THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PROACTIVE SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE PLAN ON OFFICE DISCIPLINE REFERRALS AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Liberty University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Elizabeth A. Anderson

November 2009

The Effectiveness of a Proactive School-Wide Discipline Plan on Office Discipline Referrals at the Elementary School Level

By Elizabeth A. Anderson

APPROVED:

COMMITTEE CHAIR	Beth Ackerman, Ed.D.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Nancy DeJarnette, Ed.D
	Brittney Wilson, Ed.D.
CHAIR, GRADUATE STUDIES	Scott B. Watson, Ph.D.

Abstract

Elizabeth A. Anderson. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PROACTIVE SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE PLAN ON OFFICE DISCIPLINE REFERRALS AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL (Under the direction of Dr. Beth Ackerman) School of Education, November, 2009. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a proactive school-wide discipline plan on office discipline referrals, and as a predictor of incidents of chronic disciplinary referrals. The study examined two consecutive school years, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, with 2007-2008 being the control group without a school-wide discipline plan, and 2008-2009 the treatment group with a school-wide discipline plan in place for a full academic year. The purpose was to determine if there would be a statistically significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals and the number of office discipline referrals which resulted in In-School or Out of School suspension. The study also demonstrated through Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient regression if academic achievement was a predictor of incidents of chronic office disciplinary referrals which may contribute to future behavioral issues and the need for secondary intervention. The hypotheses stated there would not be a significant difference in the number of office referrals and the number of office discipline referrals which result in In-School Suspension and/or Out-of-School Suspension, and students with two or more office discipline referrals would not be significantly different than other students in terms of academic achievement. A dependent t-test showed there were significantly more office discipline referrals and office discipline referrals which resulted in In-School or Out of School suspensions in 2008-

2009 than in 2007-2008. Using Pearson's correlation, a negative correlation was found between academic achievement and number of office discipline referrals. As academic achievement decreased the number of office discipline referrals increased. Results indicate that academic achievement can serve as an early predictor of chronic office discipline referrals.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my grandfather, William M. Hutcheson, who has always been the wind beneath my wings. Thank you for being my hero, and always encouraging me to fulfill my dreams. I love you Granddaddy!

This study is also dedicated to my loving husband, Grant, who has stood behind me and cheered me on throughout this lengthy process. Without his love and encouragement this dream would never have become a reality. It is also dedicated to my wonderful children, Sam and Timber, who have shown incredible patience with me as I have spent hours working at the computer. Thank you for always believing in Mom and knowing someday she would be finished. That day is here! Mom is finished.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my mom, Carol Anne Dressler, for always encouraging me in my many endeavors. Thank you for always believing in me. To Carol and David Anderson, thank you for being interested in my study and cheering me on along the way. I would like to thank Tonya Campbell for her countless hours assisting me in retrieving data. Dr. Kristin Kiddoo, thank you for the many hours you devoted to ensuring my statistics were accurate. To my dissertation committee members, Dr. Brittney Wilson and Dr. Nancy DeJarnette, thank you for your time and encouragement. I sincerely appreciate all your help and wisdom.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Beth Ackerman, thank you for your prompt responses, advise, expertise, encouraging words, and reminding me I would see the light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Abstract iii

Dedication v

Acknowledgments vi

Table of Contents vii

List of Tables x

List of Figures xi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1

Background of Study 3

Statement of problem 5

Hypothesis 7

Professional Significance of Study 7

Definition of Terms 8

Summary 10

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE 12

Theoretical Background 12

Historical Background 15

Traditional Discipline 17

Response to Intervention 20

Positive Behavior Support 23

School-wide Discipline 28

Office Discipline Referrals 31
Early Intervention 33
Academic Achievement 37
Summary 41
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY 43
Overview of Study 43
Design of the Study 45
Setting 46
Subjects 50
Data Gathering Methods 52
Instrumentation 53
Data Analysis Procedures 56
Summary 57
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS 59
Descriptive Statistics of Study 59
Hypothesis #1 62
Hypothesis #2 63
Hypothesis #3 64
Summary of Data Analysis 67
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION 68
Summary and Results 68
Statement of Problem 69

Review of Methodology 69

Summary of the Results 71

Discussion of the Results 72

Relationship of Current Study to Prior Research 75

School-wide Discipline Plan 75

Reduction of Office Discipline Referrals and Suspensions 77

Correlation between Office Discipline Referrals and Academic Achievement ...82

Implications of the Study 83

Limitations of the Study 89

Recommendations for Further Research 91

References 93

Appendixes 104

Appendix A: Behavior Guidelines 105

Appendix B: School Permission Letter 109

List of Tables

Page

Table 1. Demographic Information....50

Table 2. Ethnicity....51

Table 3. Office Discipline Referrals 52

Table 4. 2007 CRCT 55

Table 5. 2008 CRCT 55

Table 6. Percentage of Office Discipline Referrals 60

Table 7. Offenses Resulting in Office Discipline Referrals 61

Table 8. Mean Office Discipline Referrals 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 63

