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Barriers to Initial Implemenation and Sustained Positive Behavior Intervention Systems in High Schools

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BARRIERS TO INITIAL IMPLEMENATION AND SUSTAINED POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SYSTEMS IN HIGH SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (SWPBIS) has increasingly become a popular method to working with students at all school levels. While more attention has been given to elementary and middle schools than high schools, the research that has been conducted at the high school level primarily includes studies of the tier one SWPBIS level. This thesis aims to research the barriers to initial implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS at the tier one level in high schools, the factors that predict abandonment of SWPBIS in high schools, and the timeline for high schools to reach fidelity. The barriers are categorized into procedural practices (methods that focus on students) and systems processes (factors that focus on faculty and staff). Results indicate that there are slightly more procedure barriers than systems barriers at initial implementation and significantly more systems barriers than procedures barriers at the sustained implementation level. While the factors that predict abandonment are mixed, the results of the timeline for high schools to reach full fidelity after initial implementation is also mixed, with studies indicating a range of two to four or more years for high schools to reach fidelity. Limitations and the need for further research are also discussed.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (SWPBIS) has grown increasingly popular within the last few decades, with 20,000 schools adopting it in 2014 (McIntosh, 2014). Furthermore, the number of high schools that implement SWPBIS has risen from 2,595 in 2013 to 3,138 high schools in 2016. To expand, of the total SWPBIS schools world-wide, 13% are high schools, with 7% of the high schools in the United States adapting SWPBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports OSEP Technical Assistance Center, 2018). According to Smith (2005), SWPBIS strategies are explicitly included in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 as applicable and favored methods and supports for working with students with disabilities.

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention Framework Defined

Kincaid et al. (2016) defined SWPBIS as an ongoing behavioral support approach that is grounded in research-based assessment, behavioral interventions, and decision making based on data. There is a strong focus on social and functional proficiencies that gives focus to preventing problem behaviors through behavior support. Behavioral strategies are indicative of being respectful to the person and their dignity. SWPBIS is applied though an evidence based framework with multiple tiers. Generally, there are three tiers in which SWPBIS is employed including the tier one (universal/preventative), tier two (group) and tier three (individual) levels.

As noted by Ogulmus and Veran (2016), SWPBIS is rooted in the major themes of prevention, multi-tiered support, and data based decision making. The principles of prevention include defining and teaching expectations of behavior, a systems use for rewarding appropriate, positive behavior and ensuring that there is a continuation of results from problem behaviors. Furthermore, there are seven key features to SWPBIS including the description of three to five

school-wide expectations of behavior, the active teaching of the school-wide expectations of behavior to students, observing and accepting appropriate behavior from students, problem behaviors being corrected through a continuation of behavioral outcomes that are regularly administered, the collection and use of data related to student behavior that guides decision making, the use of a leadership team to employ school-wide applications from a SWPBIS director, and the employment of district level support. The director of the SWPBIS program establishes a SWPBIS team to carry out SWPBIS in the school, is an active SWPBIS team member, ensures that there is enough time to carry out behavior support processes for faculty, and places SWPBIS as a priority in the school (Horner et al., 2004).

SWPBIS is a multi-tiered framework in which three tiers of interventions are represented. At tier one, or the universal tier, early intervention and the teaching and rewarding of acceptable, social behaviors are adopted as the school-wide norm. According to OSEP Center on PBIS (2009), the essential elements of the universal interventions include defining and teaching the appropriate behavioral expectations, ensuring that multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate positive, pro-social behaviors are provided to give feedback and encouragement, and make sure that problem behavior is supported positively and constructively. Tier one interventions are shown to be effective for about 80% of students (Yeung et al., 2015).

The tier two (or group tier) is effective for approximately 10-15% of students when they do not respond to tier one interventions. These students require more specific social-emotional supports that are used within small groups or individual students through targeted instruction and feedback and the increase of environmental formats. There are three main focus of tier two strategies, including the increase of social skill

instruction, the use of self-management, and increased academic supports (Yeung et al., 2015).

The last tier of SWPBIS is used for the smallest group of students (1-5%) in which tier one and tier two interventions do not prove to be enough. At tier three, also known as the individual tier, supports are further individualized and intensive, as the problem behavior has become chronic with these students' behaviors continuing over an expanded amount of time. At this tier, individualized behavior support plans (Functional Behavior Assessments) are conducted in order to reduce the severity and intensity of the focused behaviors (Yeung et al., 2015).

Fidelity of SWPBIS

Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco and Hansen (2003) defined fidelity of implementation as the degree to which SWPBIS is implemented as intended. Macintosh, Campbell, Carter and Dickey (2009) defined sustainability as the level of fidelity that continues to have valued outcomes in the long-term. There are six major evaluation tools that assess the fidelity of SWPBIS in schools. These include the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) (Bradshaw, Pas, Debnam, & Johnson, 2015; Bohanon et al., 2006; Coffey & Horner, 2012; Farkas et al., 2012; Flannery, Fran, Kato, Doren & Fenning, 2013; Muscat, Mann & LeBrun, 2008; Nese et al., 2016), Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) (Childs, Kincaid, & George, 2010; Kincaid, Childs, Blase & Wallace, 2007; Nese et al., 2016), the Team Implementation Checklist (TIC) (Childs et al., 2010; Coffey & Horner, 2012; Nese et al., 2016; Schaper, McIntosh, & Hoselton, 2016), Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) (Nese et al., 2016), the Effective Behavior Support Survey (EBS Survey) (Bohanon et al., 2006; Flannery et al., 2013; Muscat et al., 2013), and the School-Wide Universal Behavior Sustainability Index: School Teams (SUBSIST) (McIntosh et al., 2014). Each of these fidelity measures can be used to find areas of strength in which the school is implementing well, and areas of growth in which it needs to improve in fidelity. SWPBIS teams

also use these fidelity measures to create action plans to guide the direction of schools' SWPBIS process.

One of the most widely used tools is the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET), which measures the implementation of SWPBIS at the universal (tier one) level (Flannery et al., 2013). The SET included 28 items within seven subcategories that are designed to evaluate the essential components of SWPBIS. These subcategories include behavioral expectations defined, behavioral expectations taught, building a system for rewarding expected behaviors, establishing a system for responding to behavioral offenses, establishing an ongoing behavioral monitoring and decision-making process, maintaining effective management processes, and acquiring district level support in order for implementation to be on going (Flannery et al., 2013). These items are scored on a three point scale with 0 indicating that the item is not implemented, 1 indicating that that it is partially implemented and 2 indicating that it is fully implemented. In order for the SET to include the high school context, four items were added to the SET that composes the involvement degree to which students are aware the use of SWPBIS and the acknowledgment system, and the administration of praise is given to students. This is called the High School School-Wide Evaluation Tool (HS-SET). Schools are to receive 80% on the SET or HS-SET in order for SWPBIS to be considered implemented with fidelity (Flannery et al., 2013).

The Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) is comparable to the SET in that it assesses the fidelity of SWPBIS at the universal tier (Childs et al., 2010). It contains 53 items that measures ten subcategories. These include the SWPBIS team, commitment from faculty, efficient policies and actions for discipline for behaviors, establishment of a data entry and analysis system, the development and definitions of rules and expectations, an establishment of a reward program, the

development of lesson plans for teaching expectations and rules, an implementation plan, and classroom systems and evaluations (Nese et al., 2016). In order for schools to be considered to have adequate fidelity, schools must score at least 70% on the BoQ (Nese et al., 2016).

