likely to see that the family and community should be partners within the school realm (Epstein, 2010). This family and community recognition and partnership should then translate into development of a more comprehensive and effective education for the student. Research is in short supply and is sorely needed in the area of effective community relationships. If effective and efficient partnerships are formed then the gaps between school and home are usually bridged. These partnerships can affect student achievement, healthy development, overall student success, and can unite community and family resources.

The principle investigator of this research also served in the capacity as coordinator and co-director of the LASWPBS project over its six year existence. The instruments utilized lacked established research reliability or validity studies and psychometric measures. However, the instruments are useful and were adapted from the national PBIS network.

A factor that has a tremendous impact on PBIS implementation is administrator and teacher retention. The longer a school remains with the same administrator and most of the staff, the better the chance the school has to make systems changes through the PBIS process. The continued benefits to a positive school culture and learning environment, in turn promote further retention and growth for school staff.

Further research may be conducted to determine the impact of sustained use and growth with the PBIS system on the School Performance Score. In addition to Staff Satisfaction with the

PBIS implementation process, research may focus on the staff retention aspects to determine if there is a quantifiable link between PBIS school performance and school staff satisfaction.

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