Table 9. Mean of Office Discipline Referrals Resulting in ISS/OSS 64

Table 10. Mean CRCT Test Scores 65

Table 11. Correlations Between Test Scores and Office Referrals 66

List of Figures

Page

Figure 1 Continuum of School-Wide Instruction and Positive Behavior Support 25

Figure 2 A Coercive Cycle of Behavioral and Educational Failure 40

Figure 3 Cardinal Cash Rewards and Fines 49

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In response to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), schools are being asked to take a proactive approach to students' academic and behavioral needs. Tobin and Sugai (1999) state disruptive behaviors in schools are not new issues, but now there is a sense of urgency to implement proactive interventions. Research by Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, and Feinberg (2005) found problems such as violence, vandalism, bullying, and other disruptive behaviors create an unsafe learning environment, undermine instruction, and potentially pose a threat to all members of the school population. Students who demonstrate antisocial, destructive, and violent behavior early in life are among the best predictors of delinquent and violent behavior later life (Fagan, 1996). Violent and disruptive behaviors become more destructive over time, destroy the school environment, and lower the quality of life for the students and teachers (Walker, et al., 1996). Historically, concerns regarding discipline were addressed through character education programs or moral development programs with minimal effectiveness (Luiselli et al., 2005). More recently, research has identified proactive scientifically-based strategies to address discipline issues.

A proactive response to discipline is in direct contrast to prevalent techniques for managing behavior. Current practices, such as corporal punishment, loss of privileges, detention, reprimands, and fines tend to be largely reactive (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). The emergence of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Support (PBS) are scientifically-based strategies founded on the premise of changing the ways schools proactively work with students identified with learning and discipline problems. PBS is

the proactive intervention used to decrease problematic behavior and is based on teaching and reinforcing desired or wanted behaviors. PBS is divided into three tiers with tier one advocating the creation and maintenance of a proactive school-wide discipline plan. The school-wide discipline plan procedures are created by school discipline teams with administrative support and direction (Horner & Sugai, 2000). Three to five school behavioral expectations are selected and taught to all students. Students who comply with the behavioral expectations are rewarded through an ongoing behavioral recognition program. Students demonstrating inappropriate behaviors are redirected and are ineligible for the rewards program arranged by the school. The school discipline team meets periodically to review the school-wide discipline plan and evaluate office discipline referrals. According to PBS literature, tier one, or primary prevention, should be effective for over eighty percent of a school's population. Proponents of PBS claim a school-wide discipline plan will reduce the large number of discipline referrals and provide a means for school personnel to document which students continue to have more serious behavioral problems. Lastly, they claim without the implementation of primary prevention there will continue to be an increase of students who receive office discipline referrals. The percentage of office discipline referrals will continue to be greater in schools without a school-wide discipline plan (Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007). Without school-wide discipline plans schools will continue to rely on reactionary measures, such as suspension, which have been found ineffective (Sugai & Horner, 1999) and may negatively impact the offending students as they are removed from constructive learning environments (Morrison, Anthony, Storino, & Dillon, 2001).

To comply with the demands of NCLB, and to achieve a proactive approach to dealing with discipline, schools across the nation are adopting strategies developed by the Office of Special Education Programs Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). One of these strategies at the primary prevention level is the creation of a universal proactive school-wide discipline plan. This study will examine the effectiveness of a proactive school-wide discipline plan on office discipline referrals, and if a correlation exists between incidents of chronic discipline referrals and academic achievement.

Background of Study

Thirty-four years ago the United States Congress passed Public Law 94-142, better known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The passage of this legislation provided students with disabilities the right to educational opportunities which were equal to those provided to nondisabled peers. After passing this historic piece of legislation, an alarming trend began to develop. The number of students identified as having a learning disability “grew much more quickly and reached much higher levels than expected" (Brown-Chidsey, 2007, p.40). The number of minorities who were found eligible for special education also began to increase at a staggering pace. Many of these same students were also found eligible for special education due to behavioral issues. In 1990, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Even with the reauthorization of IDEA in 1990, there was still little discussion how to respond to the disproportionate number of students being staffed into special education due to academic or behavioral issues and concerns.

On June 4, 1997, President Bill Clinton signed into law new amendments to IDEA. The amended IDEA still offered educators no provisions how to improve discipline or how to utilize research-based strategies to prevent students from being considered for special education when these services were unnecessary. Educators and legislators opened discussions again to review the eligibility process for students being considered for special education services. They also decided there was "a need for proactive procedures to meet the discipline needs of teachers in special education and general education classrooms" (White, Algozzine, Audette, Marr, & Ellis, 2001, p. 4).

The result was the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004. Response to Intervention (RTI) was developed from IDEIA to improve the identification of students found eligible for special education services, and as a general education approach to determine appropriate levels of academic and behavioral support for all students (Hawken, Vincent, Schuman, 2008; Gresham, 2004). RTI is a model based on prevention-focused practices. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) defines RTI as a process by which teachers systematically document students' performances as evidence of the need for additional services after making changes in classroom instruction and behavior management. The purpose of RTI is to "change the way schools support students with learning or behavior problems by systematically delivering a range of interventions based on demonstrated levels of need" (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007). RTI examines environmental factors which may be contributing to students' difficulties and then provides services or interventions. This model aids educators identifying potential disabilities and serves as a vehicle for early intervention in general

education for the "most vulnerable, academically unresponsive children" in schools and school districts (Fuchs & Deshler, 2007, p. 131).

According to OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2007), Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is based on a problem-solving model and strives to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a process similar to RTI because it identifies students who may be unresponsive to traditional disciplinary practices and utilizes a variety of interventions in an effort to improve behavior problems.