The Team Implementation Checklist (TIC) measures fidelity of SWPBIS during the initial implementation stages of the program (Schaper et al., 2016). It consists of 22 items that speak to the necessary steps for initial and continued implementation. These items are scored on a three point scale with 0 indicating that the action has not yet started, 1 indicating that the action is in progress and 2 indicating that the action is achieved. This measure is designed to guide SWPBIS teams in the basic actions of SWPBIS implementation and should be administered quarterly for the first few years of implementation (Schaper et al., 2016). The criterion for fidelity of implementation of the TIC is 80% (Nese et al., 2016).

The Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) measures fidelity across all three tiers of SWPBIS. It includes 43 items within four constructs including school-wide systems, non-classroom setting systems, classroom systems, and individual student systems. This self-assessment survey requires 80% criterion in order for the school to be considered fidelity status (Nese et al., 2006).

The Effective Behavior Support Survey (EBS Survey) is similar to the SAS in that measures fidelity across all tiers of SWPBIS and includes items from the four domains of support that include school-wide, classroom, non-classroom and individual (Bohanon et al., 2006). The survey is designed to be administered at the beginning stages of training and planning for SWPBIS, but can be used in an ongoing basis as well. It is scored based on actions being in place, partially in place or not in place (Bohanon et al., 2006).

The last measure includes the School-Wide Universal Behavior Sustainability Index: School Teams (SUBSITST). This includes 50 essential components of SWPBIS practices and

are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale with the criteria of strong negative impact, negative impact, no impact, positive impact and strong positive impact (McIntosh et al., 2014). The three open-ended questions that are also contained in the measure include "What is the most important factor for sustaining SWPBIS?", "What is the most significant barrier to sustaining SWPBIS?" and "What factors are more important for sustainability and initial implementation?" (McIntosh et al., 2014, p. 34). The components that are assessed measure if these items are enhancing or inhibiting SWPBIS implementation (McIntosh et al., 2014).

Research Questions

There are many research questions posed that address high schools implementing SWPBIS. I am interested in the barriers to SWPBIS that come up within high schools at the universal (tier one) level. Knowing the barriers are essential, as the SWPBIS team can create action plans based on the results of the fidelity measures used to combat these barriers. The first research questions is "What types of barriers arise at the initial implementation phase of SWPBIS compared to sustained implementation phase within high schools?" The second research question is "What are the factors that predict abandonment of SWPBIS?" It can be assumed that barriers to SWPBIS can lead to abandoning SWPBIS, if the barriers are pronounced enough. Knowing the factors that lead to abandonment can allow SWPBIS team to avoid these when implementing the program. A final research question is "What is the timeline for high schools to reach full fidelity of SWPBIS?" This information is valuable to high schools that are initially implementing SWPBIS for the first time and sustaining SWPBIS for many years, as SWPBIS teams will know what to expect and how to avoid mistakes when launching the program.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Search Procedures

Chapter Two reviews the published literature on SWPBIS in high schools. It will examine the factors that impact the fidelity of initial implementation and sustainability in high schools. Barriers to initial implementation and sustainability will be described and categorized into Procedures practices and Systems practices. Factors that predict abandonment and the rate to fidelity from initial implementation will also be addressed. This information should help determine the best course of action for high schools when initially implementing and sustaining SWPBIS. The literature used in this thesis was located through ERIC, Academic Search Premier, and EBSCO with the Publication dates from 2005-2017. This list was narrowed by only reviewing published empirical studies from peer-reviewed journals that focused on the fidelity of implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS in high schools. The following keywords were used to assist in narrowing down the literature when searching for literature: "PBIS," "PBS," "positive behavior intervention systems," "positive behavior interventions," "high school," "fidelity," "sustainability," "implementation," and "initial implementation."

Procedures and Systems of SWPBS

Horner, Sugai and Anderson (2010) described the two categories of practice to implementation of SWPBIS. These include Procedures: Practices Focused on Students and Systems: Practices Focused on Faculty and Staff. Procedures: Practices Focused on Student Systems targets the processes involved the approaches and methods involved in centering around students for implementing SWPBIS. The Systems: Practices Focused on Faculty and Staff addresses the actions and operations aligning with the staff within the school and district. Horner et al. (2010) mentions Procedures and Systems within each of the three tiers of the two

categories, but due to the focus of this thesis being on the universal/primary prevention tier, the actions mentioned within the universal tier will be noted. Within the Procedures: Practices Focused on Students category, procedures include the implementation of SWPBIS school wide, defining and teaching behavioral expectations for the entire school, designating the reward system for appropriate behavior, determining a sequence for the consequences for inappropriate or problem behavior, implementing school wide classroom management practices, administering practices for family involvement, and collecting and using data in order to make decisions regarding specific student-focused interventions. Methods involved in Systems: Practices Focused on Faculty and Staff include implementation of the SWPBIS leadership team, active commitment from the district and administration, defined and distinct guidelines that focuses on student-social behavior, annual staff orientation to SWPBIS practices, screening at the universal level for behavior supports, and the use of fidelity data to lead implementation and sustainability.

Each of the articles mentioned describes the factors that impact implementation and sustainability of SWPBIS. The rationale for this is the questioning of if the Procedures: Practices Focused on Students or Systems: Practices Focused on Faculty and Staff differ in the number of factors identified as impacting sustainability and implementation. Each study noted at least one factor from both of the categories, revealing that there are influencers throughout a variety of components of SWPBIS. Additionally, when comparing the total amount of Procedures versus Systems, there is an overwhelming amount of evidence suggesting that Systems factors are more prevalent in initial implementation schools and sustainable schools with SWPBIS than Procedures factors. Analyzed articles are organized according to those that studied SWPBIS at initial implementation and through sustainability of SWPBIS.

Initial Implementation

Contrary to the evidence suggesting that systems factors are more frequently found than procedure factors at the initial implementation level, the research suggests slightly more procedural barriers than systems barriers. Flannery, Sugai and Anderson (2009) administered the Survey of Positive Behavior Support Implementation in High Schools to 43 members of SWPBIS teams from 12 different U.S. states. This measured the implementation process across five areas: school demographics, staff participation and support, expectations and types of acknowledgements, leadership team membership and priorities for the year's action plan. Additional open ended questions were gathered regarding the perceptions of factors that facilitated or impeded implementation.

Results were discussed using the key areas of current team priorities, support and buy in from staff, students and administration, presence of a leadership team, rules and expectations and factors aiding or impeding implementation. First, it was identified that it was a significant challenge for faculty and staff to support the implementation of SWPBIS. Thirty percent of respondents reported that 76% of staff supported implementation and 26% of respondents stated that 76% actively participated in the SWPBIS program, which is troubling considering that 80% of personnel are needed to support SWPBIS in order to find it successful (Sugai & Horner, 2005). It is also important to note that respondents indicated that administrative support was the most stressed barrier, as all parts of SWPBIS implementation was difficult without having administrator buy in and active support (Flannery et al., 2009).

Another barrier included the lack of staff and administration buy in and support. More than 50% of school staff generally supported SWPBIS activities and approaches, but far less than that actively participated in the process. The lack of personnel and administration buy in showed many additional negative effects including the lack of developmental time with teachers, lack of

time to participate in numerous initiatives, SWPBIS included, lack of consistency with implementing SWPBIS, including inconsistencies with using the acknowledgment system and incompatible opinions of what should be considered an office referral and clashing opinions and questioning of the appropriateness and value of SWPBIS elements (Flannery et al., 2009). This is alarming, as Reinke, Herman and Stormont (2012) noted that efficacy and emotional exhaustion relate to negative behaviors observed in the classroom. In turn, teacher perceptions and negative classroom interaction affects student-teacher interactions and the use of SWPBIS acknowledgment systems.