Statement of Problem

The field of education changes continuously to meet the needs of a wide variety of students. New initiatives are constantly being developed to provide educators with more effective teaching methods and proactive disciplinary strategies. Across the nation schools are valiantly trying to guarantee students are provided quality academic instruction along with a safe learning environment. School systems are implementing a variety of initiatives such as character education, safe schools, healthy students, proactive school-wide discipline, and drug free zones (Sugai & Horner, 2001). Studies by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) suggest discipline problems in schools are contributors to school violence and crime. In addition, the NCES found students with low academic achievement tend to be those at risk for disciplinary problems. Furthermore, Lannie and McCurdy's 2007 study revealed classroom disruptions are directly associated with lower academic achievement for the offending student.

One proactive disciplinary initiative from the University of Oregon by researchers George Sugai and Robert Horner (2001) is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Sugai and Horner's (2001) research on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports maintains that school-wide discipline plans, which focus on a proactive approach to discipline, will significantly decrease office discipline referrals. As schools continue to be faced with disciplinary issues, educators must determine if the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan will impact the total number of office discipline referrals and reduce the number of discipline referrals that result in In-School suspension (ISS) or Out-Of-School suspension (OSS). Statistics from NCES (2007) show students with low academic achievement tend to be those at risk for disciplinary problems. With the increasing pressure of educating all students and ensuring each student meets expectations in order to achieve adequate yearly progress do school-wide discipline plans have the capability to reveal a correlation between students with chronic discipline referrals and low academic achievement scoring below 800 on the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Test (CRCT)?

The study attempted to answer the following:

Is there is a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals and in the number of office referrals which result in In-School Suspension and/or Out-of-School Suspension in an elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan? Will there be no significant correlation between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and number of office discipline referrals?

Statement of Hypothesis

The number of office discipline referrals in a K-5 elementary school that implements a universal school-wide discipline plan based on positive behavior support processes will be significantly lower as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan.

Null Hypotheses

In addressing the research question, the study will retain or reject the following null hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant difference in the number of office referrals in a K-5 elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan.
2. There will be no significant difference in the number of office referrals which result in In-School Suspension and/or Out-of-School Suspension in a K-5 elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan.
3. There will be no significant correlation between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and number of office discipline referrals.

Professional Significance of the Study

Not all students will respond to universal or school-wide plans and interventions. Approximately fifteen percent of students will exhibit patterns of problem behavior which will require either more specialized support or highly individualized and targeted support (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000). For educators it would be beneficial

to know which students may not respond to a school-wide intervention plan. If educators had the ability to determine which students may need early intervention, then chronic disciplinary problems could possibly be prevented. There is a plethora of research which suggests a connection between academic achievement and disruptive behaviors such as noncompliance, classroom disruptions, fighting, and bullying (Lohrman & Talerico, 2004; White et al., 2001; Simonson, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). Therefore, to have the capability to determine which students may be prone to having disciplinary problems would prove invaluable for developing specialized strategies and supports. However, at this time there is limited research which identifies a correlation between academic achievement and behavior which may result in repeated office discipline referrals. This research will provide educators a recognizable correlation between the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan and low academic achievement with scores falling below 800 on the Georgia CRCT in order to prevent students from becoming at-risk for habitual office discipline referrals.

Definition of Key Terms

Academically At Risk: A student who scores an 800 or below on Georgia's Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in math, reading, or English/language arts.

Consequence: The condition that follows a behavior.

Corporal punishment: Physical pain inflicted on the body of a child as a penalty for inappropriate behavior.

Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test: The state test used to measure how well students acquire the knowledge described in the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). The assessment yields information on academic achievement at the student, class, school,

system, and state levels. This information yielded from the test is used to diagnose individual student strengths and weaknesses as related to the instruction of the GPS, and to gauge the quality of education throughout Georgia.

Habitual discipline referrals: Two or more office referrals which resulted in either In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension.

In-School Suspension (ISS): A consequence given to students for not complying with school rules and expectations. Students are removed from class and isolated in a room under the supervision of an administrator or other school staff.

Office Discipline Referral: The official school document completed by teachers or other staff members after a type three offense has been committed by a student. The discipline referral notes the event witnessed, the time of the incident, and response by the administrator.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS): Removal of a student, who has violated a school rule or expectation, from the campus for a specific length of time by an administrator.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS): A behaviorally-based proactive system which encourages schools to utilize research-based strategies to decrease the incident of unwanted behaviors. This system is comprised of three tiers: primary prevention, secondary prevention, and tertiary prevention.

Reinforcers: Anything that strengthens a desired response from a student.

*School-wide discipline plan***:** A discipline plan agreed upon by all faculty and staff members, which has clear school expectations, positive reinforcers or rewards for appropriate school behavior, and consequences for misconduct.

Type three offense: Anyone of the following: vandalism, major insubordination, flagrant disrespect, leaving class or assigned area without permission, attempts to leave school grounds, profanity, vulgarity, inappropriate gestures, sexual harassment or acts, possession of firearms, knives, or weapons, possession of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs, theft, harassment, racist acts, fighting, biting with injury.

Summary

Students continue to challenge teachers and administrators with behavioral issues. Traditionally, educators have dealt with problem behaviors using a reactive disciplinary approach. The inception of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act has prompted reform specifically focusing on how schools work with students who experience learning and behavior problems. Response to Intervention, which includes Positive Behavior Support, is a systematic means to decrease problematic behavior through the use of tiered interventions. The first tier of the three tier intervention is primary prevention which involves the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. As schools begin to create and implement school-wide discipline plans, there may continue to be some students who remain unresponsive to universal or school-wide interventions.

Chapter one introduced the study and detailed the professional significance. By examining a school which had never utilized a school-wide discipline plan until the current 2008-2009 school year where a plan was implemented, data should reveal if this type of universal system is effective in decreasing office discipline referrals and those which result in either ISS or OSS. This study will also determine if office discipline referrals have the capability to reveal a correlation between the implementation of a

school-wide discipline plan and academic achievement which may put students at-risk for chronic discipline referrals and increase likelihood for support at the secondary prevention level.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The field of education changes continuously to meet the needs of a wide variety of students. New initiatives are constantly being developed to provide educators with more effective teaching methods and proactive disciplinary strategies. Across the nation schools are valiantly trying to guarantee students are provided quality academic instruction along with a safe learning environment. Traditionally, educators have dealt with problem behaviors using reactive disciplinary methods. The inception of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act has prompted reform specifically focusing on how schools work with students who experience learning and behavior problems. Response to Intervention, which includes Positive Behavior Support, is a systematic means to decrease problematic behavior through the use of tiered interventions. The first tier of the three tier intervention is primary prevention which involves the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. This chapter discusses the history of disciplinary procedures used in schools, the foundation of school-wide discipline plans, and the impact of early intervention on behavior and academic achievement.

Theoretical Background

The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of behaviorism as a science. Behaviorism originated with the work of John Watson in 1913. Watson defined behaviorism as the scientific study of human behavior (Watson, 1999). Inspired by the work of Ivan Pavlov, Watson concluded animals and humans operated on the same principles, but humans were much more complex. Watson believed nerve pathways

conditioned by previous experiences shaped people's responses to the environment. He disagreed with psychological theories which suggested behavior originated from mental processes. Watson theorized that psychology emphasized "the importance of empirical, observable behaviors" (Holifield, 2009, p.11). Watson's approach to behavior was grounded in the theory that human behavior is determined by external factors in the environment and is not predetermined by genetic disposition (Holifield, 2009).

Watson's views on human behavior experienced brief popularity. This was due to the emergence of Freudian psychology. Mowrer (2001) states, "Behaviorists had allowed themselves to deal only with the phenomena - stimulation and responses - which were only externally observable, whereas Freud and his students focused their attention almost exclusively upon verbal reports from their patients concerning what was going on inside them, both at the emotional and cognitive levels" (p. 6). Behaviorism was eclipsed by Freudian psychology which believed behavior was determined by the unconscious mind which contained repressed impulses and desires. Freudian psychology remained popular until a scientist named B.F. Skinner became known in the late 1950s and behaviorism emerged again as an influential science.

B.F. Skinner is credited with distinguishing operant conditioning from respondent conditioning. Respondent conditioning is defined as responses that are reflexive and involuntary. Skinner's work was based on operant conditioning or voluntary responses. Alberto and Troutman (1990) maintain the following:

> Operant conditioners are concerned primarily with the consequences of behavior and the establishment of functional relationships between behavior and consequences. Early application of operant conditioning techniques to human

> beings was directed toward establishing that the principals governing animal behavior also govern human behavior (p. 33).

The 1960s witnessed operant conditioning emerging from laboratory settings to other disciplines such as psychology, education and economics. The use of Skinner's principles to change people's behavior gradually became known as behavior modification.

The premise of a school-wide discipline plan following Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) guidelines involves teaching all students the school's rules and expectations resulting with students being positively rewarded for complying with the expectations. The implementation of a school-wide discipline plan asserts that students' behavior can be changed if a relationship between behavior and consequences can be established. The foundations for the logic regarding the implementation of a school-wide positive behavior support are not new. Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, and Vincent (2004) note, "they are logical extensions of the basic principles of behavior articulated by Skinner and adapted for practical use through applied behavior analysis and organized behavioral management" (p.132). According to Skinner, "the consequences of behavior determine the probability that the behavior will occur again" (Holifield, 2009, p.11). Skinner believed a behavior would be repeated for a desired reward and the behavior would be strengthened by the need to receive the reward. These rewards were later renamed by Skinner as reinforcers. Reinforcers are defined as anything that strengthens a desired response from a subject (Kearsley, 2006).

In 1968 Skinner identified what he believed were four major problems in public education which needed to be confronted. First, he believed teachers relied a great deal on the use of aversive techniques to motivate and control students' behavior. Second,

Skinner did not believe teachers were providing students immediate feedback for appropriate behaviors or work. Next, he saw a lack of positive reinforcement and the lack of a solid well-sequenced curriculum (Tobin, Lewis-Palmer, & Sugai, 2002) Researchers George Sugai (2007), Robert Horner (2006), Jeffery Sprague (1999), and Douglas and Lynn Fuch (2007) have used Skinner's basic theory, which implies the systematic use of reinforcers for appropriate classroom behavior could positively shape the behavior of students. Skinner's theory is one of the core elements of the primary prevention tier of school-wide positive behavior support which encourages the creation of a rewards system for appropriate behavior (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007).

Historical Background

How students are disciplined has been an issue since the inception of public education. Discipline problems in schools continue to change, yet a number of methods of discipline, such as corporal punishment and negative consequences, have not changed in hundreds of years. In 1770, William Blackstone applied the phrase *in loco parentis,* which literally means in place of the parents, to educators. *In loco parentis* gave teachers the ability to act in place of the parent in response to disciplinary actions (Conte, 2000). *In loco parentis* was implemented in schools in the early 1900s, and with it came corporal punishment. Victorian era parents believed children who were lazy and insubordinate were alienating themselves from God, and teachers were thought to be the perfect authority figure to ensure alienation did not occur (Parker-Jenkins, 1997). During this time period corporal punishment was viewed as necessary to produce citizens who conformed to the norms of society, beat out sin, and ensure learning occurred (Parker-

Jenkins, 1997). The book of Proverbs in the Bible advocates the use of a rod, i.e. corporal punishment, to save children's souls from death. Therefore, teachers began administering corporal punishment for acts of wrongdoing by their charges (Conte, 2000). According to the National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment (2002), corporal punishment is defined as physical pain inflicted on the body of a child as a penalty for inappropriate behavior. Corporal punishment includes actions such as spanking, hitting, punching, paddling, and shaking. Treatments such as excessive physical drills and electric shock are also considered corporal punishment (Dupper & Dingus, 2008).