A recurrent barrier to implementation is linked to staff buy in and philosophy: teachers who do not value the acknowledgment system and see it an unnecessary or unimportant. Respondents expanded on this challenge stating that some teachers do not think it is appropriate or necessary for teachers to reward students for doing what they should be doing, as it is an expectation (Flannery et al., 2009). It was also interesting to note that respondents indicated that buy in for older students was more difficult than for younger students, showing that involving all students in the implementation process was difficult. Another challenge to initial implementation of SWPBIS was the limited amount of parent and student participation in the program and activities. The use of data was one of the most stressed barriers contributing to SWPBIS implementation. Participants reported that it was a challenge when they were unable to use their data to guide decision making, as they were not trained in this (Flannery et al., 2009).

A second study conducted by Flannery, Frank, Kato, Doren and Fenning (2013) expanded on the research of the feasibility and fidelity of implementing SWPBIS at the high school level. Eight diverse public high schools in two states in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest United States were studied for two years when initially implementing SWPBIS. The

HS-SET was given at baseline, the end of year one and the end of year two with seven categories included: expectations defined, expectations taught, rewards, response to violations, monitoring, management and district support. Leadership teams reviewed the performance results of the HS-SET and developed an action plan based on the results after each year (Flannery et al., 2013).

At baseline, the schools scored highest on district support but did not show significant change across the two years of the study. Due to the district support level being high initially, this is not concerning. However, the item within district support that varied across time was funding for SWPBIS. Scores were also low on expectations defined, expectations taught, and systems for rewarding behavioral expectations, with each of these three categories not reaching fidelity at baseline (Flannery et al, 2013). This is alarming, as the classroom systems consisting of the acknowledgment of expected student behaviors on a regular basis and with positivity, matching instructional curriculum to student needs and access to additional support are predictors of sustaining SWPBIS implementation (Mathews, McIntosh, Frank & May, 2014). When examining the significance of change across years, teaching expectations and establishing a system for rewarding behavior did not show statistically significant changes over time, although they did approach significance by the end of year one (Flannery et al., 2013).

Changes were also examined from the first year to second year of implementation. Statistically significant changes were found in teaching expectations, establishing a system for rewarding behavior, and responding to behavioral violations (Flannery et al., 2013). Additionally, although changes were meaningful in monitoring and decision making, there were no significant changes at the end of year two. There were also no significant changes in effective management across the two years of implementation (Flannery et al., 2013).

Flannery et al. (2013), concluded that one issue of implementing SWPBIS was the lack of time for staff and faculty to meet as a team. This barrier was explained in that high schools often have longer days and teachers take on more duties, due to clubs or sports than elementary and middle schools. Due to this issue, it was a challenge for personnel to find time to meet as departments, teams and school wide. Additionally, Flannery et al. (2013) noted that defining and teaching expectations took more time than in middle and elementary schools because expectations were often stated in negative terms (what students should not engage in instead of what they should engage in) and were not school wide, due to the complex structural components of high schools.

Bohanon et al. (2006) studied one high school from Chicago Public Schools that served about 1,800 students. The EBS Survey was administered during the fall of year two and spring of year three, which was the driving force behind priorities for action planning during years three and four. The SET was not administered during baseline, as the researchers were worried that giving this instrument too early in the implementation process would be a punitive experience for staff involved. Instead, it was administered at the beginning of year three. Additionally, interviews were conducted and documents/notes from data were reviewed in order to fully understand the staff points of view of the system (Bohanon et al., 2006). The scope of the study was during the following academic school years: 2001-2002 Phase 1: initial inquiry (year one), 2002-2003 Phase II: baseline (year two) and 2003-2004 Phase III: intervention (year three).

At the end of year three, all categories of the SET reached 80% fidelity except for two: behavioral expectations taught and district level support (Bohanon et al., 2006). This indicates that the expectations for all students in the building were not clearly or consistently taught, but were positively acknowledged and reinforced when students exhibited positive behaviors.

Similarly, teachers seemed to focus on teaching their content area over pedagogy (Bohanon et al., 2006). Other concerns included the logistics of SWPBIS, specifically managing the adequacy of the acknowledgment system and promoting communication within the school. Specifically, due to the large numbers of staff and students in the school, agreeing to the many policies consistently needs a lot of effort and time. Discussions seemed to show intensity and remain unresolved with Bohanan et al. (2006) noting that issues were raised at various meetings, but were not decided upon. The leadership team also had concerns over facilitating a consistent policy for behaviors and a consistent disciplinary referral system. This difficulty was eventually resolved after year one (Bohanon et al., 2006).

To analyze Florida's SWPBIS evaluation process, Childs, Kincaid, and George (2010) described the avenues in which Florida's schools evaluate SWPBIS at the universal level from years 2004-2007. Scales that were used consisted of the New School Profile which included basic demographic information, a School profile which involves providing demographic data annually, the Team Process Evaluation which is a survey that assesses team functioning and effectiveness, the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ), the Outcome Data Summary which relates to data on attendance, behavior referrals, and academic achievement, the Schoolwide Implementation Factors (SWIF), a survey for the team, coaches and district coordinators that assesses the facilitators and barriers to SWPBIS and the Attrition Survey for schools that discontinue SWPBIS. Baseline data was collected with the New School Profile before universal training was implemented to school staff. School Profile data and the Team Process Evaluation was given mid-year. The BoQ, Outcome Data Summary and SWIF was collected at the end of the school year. Attrition Surveys were given throughout the year as schools were identified as exiting schools.

The overall BoQ score was 66, indicating that high schools did not reach the minimal fidelity score of 70 and were categorized into the low implementing schools. According to the SWIF, barriers for low implementing schools included staff time for SWPBIS, staff beliefs about the effectiveness of SWPBIS, staff philosophy, staff consistency in teaching, and staff consistency in discipline procedures. With this study, the low implementing high schools had slightly fewer procedural practices than systems practices.

A reviewed study conducted by Farkas et al. (2012), suggests an equal number of systems and procedural barriers at the initial implementation level for a small, private junior-senior high school for students with the primary disabilities of Emotional Behavioral Disorder, Other Health Impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or Specific Learning Disabilities. The purpose of the study was to evaluate tier one of SWPBIS implementation and assess the fidelity at this small, private junior-senior high school (Farkas et al., 2012). Students were either enrolled in mainstream classrooms or a self-contained setting. Overall, the school had 44 students and 21 staff. The authors described the stages of implementation in detail, as well as the results of the SET given at the end of the school year, ratings of lesson plans, a teacher report on SWPBIS, a student report on SWPBIS, and the fidelity of measures for recognizing students with positive tickets through classroom observation (Farkas et al., 2012).

Results indicated that overall, fidelity scores were high from the SET (83.8%), indicating that this school had reached fidelity after one year (Farkas et al., 2012). The only subclasses that did not reach the 80% minimum fidelity score were defining expectations with 75% fidelity, and district support with 50% fidelity. This is disheartening, as authority, resources and coordination of SWPBIS is the backbone of SWPBIS initial implementation and sustainability (Horner et al., 2014). The authors also noted that after the first semester, teachers missed many opportunities to

give positive reward tickets. However, this issue was improved by the end of the year, with fewer missed opportunities to distribute tickets (Farkas et al., 2012).

Predicting SWPBIS Abandonment. Nese et al. (2016) sought to identify the factors that predicted SWPBIS abandonment through records from state SWPBIS initiatives from a total of 915 public schools across three states within the Midwest and East Coast of the United States. They wanted to find out the proportion of schools that abandoned SWPBIS, the year they were most likely to abandon SWPBIS, the school characteristics and fidelity at year one of implementation that predicted abandonment within the first five years of implementation. The measures used to assess fidelity were the SET, BoQ, SAS, and TIC (Nese et al., 2016).