The 1920s and 1930s began to bring an awareness of the effects of corporal punishment resulting from the emergence of research on child development. Researchers began to consider the effect corporal punishment had on children's normal development (Evans & Fargason, 1998). The 1940s produced literature on child development which suggested individuals were administering corporal punishment to children when the behaviors being exhibited by children were a part of normal development (Dupper & Dingus, 2008). Literature in the 1960s drew attention to the fine line between excessive physical discipline and child abuse and considered corporal punishment a socially abnormal form of discipline (Evans & Fargason, 1998).

Since the early 1970s, debates have raged regarding the effectiveness of corporal punishment as a means to change student behavior (Hyman, 1995). Research conducted by Owen (2005) indicated the dispensing of corporal punishment in schools does result in an increase of immediate compliance. However, the Society for Adolescent Medicine (2003) claims there is no data suggesting the use of corporal punishment increases social skills or encourages children to maintain more self-control over time. "The effects of

punishment outside the controlled laboratory conditions are largely unknown with regards to both long and short effectiveness and negative consequences, when compared to other behavior techniques" (Kennedy, 1995 p. 53). This is evident when discipline records often reveal the same students are the recipients of corporal punishment, often minority children, children with disabilities, and boys (Teicher, 2005).

Traditional Discipline

Traditional school discipline has historically been based on reactive responses as opposed to proactive approaches. Reactive schools respond to inappropriate behavior by administering aversive consequences. Aversive consequences can range from In-School to Out-of-School suspension, loss of privileges, and in some states, corporal punishment. Reactive responses to manage students' inappropriate behavior continue to be the standard in schools across the country. The reason many teachers and administrators continue to rely on aversive consequences or punishment is the ease with which it can be administered. Punishment is a quick solution to an immediate behavioral problem. The ease with which punishment can be administered has made it a desirable method of classroom management (Maag, 2001). Tidwell, Flannery, and Lewis-Palmer (2003) argued "research has shown that reactive discipline systems are ineffective and result in increases in problem behavior, rather than improvements in behavior" (p. 19). Reactive disciplinary strategies produce an immediate reduction in disruptive behavior, yet the reduction or extinction is usually only temporary with the behavior reoccurring at another time (Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007). Reactive discipline systems rely heavily on the use of negative consequences rather than creating an atmosphere which utilizes positive

consequences for desired behaviors. “Students’ behaviors become more challenging when traditional approaches to manage them have failed” (Maag, 2001).

Negative consequences are in direct contrast to positive consequences. Teachers who rely on negative consequences tend to remain in control of behaviors rather than allowing students to learn to control their behavior. The ultimate goal of a school discipline plan is for students to take ownership of their actions and behaviors. The continued use of negative consequences can cultivate resentment in students and in many cases lead to passive-aggressive behaviors, an increase in student alienation and misbehavior, and possibly a need to seek revenge (Dupper & Dingus, 2008; Alderman, 2001).

According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (2001) Office of the Surgeon General, students with aggressive, acting out, and/or antisocial behaviors continue to increase and contribute to unsafe learning environments and reactive teaching environments. “Disruptive behavior consistently tops the list of teachers’ and parents’ concerns about education” (Skiba & Sprague, 2008). A 1999 survey by the Metropolitan Life Company, with a sample of 1,000 teachers and 1,180 students, showed most teachers and students feel safe at school. However, 24% of the students surveyed admitted they had personal experience with violence. The type of violent behaviors most frequently encountered by students included: verbal insults, pushing, shoving, grabbing, or slapping. Over 44% had verbally insulted another student, and over 37% had pushed, shoved, grabbed, or slapped. Approximately 22% of the students surveyed expressed concern about being hurt at school. Disruptive and/or

dangerous students affect teachers' instruction and the learning of other students (Walker, et al., 1996; Tidwell, Flannery, Lewis-Palmer, 2003; Sugai et al., 2000).

Two traditional reactive responses to inappropriate behavior are In-School suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School suspension (OSS). Suspensions are typically administered when a student's behavior is severely interfering with the learning of other students and a teacher's ability to teach (Blomberg, 2004). Furthermore, the removal of the offending student is generally the only means available to cease the persistent interruptions.

In-School suspension is a program which is housed within the school where students are assigned a designated time for a committed offense. When a student receives ISS they are removed from the traditional classroom. ISS can range from a classroom staffed by a teacher or paraprofessional to a small room with a window which can be supervised from a short distance by an administrator or office assistant. ISS allows instructional time to continue because students bring their work to the assigned location to complete during the day. If an ISS student is served in special education, that student will receive some special education services and support while serving in ISS class. Often a counselor will speak with students while they are serving ISS to determine root causes for the demonstrated behavior. Out-of-School suspension involves removing students from the school setting and not allowing them on campus for a given amount of time. Typically, an administrator will determine the length of the OSS depending upon the severity of the offense committed.

Axelrod (1996) believes the reason educators do not embrace positive reinforcement when developing a school or classroom discipline plan is the time involved

in creating and administering the system. Alderman (2001) suggests another reason teachers continue to use reactive methods is due to lack of discipline basics or lack of disciplinary training. According to Terry Alderman (2001), the more positive a teacher's behavior management plan is the more power he or she has over the class. His research showed "effective teachers use about four times as many positive consequences as negative ones" (p. 40). When teachers implement positive consequences the results that are reaped are also positive. Students put more effort into their studies and have more pride in themselves and their abilities. Positive relationships are established between teachers and other students, and ultimately more self-control is demonstrated by the students (Alderman, 2001). Hyman (1995) stated, "reward, praise, and interaction with children that promotes the development of a positive self-concept, are the most compelling motivators for learning in school" (p.119). "The events that occur in the classroom affect how students learn, how the teacher teaches, and how students interact outside the classroom" (Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003, p. 19).

Cohen, Kincaid, and Childs (2007) as well as Sugai and Horner (2007) have found a proactive approach to discipline which emphasizes that teaching students behavioral expectations and positively reinforcing wanted behaviors are effective for the majority of students. However, transitioning from a system which has relied on reactive responses, punishment, and negative consequences to one founded on proactive responses and positive support is a monumental transition (Muscot, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008).

Response to Intervention

The 2004 reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) introduced an alternative approach to determining eligibility for special

education services (Brown-Chidsey, 2007). Response to Intervention, better known as RTI, was created to contend with the rapidly growing number of students identified as learning disabled as well as the disproportionate number of minorities being found eligible for special education services. IDEIA changed the traditional eligibility process which relied on IQ testing for identification of children with learning disabilities. Previously, if a child's scores revealed a severe discrepancy between academic achievement and intellectual ability, they were found eligible for services in special education (Brown-Chidsey, 2007). IDEIA removed the significant discrepancy formula and now requires states to allow school districts to use alternative models for learning disability eligibility. An example of an alternative model is Response to Intervention (Wedl, 2005). Currently, schools are "allowed to use evidence of a student's failure to respond to instructional interventions as part of the data documenting the presence of a specific learning disability" (Brown-Chidsey, 2007, p. 40).

RTI not only provides a scientifically-based means for identifying students with a learning disability, but merges special education and the NCLB Act through the use of clear standard-based practices, measurement of progress, and instructional practices (Wedl, 2005). The foundation of RTI is based on "prevention-focused instructional practices" (Brown-Chidsey, 2007, p. 40). Students are no longer able to be referred from a general education class for special education services without first being exposed to high-quality, scientifically-based instructional practices.

Two studies conducted in 1977, one by Bergan and the other by Deno and Mirkin, formed the early research supporting the need for RTI. Both studies utilized similar methodologies, with the only difference being one explored behavioral issues and the

other academic issues. The studies introduced two different approaches to RTI. Bergan's study focused on behavioral issues and employed a problem-solving RTI model. Deno and Mirkin's study focused on academic issues, utilizing curriculum-based measurement, which would become known as the standard treatment model (Bender & Shores, 2007).

Bergan's research focused on a problem-solving approach to address behavioral issues among students served in special education. The problem-solving approach begins with the identification of the targeted behavioral problem, which is then measured as accurately as possible (Bender & Shores, 2007). The student's intellectual functioning is compared to grade level peers. A behavioral intervention team is created which consists of teachers, administrators, a counselor, parents, and other individuals who have a stake in the student's education. The intervention team then utilizes a problem-solving process to interpret the data and creates measurable behavioral goals for the student. After creating goals, the team designs "an intervention plan based on scientifically validated practices for behavior change" (Bender & Shores, 2007, p. 7). The individualized behavior interventions are then implemented and progress is monitored frequently over a period of time. The collected progress monitoring data is then analyzed to determine if the interventions were successful in reducing or eliminating the targeted behavior. Lastly, the intervention team uses the data to "make programming decisions for the student" (Bender & Shores, 2007, p. 7).

Deno and Mirkin's research focused on assessing student's academic progress over a period of time. During this period of time, data is collected, a specific weakness is identified, and an academic intervention plan is created. The intervention plan focuses on the targeted area of weakness and specific strategies are utilized to remediate. During the

remediation period, the student is assessed frequently to determine if he or she is responding to the interventions. The results of the assessments inform the teacher if the interventions need to be continued, discontinued, modified, or intensified. Bender and Shores (2007) conclude "both approaches require research-based interventions, ongoing progress monitoring, and measures to assure fidelity and integrity of the interventions and assessment" (p. 8).

RTI is not a wait and fail model, but a model based on proactive preventative instructional practices (Brown-Chidsey, 2007). Fuchs and Deshler (2007) encourage "practitioners and researchers to recognize that assessments and identification inextricably connected to early intervention; to a school district's or school building's capacity to provide more intensive and costly help to its most vulnerable, academically unresponsive children. An assessment and identification process with strong predictive validity is likely to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of early intervention" (p. 131).