The overall abandonment rate was low, with 7% of schools abandoning SWPBIS within the first five years of implementation (Nese et al., 2016). Looking further into this statistic, 89% of the schools that abandoned SWPBIS showed abandonment within the first three years, with 27% within the first year, 35% within year two, 27% within year three and 11% within year four and no school abandonment during year five (Nese et al., 2016). Additionally, within school statistics, the only significant variable that predicted abandonment was the location of the school. Schools within cities were 13 times more likely than schools in rural areas to abandon SWPBIS within the first five years of implementation. Although school poverty (signified by a school having Title 1 status) did not significantly predict SWPBIS abandonment, Title 1 schools were three times more prone to abandon SWPBIS than non-Title 1 schools (Nese et al., 2016). Interestingly, fidelity during year one was not a significant predictor of abandoning the system, even though 35% of the schools abandoned and 35% of the sustained schools reached fidelity within the year one of implementation (Nese et al., 2016).

McIntosh, Mercer, Nese, Strickland-Cohen and Hoselton (2016) conducted a study on 5,331 schools in the U.S. over five years on the patterns of fidelity implementation of school and implementation characteristics. Results indicated that middle schools and high schools were more likely to abandon SWPBIS than elementary schools, indicating that school level is a demographic factor in abandonment. This does not support the results of the study from Nese et al. (2016) that the location of the school was a predictor of abandonment.

These results contrast with McIntosh, Kim, Mercer, Strickland-Cohen, and Horner (2015), that studied 860 schools at varying stages of SWPBIS implementation, the school demographic characteristics and school team actions related to barriers or sustainability factors. Results indicated that there were little to no effects of school demographic characteristics on implementing the program (McIntosh et al., 2015). In addition, Bradshaw and Pas (2011) reported that schools with Title 1 characteristics (high suspension rates, mobility, and academic failure) were more likely to adopt SWPBIS, although rates of abandonment and sustainability were not recorded for these schools.

Rate to Fidelity. Fidelity of initial implementation is measured by the SET, the EBS Survey, and the TIC (Flannery Frank, Kato, Doren & Fenning, 2013; Schaper, McIntosh, & Hoselton, 2016; Bohanan et al., 2006; Childs et al., 2010). Based on the results of literature reviewed, the rate from initially implementing SWPBIS to reaching fidelity can last from one to four plus years (Flannery et al., 2013; Schaper et al., 2016; Bohanan et al., 2006; Childs et al., 2010). It is hypothesized that this could be dependent upon a myriad of factors including school size, location, socioeconomic status and the enablers and barriers to initially implementing SWPBIS (Flannery et al., 2013; Bohanan et al., 2006). This is interesting, as elementary and middle

schools are able to implement SWPBIS programs within the first year (Bradshaw et al., 2009; Horner et al., 2009).

Flannery et al. (2013) found that it took two years to gain significant and meaningful changes in the implementation levels of SWPBIS components to reach full fidelity. According to Flannery et al. (2013), the increasingly complex structure of high schools including larger campuses, more students, more faculty, and more departments, can make the SWPBIS implementation process slower than elementary and middle schools. To expand, one high school considered their implementation year "zero year" (p. 278) since much of that year was dedicated to planning and establishing the imperative components (buy in, structure of the team, organization of data) of SWPBIS (Flannery et al., 2013). Bohanon et al., (2006) used the analogy of a ship when discussing the rate of fidelity of initial implementation of SWPBIS in high schools: "the larger the ship, the farther in advance you have to plan for turns" (p. 143).

Schaper et al. (2016) also conducted a study on the fidelity growth of SWPBIS in elementary, middle and high schools from year one through year four, using the TIC Version 3.0 and 3.1 to measure the rate of fidelity. Although this study used elementary and middle school data, only results from high schools will be reported. 353 SWPBIS teams from schools throughout the United States administered the TIC quarterly starting at year one, until adequate fidelity was measured (80%). Data was organized into school demographics and the fidelity tasks completed per year (Schaper et al., 2016).

Results indicated that there was no growth from year one to year two, with high schools averaging 41% fidelity score from the TIC during both years. However, there was a noticeable increase in fidelity from year two to year three, averaging 66% fidelity; and year three to four, averaging 80% fidelity, reaching the minimum score for schools to be considered implementing

SWPBIS with fidelity (Schaper et al., 2016). The strongest implementation growth was from year two to year three, where the growth rate significantly increased. The results showed that it took, on average, four years for high schools to reach the minimum fidelity score (Schaper et al., 2016).

Furthermore, schools completed about half of one program task per month during year one, one task per month during year two and much less than half of one fidelity task per month during years three and four. During year two, more crucial features to SWPBIS were implemented compared to year one. During years three and four, fidelity scores slowed, showing that they had capped the fidelity measure at the beginning of year four (Schaper et al., 2016). Due to these results, Schaper et al. (2016) concluded that during initial implementation, fidelity should be assessed at multiple points, as fidelity seems to be dynamic.

Bohanon et al. (2006) showed results that also suggest that it may take more than three years for high schools to reach initial implementation of SWPBIS. One high school from Chicago Public Schools that served about 1,800 students was studied. The EBS Survey was administered during the fall of year two and spring of year three, which was the driving force behind priorities for action planning during years three and four. The SET was not administered during baseline, as the researchers were worried that giving this instrument too early in the implementation process would be a punitive experience for staff involved. Instead, it was administered at the beginning of year three. The scope of the study was during the following academic school years: 2001-2002 Phase 1: initial inquiry (year one), 2002-2003 Phase II: baseline (year two) and 2003-2004 Phase III: intervention (year three). During the study, the school never reached full school-wide implementation status and the school needed two years before implementing all integral elements of SWPBIS. However, there were five categories in

which the school did reach 80% implementation: expectations defined, acknowledgements, system for responding, monitoring and decision making and management.

To analyze Florida's SWPBIS evaluation process, Childs et al. (2010) sought to analyze Florida's SWPBIS evaluation system by describing the avenues in which the schools evaluate SWPBIS at the universal level from years 2004-2007. The BoQ was one aspect of the process. Although scores were given from elementary, middle and high schools, high school data will only be reported. Specific BoQ scores were not provided but high schools scored an average of 66 across the three years and the level of implementation fidelity by the schools improved from 2004-2007. Nevertheless, the score of 66 did not reach the minimum score of 70 to achieve fidelity within three years. This suggests that it could take more than three years for high schools to reach initial fidelity.

To assess the extent that training and technical assistance had on SWPBIS schools on fidelity of implementation and behavioral infractions, Muscott, Mann and LeBrun (2008) studied 24 schools including 13 elementary schools, six middle schools, four high schools and four multilevel schools in New Hampshire for two school years. The SET was given once per year and the EBS survey was given once per year. Within the two years, none of the four high schools reach the minimum fidelity score of 80% (Muscat et al., 2008). This supports that it may take more than two years for high schools to reach fidelity from initial implementation.

An additional study, conducted by Bradshaw, Pas, Debnam and Johnson (2015) included 31 high schools in Maryland. Schools were given the SET at baseline, the end of year one and the end of year two. Results showed that all schools were below the 80% minimum fidelity score at a baseline. At the end of year one, schools showed an overall fidelity score of 70%, with the schools not yet collectively reaching fidelity. At the end of year two, the average fidelity

score was 82% with 71% of the high schools reaching fidelity (Bradshaw et al., 2015). The authors noted that it seems that the implementation process is slower in high schools than in elementary and middle schools and that high schools need to have realistic expectations during the initial implementation process (Bradshaw et al., 2015).

McIntosh, Mercer, Nese and Ghemraoui (2016) noted that the state, as opposed to district and school levels, play a significant role in the initial and sustained implementation of SWPBIS within the first five years of implementation. District and school roles become more important after fidelity is established and reach the five year implementation mark. This is worth noting, as high schools show greater risk of low fidelity early in the implementation process, and abandonment. High schools may abandon SWPBIS before it is implemented to its full potential (McIntosh, 2016).