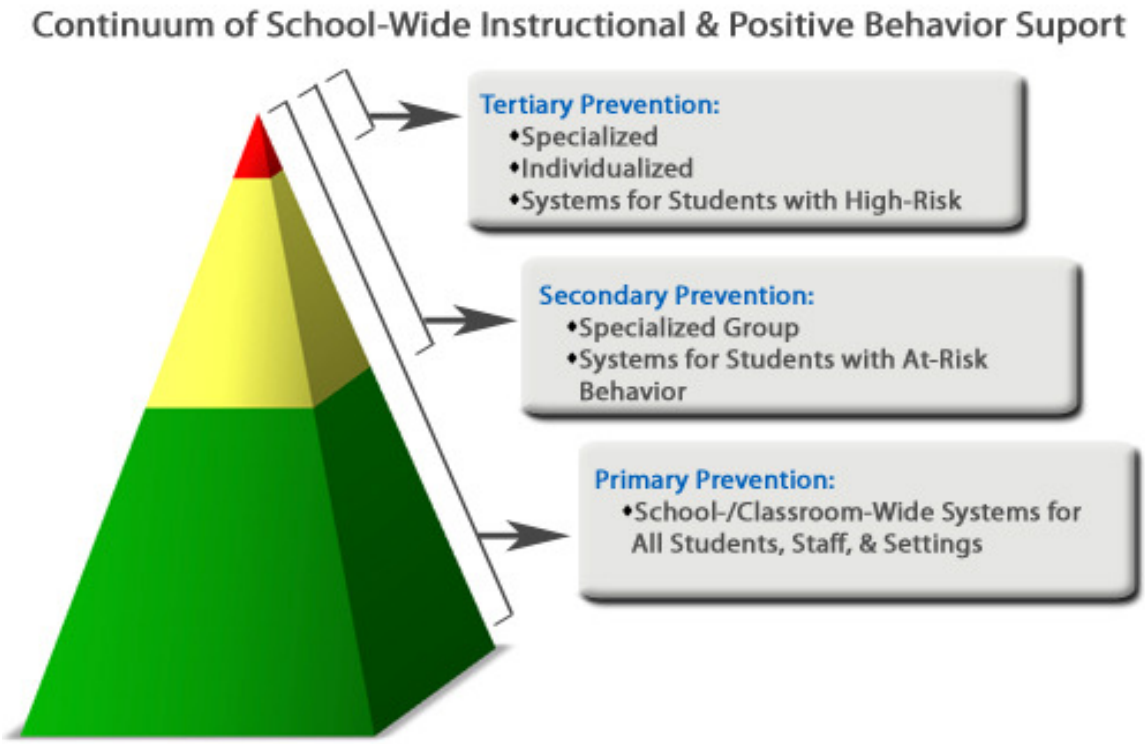
Positive Behavior Support

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is similar to RTI because it is based on systematic interventions to improve behavior. "PBS focuses on addressing systemic issues in schools to positively address the areas of discipline, academic performance, and social/emotional development" (Walker, Cheney, Stage, & Blum, 2005, p. 194). Sprague, Sugai, Horner, and Walker (1999) and Walker, et al.(1996) recommend a three tier approach to student behavior which is founded on the premise that students have three levels of need. The three tiered model provides a continuum of behavioral support to every student in the school (Lohrman, Forman, Martin, & Palmieri, 2008). The need

levels correspond with the "school's continuum of supports and interventions" (Walker et al., 2005, p. 194). The three tiered prevention model focuses on "active, early, and consistent teaching and acknowledgement of appropriate behavior as the foundation for reducing problem behavior in schools" (Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003, p. 19). The first tier is called primary prevention or universal prevention, the next tier is secondary prevention, and the top tier is tertiary prevention.

The PBS tiers are represented in the shape of a triangle (shown in Figure 1) with the base of the triangle representing primary prevention or universal prevention. Primary prevention is the first level of support which advocates the development of a school-wide discipline plan involving research-based behavior management practices designed to meet the needs of all students (Ervin, Schaughency, Matthews, Goodman, & McGlinchey, 2007). Simple school-wide expectations are created and taught to all students at the primary level. Faculty and staff members choose three to five positively stated expectations and everyone agrees to positively reinforce the school expectations.

Figure 1 Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Three Levels of Support



Note. From Positive Behavioral Interventions, by the Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007. Reprinted with permission.

The chosen school expectations are systemically taught and reinforced to ensure consistency and success. “The foundation of all effective school-wide discipline plan efforts lies in systematic attention to the universal training, monitoring, and reinforcement of expected social behavior” (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 2). Clearly defined school rules and routines are also established and enforced by school personnel. The use of positive reinforcement begins at the primary prevention level and is structured to encourage appropriate school behavior (Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003). A continuum of consequences for problem behavior is established for students at the primary prevention level. At the primary prevention level schools also create a school-

wide bullying prevention program, establish classroom positive behavior systems, and provide professional learning and behavioral supports for all teachers. Once the primary prevention level is established educators begin an ongoing data collection process in the form of office discipline referrals or antidotal notes for use in future decision-making concerning the effectiveness of the school-wide discipline plan.

Studies suggest approximately 80% to 90% of students will be successful at the primary prevention level if supports and interventions at this level are positive, consistent, and firmly established (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008; Horner & Sugai, 2001; Sprague et al., 1999). Primary prevention provides two advantages to schools. First, it reduces the large volume of office discipline referrals for minor problems which can be eliminated with consistent expectations, rules, and routines. Second, the office discipline referrals which are received in the office can serve as a means of documenting problematic behaviors and provide a way to determine which students need more intensive interventions. Typically, after a student has received two to three office discipline referrals they are moved from primary prevention to tier two or secondary prevention.