Sustainability

Lohrmann, Forman, Martin and Palmieri (2008) researched the barriers that interfere with 14 school staff's dedication to carrying out SWPBIS practices from 10 states that had been implementing SWPBIS with fidelity for at least two years. Interviews were conducted by school personnel on the observations and beliefs of the adoption and barriers of SWPBIS at the universal level.

One barrier found was the lack of administrative direction and leadership. It was the belief by school staff that activities involving planning and implementation would be lacking without administrative support (Lohrmann et al., 2008). According to the experiences of the participants, administrators who did not support or prioritize SWPBIS at the universal level did not do the following: "make public statements of support, establish written or otherwise, that implementation was a top priority, motivate staff to take up the charge, allocate rescues or

participate in process planning or implementation activities" (p. 261). There were a variety of influences for administration's direction and leadership surrounding SWPBIS including staff not understanding or having a lack of awareness surrounding SWPBIS practices, the need for more technical assistance, having difficulty in decreasing technical assistance, and the lack of carrying out universal intervention strategies (Lohrmann et al., 2008).

A second barrier found was the staff's skepticism that universal intervention is not needed. According to participants, there were three factors that lead to skepticism including staff being satisfied with the current school practices and climate, viewing universal SWPBIS practices as unnecessary; the many initiatives of SWPBIS being daunting due to the pressure to show positive results of new programs, ending in frustration and exhaustion; and school personnel's lack of connection between academic achievement and problem behavior, showing reluctance in investing their time, energy and resources (Lohrmann et al., 2008).

An additional condition that Lohrmann et al. (2008) identified as a barrier with implementing SWPBIS was the hopelessness of change from personnel. Veteran staff were most likely to resist change because they perceived new initiatives as never resulting the intended adjustments. Overall, personnel also felt that throughout the years, many initiatives were attempted and met with failure. They did not believe that change was in their control and did not observe definite positive results from initiatives.

Philosophical differences with SWPBIS was a fourth barrier described with this study (Lohrmann, 2008). Philosophical beliefs are "cultural and organizational traditions of the schools and exert implicit force on the change effort" (Coffey & Horner, 2012, p. 417). One philosophical difference was that staff wanted to administer disciplinary consequences over proactive or instructional interventions when responding to problem behavior in the classroom,

regardless of data supporting proactive interventions. Personnel have particular beliefs regarding students that are "high fliers", stating that if they were to leave to a specialized school, problems in the classroom would be solved. Another philosophical difference mentioned was the belief that the staff should not have to change attitudes or actions in order for students to exhibit appropriate behaviors in the classroom. Lohrmann et al. (2008) states that changing the teacher's habits is a personal issue that is engrained in the specific personnel's history from when they started teaching or when they were taught as children. SWPBIS practices are dependent upon staff changing their personal practices and buying into the change of their beliefs, which can be difficult for staff to do. The last philosophical difference mentioned was the belief that students should be intrinsically motivated to act appropriately since that is the expectation in schools. Staff were concerned that extrinsic motivations, such as rewards, in place of intrinsic ones would lead to the lack of development of internal motivation (Lohrnamm et al., 2008).

The last barrier found was the feeling of disenfranchisement from staff, administrators and the philosophy and mission of the school. This is more deeply rooted in the social constructs of the school. For example, Lohrmann et al. (2008) noted that the administrator's leadership style and relationship with the staff contributed to disenfranchisement. Leadership styles that were mentioned that hindered the administrator/staff relationship included defensiveness, inconsistency, passivity, negative interactions with staff, non-collaboration and resistance to looking at problems. This led to the administrator being ineffective at leading SWPBIS processes. Last, the research noted that one influential factor of the process of planning and implementing SWPBIS included negative staff-to-staff interactions and relationships. This unfavorably affected staff buy in and the ability to implement SWPBIS universal interventions (Lohrmann et al., 2008).

Similarly, McIntosh et al. (2014) found only systems practices as factors impacting sustainability of SWPBIS through a mixed method approach by surveying a large, national sample of 257 school SWPBIS team members or district personnel in 234 different schools on the factors that strengthen or hinder sustainability of SWPBIS. The three factors that were noted as significant were administrator support, regular team meetings, and PBIS being a high priority. Macintosh et al. (2014) also noted that competing initiatives, staff turnover and the lack of adequate resources were also present, but will always exist in schools and threaten the sustainability of all programs and practices.

Examining the factors and components that lead to sustainability of SWPBIS, Coffey and Horner (2012) evaluated existing data from the TIC and SET and administered a Sustainability Survey that addressed the school's sustainability conditions from 1,161 sustainers schools (schools that had a fidelity score of 80% or higher) and non-sustainer schools (schools that did not meet the 80% fidelity criteria). The most frequently reported barrier was funding. Coffey and Horner (2012) discussed that the lack of resources (including funding) demonstrates a lack of priority for SWPBIS and low priority initiatives are often put to the wayside by higher priority initiatives. Similarly, the lack of staff buy in was also a barrier to sustaining SWPBIS with fidelity.

Another barrier noted was the personal philosophical beliefs of school personnel, with many respondents stating that the use of rewards is often seen as inappropriate. Other factors mentioned were the lack of time to consistently meet as a SWPBIS team to complete the essential SWPBIS activities to ensure fidelity, and staff and administration turnover (Coffey & Horner, 2012).

In an effort to understand the perceived barriers of sustaining SWPBIS, Bambara, Nonnechacher, and Kern (2009) conducted a preliminary study by interviewing 25 teachers, school administration and parents from public schools in stakeholder groups of four to six individuals that have had a experience on participating on a SWPBIS team. Primary interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format over a period of 12 months for 50-120 minutes per session. One of the questions asked included describing the primary barriers to implementing PBIS for students.

Overall, five categories of barriers were found: School Culture, Administrative Support, Structure and the Use of Time, Professional Development and Support for Professional Practice, and Family and Student Involvement (Bambara et al., 2009). Within the School Culture category, the majority of the participants (94%) noted that the lack of knowledge or attentiveness of SWPBIS practices and activities as well as the conflicting beliefs and methods of school personnel negatively impacted SWPBIS sustainability (Bambara et al., 2009). An overwhelming majority of the participants (84%) stated that the general acceptance of SWPBIS was compromised due to the conflicting beliefs and methods held by school personnel. Similar to these conflicting beliefs, 72% noted the misperceptions of what SWPBIS is and what effective behavior management practices are. Participants added that some personnel believed that SWPBIS practices were unfair to students due to specific children receiving "special treatment" and "making excuses for the child," "spoiling," "being soft" or "giving into the child" by rewarding the child with negative behavior and getting what he or she wants (Bambara et al., 2009). Participants expanded that many personnel do not understand how preventative strategies can work because of their engrained experiences with the use and treatment of traditional beliefs and practices. This information is alarming, as it relates to the core beliefs of the effective

SWPBIS behavior management practices. Also relating to the School Culture category is the view of lack of school inclusion by staff, as mentioned by 56% of participants as a barrier to sustainability (Bambara et al., 2009). Some school personnel did not seem to understand that the goal of behavior management is inclusion. Instead, students with behavior issues were viewed as being better served at specialty schools. Other difficulties within the School Culture category mentioned by participants included school personnel being invested enough to initially commit to SWPBIS and participate in a student team, and consistently implementing behavior support plans. Finally, participants added that members who were committed to SWPBIS practices felt isolated with working against the dominant culture with lack of support from other colleagues (Bambara et al., 2009).

The second category of barriers was Administrative Support (84%), including the important role that the building administrator holds when accepting and supporting SWPBIS practices in order for SWPBIS team to complete their duties by not participating on student team, preventing technical assistance consultants from assisting the school with SWPBIS practices, and not allowing teacher release time for training (Bambara et al., 2009). A large percentage (44%) of participants stated that the lack of administrative support and understanding of SWPBIS practices was a significant barrier. Others stated that some administrators hold conflicting views of SWPBIS behavior management practices and inclusion of students with behavior issues by not being flexible to the school discipline rules for individual students (Bambara et al., 2009).

The Structure and Use of Time was a primary concern for 88% of participants (Bambara et. al, 2009). Forty eight percent of participants noted the lack of time for SWPBIS team members to meet regularly to collaborate and plan on SWPBIS practices was an issue. To expand, the general school schedule does not provide many opportunities for all major team

players to meet together at one time, which can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications of the behavioral supports for students. Additionally, 48% of participants noted that personnel often felt overwhelmed, as few or none of the teacher's schedules or daily responsibilities were adjusted with the increased responsibilities with SWPBIS efforts (Bambara et al., 2009). Similarly, some 76% of participants noted that the SWPBIS process was too labor intensive and time consuming which created a barrier in administrator and personnel involvement. Participants also noted the significant amount of time involved in collecting data to analyze, generate solutions with the team and carry out and assess support plans for students (Bambara et al., 2009).

Professional Development and Support for Professional Practice was stressed by 92% of the participants (Bambara et al., 2009). These stakeholders noted that there were not adequate and ongoing training opportunities for school personnel. Additionally, 76% of participants stated that once involvement was needed by school personnel, they were not satisfactorily trained or prepared to implement SWPBIS activities and procedures and participate on student teams. Forty percent also mentioned there was a lack of technical assistance to support team members and personnel. To expand, general technical assistance to personnel was not enough. They also needed additional assistance in employing the SWPBIS practice and solving issues, interpret data, and implementing intervention strategies (Bambara et al., 2009).

The vast majority (72%) of the stakeholders stated that Family and Student Involvement helped them gain an understanding into students' behavior when the family is involved in SWPBIS practices and that this assists in establishing a consistency between the school and home that can foster with time (Bambara et al., 2009). Disparagingly, 48% of the participants responded that the school is failing at involving parents in the SWPBIS process. Barriers

included holding meetings at times that parents cannot attend, schools not regarding parent input as important or valuable, and that parents are unappreciated, judged or blamed for students' problem behavior. Additional lack of parent involvement included parents' individual conflicting beliefs of behavior management, lack of knowledge of SWPBIS, and complications in implementing SWPBIS strategies at home (Bambara et al., 2009).

In an additional study conducted by Bambara, Goh, Kern and Caskie (2012), 239 school personnel, including behavior support specialists, teachers, school administrations, etc. from West Virginia, Georgia, Delaware, New Jersey and Kansas, were surveyed on the perceived barriers and enablers to implementing SWPBIS. Participants were asked to complete the survey that contained items of potential elements that may facilitate or impede on the implementation of SWPBIS, based on the results of a qualitative study by Bambara et al. (2009). Twenty seven barriers and 29 enablers were assessed.

In general, reports indicated that all barriers were experienced by participants, but the top 10 were stressed. The most frequently experienced barrier was the lack of knowledge of SWPBIS principles and practices by SWPBIS staff (91.7%) (Bambara et al., 2012). Other barriers were placed into the administrative/organization domain and the professional development and practice domain included the lack of time for personnel to implement SWPBIS activities (89.2%), lack of planning time for personnel to coordinate SWPBIS actions (87.5%), the lengthy amount of time that can be required in administering more individualized supports for students who need tier two and tier three assistance (91.6%), the lack of training of SWPBIS to school personnel (82.1%), and the unsatisfactory amount of staff trained in SWPBIS practices and procedures (85.3%). Bambara et al. (2012) expanded that these factors may reflect upon the

need for more training on SWPBIS core beliefs and practices, as well as personnel's reluctance to attempt new programs and interventions.

Philosophical barriers included staff personnel showing resistance to changing their behavior management methods (86.5%), the beliefs that problem behaviors should be punished (84%), the belief that students who exhibit chronic problem behaviors should attend separate or a specialized school (81.9%), and the false expectation from personnel that interventions should show immediate correction of problem behaviors (84.7%) (Bambara et al., 2012). Bambara et al. (2012) noted that these barriers pertained to the school culture, practice and beliefs domain and show evidence that core beliefs are hindered by the mindsets of staff in the school and their dedication to more traditional practices, with the lack of resilience.

McIntosh et al. (2014) conducted a study on the barriers and enablers for sustainability of SWPBIS. Two hundred and fifty seven school team members from 14 U.S. states were given the SUBSIST who had been implementing SWPBIS for an average of five years before the study. The most rated barrier was resources (including time and money), which accounts for one-third of the total responses. Other common barriers mentioned included staff turnover, fidelity, and staff-buy in as having similar ratings for barriers to sustaining SWPBIS.

Andreou, McIntosh, Ross and Kahn (2015) completed a qualitative study on a school district in British Columbia with 32 schools and 14,000 students that had been implementing SWPBIS for 15 years. They had been documented as having adequate (86-89%) fidelity based on the SET. Seventeen educators were surveyed and studied that were familiar with the process and daily activities of SWPBIS and at least two years of experience implementing tier one SWPBIS. Based on the interview questionnaire, Critical Incidents (CIs) were identified and analyzed as helping or hindering SWPBIS. Most CIs included conflict of personal beliefs with

27%, followed by school administrator involvement (19%), staff turnover (16%), maintaining priority (14%), SWPBIS team effectiveness (8%), use of data (4%), continuous teaching (4%), and positive reinforcement (3%). Within conflict of personal beliefs, sub conflicts were identified. Inconsistent implementation was a result of differing personal beliefs, philosophies, and values. For example, one participant noted that some personnel believed that teachers should focus on the academics while administrators deal with problem behaviors which hinders the implementation and sustainability of the process and practices (Andreou et al., 2015). Another sub conflict mentioned was the misconceptions of SWPBIS. One misconception mentioned that filling out office discipline referrals was punitive, not understanding that collecting this data allows the team to understand patterns and assist the student in the long term. A second misconception mentioned that SWPBIS only focused on external rewards, not keeping in mind other preventative strategies (Andreou et al., 2015).

Expanding on the barrier of administrative support, Andreou (2015) noted that if administrators do not believe in SWPBIS, they are not going to take the necessary time to do complete necessary SWPBIS tasks. Barriers included not being involved the ground-level implementation, training/presenting to staff and community agencies, the lack of additional support, and being involved in the data collection process (Andreou et al., 2015). Andreou et al., (2015) also noted that staff turnover hinders the sustainability of SWPBIS and has the ability to decrease staff consistency of implementing SWPBIS and reduce staff skills and knowledge of SWPBIS, including continuous teaching and data based decision making. One participant mentioned that due to staff mobility, personnel assumed that new staff buy into the program and did not train them in on SWPBIS practices. Within the maintaining priority category, new and

competing initiatives were barriers to priority of SWPBIS. One participant noted that if it is not documented in policies, it can easily be lost (Andreou et al., 2015).

Within SWPBIS effectiveness, one CI that hindered sustainability included the lack of an organizational structure. For instance, the lack of regular team meetings, lack of defined roles in the team, meager collaboration within the team, and divided team members were noted as contributing factors to hindering SWPBIS (Andreou et al., 2015). Additionally, the lack of access to data hindered SWPBIS due to the inadequate communication and accountability between team members, staff, school and parents, resulting in the decrease of fidelity (Andreou et al., 2015). The results also noted that the lack of continuous, explicit teaching of SWPBIS expectations was described as a hindering CI, resulting in staff and student problem behavior increasing (Andreou et al., 2015). Finally, positive reinforcement showed hindrance when teams did not revive aspects of the reinforcement and acknowledgement system, as it made the system less appealing to students and staff (Andreou et al., 2015).

Chitiyo and Wheeler (2009) added to the literature on the difficulties that teachers face when implementing and sustaining SWPBIS in their schools. Twenty-one teachers that taught in a school district in Illinois completed a questionnaire designed by the authors of this study, questioning the difficulty of essential SWPBIS components. The questionnaire was comprised of five questions, with 24 items within the first question with a Likert-style format (1 indicating the most difficult and 7 indicating the least difficult to implement), question two comprising of a checklist of the components that the teachers implement in their schools, and questions three through five being open ended questions about the challenges they encountered with SWPBIS, the area that they feel they need technical assistance training on, and what they would do differently if they were to re-implement SWPBIS.

Challenges that teachers mentioned included the lack of administration support, large class sizes, challenges with collaborating with staff, lack of resources, and the time to implement SWPBIS practices. The time component was the most difficult barrier that the teachers mentioned (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009). Other barriers included collaboration with families, staff understanding the SWPBIS terminology, data collection, teaching alternative replacement behaviors from negative problem behaviors, and monitoring individual interventions (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009).

The EBS survey was administrated by Fallon, McCarthy, and Hagermoster Sanetti (2014) to 171 staff members in a variety of schools in Connecticut that had been implementing SWPBIS with fidelity for two or more years. Overall, the researchers noted challenges in the classroom that revolved around insufficient training and the lack of understanding SWPBIS guidelines from teachers and students (Fallon et al., 2014). Specifically, participants found the following items somewhat challenging: "matching instructional materials to students' ability, ensuring academic success, aligning expected behavior with school-wide practice, problem behaviors received consistent consequences, procedures for problem behaviors are consistent with school-wide procedures, classroom instruction continues when problem behavior occurs, and teaching expected behavior directly" (p. 15-18).

Fidelity as a Factor

One study conducted by Houchens et al. (2017) compared the differences in teachers' perceptions who work in SWPBIS schools compared to those who do not, as well as if the level of fidelity is a factor in teachers' perceptions within SWPBIS schools. One hundred and fifty one Kentucky SWPBIS schools were compared to 151 Kentucky non PBIS schools through the measure of the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Kentucky survey that

measured teacher perceptions and working conditions of eight constructs: Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Development and Instructional Practices and Supports. In addition, the BoQ was given to SWPBIS schools to compare fidelity scores of low fidelity schools (scores of 70-80), medium fidelity (scores of 80-90) and high fidelity (90-100) (Houchens et al., 2017).

When comparing SWPBIS schools to non SWPBIS schools, one interesting note was the concern that SWPBIS schools reported regarding the use of time, which was not reported by non SWPBIS schools (Houchens et al., 2017). This systems barrier is consistent with the research reviewed that many SWPBIS schools report difficulty using their time surrounding SWPBIS efforts.

Another worthwhile note is the difference in perceptions between low, medium and high implementing schools. There were significant differences in Managing Student Conduct, Community Support and Involvement, and Teacher Leadership between all levels. There especially were differences within all of the items relating to Managing Student Conduct, suggesting that the level of fidelity that is being implemented at a school can affect the teacher's perceptions and understandings of expectations of student behavior, school safety and adequate student conduct. There were also significant differences between high and low fidelity schools in all items relating to Community Support and Involvement, with teachers in high and medium implementing schools reporting more positive perceptions of communication with parents and teachers, parent involvement, and support from the community compared to low fidelity schools. These results suggest that the level of fidelity of SWPBIS schools is a factor related to barriers of implementation.

Another study conducted by Kincaid, Childs, Blase and Wallace (2007) compared the barriers of implementation of high implementing schools and low implementing schools, using the BoQ as the measure of fidelity. High implementing schools had a BoQ score of 70% or higher and low implementing schools had a BoQ of below 70%. Results indicated that there were some similar barriers to implementation between high implementers and low implementers. Similar barriers in the study included staff buy in, staff implementation of SWPBIS, the use of data, the use of reward systems, and the time to deliver SWPBIS practices. In addition, low implementers had more barriers in the areas of SWPBIS team functioning and communication within the school. High implementing schools had additional barriers of staff training and misperceptions of SWPBIS. This indicates there may be similarities, as well as slight differences between high implementing schools and low implementing schools, with fidelity of SWPBIS potentially being a factor.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Summary of Literature

Among the research reviewed, there are slightly more procedural barriers compared to systems barriers when high schools initially implement SWPBIS (Bohanon et al., 2006; Childs et al., 2010; Farkas et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Flannery et al., 2013). Procedural barriers included lack of consistent implementation that includes the acknowledgment system, office discipline referrals and responding to violations (Bohanon et al., 2006; Childs et al., 2010; Farkas et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Flannery et al., 2013), involving all students in the SWPBIS process (Flannery et al., 2009), SWPBIS expectations defined and taught (Bohanon et al., 2006; Childs et al., 2010; Farkas et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2013), parent and student participation (Flannery et al., 2009), the use of data (Flannery et al., 2009), monitoring and decision making (Flannery et al., 2013), effective behavior management (Flannery et al., 2013), and communication within the school (Bohanon et al., 2006).

There are slightly fewer systems barriers at the initial implementation level compared to procedural barriers including faculty and staff support (Flannery et al., 2009), conflicting staff beliefs and philosophy (Childs et al., 2010), lack of time for staff to meet, collaborate, and focus on SWPBIS participation (Childs et al., 2010; Flannery et al., 2009; Flannery et al., 2013), lack of administrator support (Flannery et al., 2009), and lack of district support, including funding (Bohanon et al., 2006; Farkas et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2013).

Inconsistent with results from the initial implementation stage, sustained implementation of SWPBIS indicates significantly more systems barriers compared to procedural barriers at the

high school level (Andreou et al., 2015; Bambara et al., 2009; Bambara et al., 2012; Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009; Coffey & Horner, 2012; Fallon et al., 2014; Lohrmann et al., 2008; McIntosh et al., 2014; McIntosh et al., 2014). Procedural barriers to sustained implementation of SWPBIS includes the use of data (Andreou et al., 2015; Bambara et al., 2009; Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009), continuous teaching of SWPBIS to students (Andreou et al., 2015), the use of positive reinforcement (Andreou et al., 2015), professional development and the support for professional practice (Bambara et al., 2009; Bambara et al., 2012; Fallon et al., 2014), lack of SWPBIS knowledge from staff and faculty (Bambara et al., 2012; Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009; Fallon et al., 2014), the lack of family and student involvement (Bambara et al., 2009; Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009), and monitoring intervention implications (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009).

Systems barriers to sustained implementation of SWPBIS in high schools include lack of school administration support, direction and leadership (Andreou et al., 2015; Bambara et al., 2009; Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009; Lohrmann et al., 2008; McIntonsh et al., 2014), staff and faculty beliefs/buy in of SWPBIS and philosophical differences (Andreou et al., 2015; Bambara et al., 2009; Bambara et al., 2012; Coffey & Horner, 2012; Lohrmann et al., 2008; McIntosh et al., 2014), staff turnover (Andreou et al., 2015; Coffey & Horner, 2012; McIntosh et al., 2014), team effectiveness (Andreou et al., 2015), the lack of time to meet and coordinate among staff and as a SWPBIS team (Bambara et al., 2009; Bambara et al., 2013; Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009; Coffey & Horner, 2012; McIntosh et al., 2014; McIntosh et al., 2014), lack of SWPBIS funding and resources (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009; Coffey & Horner, 2012; McIntosh, 2014), viewing SWPBIS as a low priority (Andreou et al., 2015; McIntosh et al., 2014), misperceptions of SWPBIS from faculty and staff (Bambara et al., 2009), feelings of hopelessness of change by

faculty and staff (Lohrmann et al., 2008), feelings of disenfranchisement from faculty and staff (Lohrmann et al., 2008), and lack of collaboration with staff (Chitiyo & Wheeler, 2009).

Studies (Houchens et al., 2017; Kincaid et al., 2017) noted that the level of fidelity of SWPBIS schools can perpetuate the barriers to implementation. Houchens et al. (2017) reported that there were differences between high implementation and low implementation schools surrounding Managing Student Conduct, Community Support and Involvement and Teacher Leadership. Kincaid et al. (2017) noted differences with low implementers reporting barriers with team functioning and school communication, and high implementers noting training and misperceptions of SWPBIS as barriers.

In addition, predictors of abandonment were mixed with some studies reporting the school location of being within the city as a predictor (Nese et al., 2016), some stating that the school level, with middle and high schools more likely to abandon than elementary schools, was a significant predictor of abandonment (McIntosh et al., 2016). One study noted the lack of support from the state level within the first five years predicted abandonment (McIntosh et al., 2016) and some schools did not find any significant school demographic predictors of SWPBIS abandonment (McIntosh et al., 2015).

Furthermore, research points out that the amount of time for high schools to reach full implementation according to adequate fidelity from initial implementation takes up to four years with research varying from two years to four years (Bohanon et al., 2006; Bradshaw et al., 2015; Childs et al., 2010; Flannery et al., 2013; Muscott et al., 2008; Schaper et al., 2016). While Flannery et al. (2006) and Bradshaw et al. (2015) state that full implementation can take two years to reach full implementation, Bohanan et al. (2006) and Childs et al. (2010) found that it can take up to three years for high schools to reach full fidelity. Schafer et al. (2016) showed

evidence that it can take up to four years for high schools to reach initial fidelity, with little growth during year one (Flannery et al., 2013; Schaper et al., 2016) and significant growth during year two and three (Schaper et al., 2016). This is alarming, as abandonment of SWPBIS was most likely to occur within the first five years of implementation (Nese et al., 2016). Flannery et al. (2013) hypothesized that the increased amount of time to reach initial fidelity compared to elementary and middle schools could be due to the larger campuses, increased number of students and faculty on campus, and the variety and large size of departments within the school.

Limitations of the Research

The literature used in this thesis included peer-reviewed empirical studies that focused on the fidelity of initially implementing and sustaining SWPBIS in the high school setting. ERIC, Academic Search Premier and EBSCO were used to locate the literature, with publication dates from 2005-2017. Keywords that were used to search for the subject were “PBIS”, “PBS”, “positive behavior intervention systems”, “positive behavior interventions”, “high school”, “fidelity”, “sustainability”, “implementation” and “initial implementation”.

While there are many research studies that address SWPBIS at the elementary level, there are far fewer studies that solely look at high schools implementing SWPBIS. This limited the research articles used in this thesis. Due to the limited articles that only include high schools, this thesis included articles that involved data from all school levels, including elementary, middle and high schools, although data from high schools within these articles were only recounted. Furthermore, there were a variety of methods in which barriers to implementation were addressed including using school staff surveys and fidelity measures such as the TIC, SET, BoQ, SAS, EBS Survey and SUBSIST. While some studies used the fidelity measures, others

used surveys, and other articles used both. The variety of these research methods creates inconsistencies with the data. This also resulted in an amalgamation of barriers with mixed outcomes. There were also limited research articles that addressed the rate of fidelity from initial implementation of SWPBIS in high schools, with most research articles studying elementary schools. Demographic characteristics were scarcely addressed, which may have skewed results. Finally, there seemed to be more studies that addressed the sustainability of SWPBIS over initial implementation due to the lack of fidelity during the first years of implementation.

Implications for Future Research

Due to the gaps in the research, there is a strong need for future research in SWPBIS, overall. There also are many more studies that involve elementary and middle schools over high schools that employ SWPBIS. Much more research needs to be done on high schools and SWPBIS that does not include elementary and middle school data. Furthermore, research needs to be completed on the barriers of SWPBIS that are unique to high schools compared to elementary and middle schools, and why or how those barriers are put in place. Demographic information needs to be addressed at the high school level that employ SWPBIS to determine if any of these factors impede the implementation of SWPBIS. There also needs to be more research on the barriers at the initial implementation level versus the sustainability level, as well as the predictors of abandonment of SWPBIS. Consistencies with the use of fidelity data (TIC, SET, BoQ, SAS, EBS Survey, SUBSIST) versus faculty surveys and reports are also needed. While there has been growing research in SWPBIS at the high school level recently, it is clear that the gaps in research need to be filled, with the need for data of initial implementation and sustainability at the high school level to be addressed.

Implications for Professional Application

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (SWPBIS) have become increasingly popular, as empirical research has increased, with the research practice in this area being condoned due to the positive existence of data available. A result of the benefits of SWPBIS is the increasing number of schools employing SWPBIS, including schools at the elementary, middle, high, and alternative settings. As a teacher who works in a SWPBIS high school, it is important to know information regarding the barriers to sustaining SWPBIS in order for the school to avoid or combat these issues through a variety of methods including training, support from the SWPBIS leadership team, support from administration and the district, etc. If the district or school knows what common issues occur at which level, these issues can be address within those settings and the use of SWPBIS can be maximized.

It is also important to know the barriers to implementing SWPBIS when it is initially being carried out for the same reasons that sustaining schools need to understand barriers: so that these issues can be realized and averted within the varying levels. For example, if primary issues are within school faculty employing negative attitudes and differing philosophies of SWPBIS, these issues need to be addressed by administration. Additionally, it is crucial to know the timeline to fidelity from initial implementation in order for schools to avoid dropping SWPBIS before it has been able to reach fidelity. Research has shown that the high school timeline to reach fidelity is longer than at the elementary or middle school level (Bohanon et al., 2006; Bradshaw et al., 2015; Childs et al., 2010; Flannery et al. ,2013; Muscott et al., 2008; Schaper et al., 2016). This is essential for high schools to understand when they start SWPBIS so that they have an accurate portrayal of the timeline of fidelity after fully launching SWPBIS practices.

Finally, if administrators know the predictors to SWPBIS abandonment at the high school level, they can use empirical studies and evidence to help them take action against these issues.

For example, if a high school that was located in a large city were to initially implement SWPBIS and research had indicated that location was one predictor to SWPBIS (Nese et al., 2016), the district can research the reasons for the larger number of SWPBIS abandonment issues within cities, as well as tactics to ensure that these issued do not arise when initially implementing SWPBIS.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of research in the field of SWPBIS at the high school level, there were many research questions posed within this paper. The first research question was "What types of barriers arise at the initial implementation phase of SWPBIS compared to sustained implementation phase within high schools?" Research showed that there are slightly more procedures barriers compared to systems barriers at the initial implementation phase and there are significantly more systems barriers compared to procedures barriers at the sustained implementation phase of SWPBIS. The second research question was "What are the factors that predict abandonment of SWPBIS?" After reviewing the limited research on this topic, it is concluded that the results are mixed, with some studies finding demographic predictors, some not finding any demographic predictors, and some finding the systems barriers of lack of administrative support being predicted of abandoning SWPBIS. A final research question was "What is the timeline for high schools to reach full fidelity of SWPBIS?" Results showed that it can take two to four or more years for high schools to fully reach fidelity of SWPBIS, which is a longer timeline than elementary and middle schools. This information is valuable to high schools that are initially implementing SWPBIS for the first time and sustaining SWPBIS for many years.

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