Secondary prevention is designed to "support a targeted group of students who have not responded to primary tier intervention, but whose behaviors do not pose a serious risk to themselves or others" (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008, p. 33). Students who prove unsuccessful at the primary prevention level are then "candidates for intensive, individually tailored interventions" (Walker, et al., 1996, p. 203). Intervention at this level targets about 10% to 15% of students (Hawken, MacLeod, & Rawlings, 2007). Students who progress into secondary prevention are considered at risk for

behavioral disorders and mental illness (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008). At the secondary prevention level interventions and supports are individualized according to the needs of the targeted student. The interventions and supports are implemented individually to decrease the probability the behaviors will escalate into more serious problem behavior. On average, a student moves from primary prevention to secondary prevention after two to three office discipline referrals. At the secondary level a team is created to determine the function of the behavior. The team typically consists of the parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and other individuals who may be involved with the implementation of the interventions and supports. During secondary prevention, the student's behavioral progress is monitored frequently and adjustments are made to ensure success within a specified timeframe. If the student does not respond to interventions developed at the secondary intervention level, the student then moves to tier three or tertiary prevention.

The last level is tier three, or tertiary prevention, which provides significant interventions, strategies, and supports for roughly five percent of a school's population (Hawken, MacLeod, & Rawlings, 2007). Students placed in tertiary prevention are displaying "symptoms or behaviors related to an emotional and behavioral disorder or mental illness" (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008, p. 191). The behaviors the student is exhibiting pose a threat to him or her as well as others and require immediate and intensive support from support staff (Simonsen, Sugai, Negron, 2008). Some students at the tertiary level qualify for special education while others may not. "Individualized behavior contracts, systematic functional behavioral assessment and behavior support plans, wrap-around services, and Individualized Education Programs are typical supports

at this level" (Walker et al., 2005, p. 195). Ultimately, the goal for students placed in tertiary prevention is to extinguish the unwanted behavior while increasing the student's adaptive skills, academic achievement, and enhancing his or her quality of life.

Sugai et al. (2000) recommend schools re-examine their support systems at the secondary level if the proportion of students receiving between two to ten office discipline referrals exceeds students only receiving one. Next, if ten students receive ten or more office discipline referrals, Sugai et al. (2000) suggests the school restructure the individualized support systems which are being utilized. Lastly, if 5% of students compose the highest proportion of the overall school's office discipline referrals, then the individualized supports at this level must be re-evaluated. "More simply stated, they [Sugai, Sprague, Horner, and Walker] have established three levels of analysis of office discipline referrals that correspond to the 3-level Positive Behavior Support model" (Walker et al., 2005, p. 195).

School Wide Discipline

Terry Alderman (2000) proclaimed peaceful schools will continue to be nonexistent if piece meal discipline remains the norm. The beginning of the new millennium was an opportune time for the general public to call for the reform and restructuring of antiquated discipline policies and practices which would ensure the safety and well-being of students (White et al., 2001). A year later came the passage of the NCLB Act and subsequently the reauthorization of the IDEA which mandated educators take a proactive approach to students' academic and behavioral needs. The legislative mandates prompted the United States Office of Special Education Programs to develop Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Research conducted by Lewis,

Sugai, and Colvin (1998) and Sugai, Sprague, Horner, and Walker (2000) was at the forefront of the Response to Intervention and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports movement. Their research supports plans which focus on a proactive approach to discipline (Sugai & Horner, 2001). School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a "process through which schools improve services for all students by creating systems wherein intervention and management decisions are informed by local data and guided by intervention research (Ervin et al., 2007, p. 7). School-wide Positive Behavior Support is not a "packaged curriculum, but is an approach that defines core elements that can be achieved through a variety of strategies" (Sugai & Horner, 2007, p.2). School-wide Positive Behavior Support encourages the creation of a school-wide discipline plan which is the foundation of primary prevention. Many educators are utilizing school-wide discipline plans to diminish the incidence of disruptive and dangerous behaviors (Irvin et al., 2004). The school-wide plan includes a "positively stated purpose, clear expectations backed up by specific rules, and procedures for encouraging adherence to and discouraging violations of the expectations" (Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007, p. 203).

The Office of Special Education Programs Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2007) provides guidelines regarding factors which need to be present to ensure successful implementation. There are six conditions which must be met when developing a school-wide discipline plan. The first is the creation of a team which problem solves and uses data to drive decisions regarding the school-wide discipline plan. Next, administrators must be active in the planning process and provide consistent active support. Then stakeholders must be committed to improving the climate of the school. The school's administration must guarantee adequate personnel are available to

plan and implement the school-wide plan and that funds are budgeted to support professional learning and purchase materials. Lastly, an information system must be established to collect data. Once the six conditions are evident a school is able to proceed in developing the school-wide discipline plan.

The implementation of a school-wide discipline plan is a proactive measure to prevent disruptive and dangerous behaviors (Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003). The school-wide discipline plan is based on a continuum of supports which begins with the least intensive and moves to most intensive (Walker et al., 1996). White et al. (2001) found proactive school-wide approaches to discipline are considered best practices when working with students with challenging behaviors. A school which implements a school-wide discipline plan under the "assumption that when all school staff members in all school settings actively teach and consistently reinforce appropriate behavior, the number of students with serious behavior problems will be reduced and the school climate will improve" (Irvin et al., 2004, p. 131). Although school-wide discipline plans are considered an effective means to curtail discipline problems, many schools have yet to adopt the approach (Lohrman & Talerico, 2004). The lack of school-wide discipline often makes maintaining discipline within the classrooms difficult when there is minimal discipline within the school (Alderman, 2000). Classrooms which lack discipline provide an environment that fosters disruptive students to interfere with teacher instruction and the learning of other students. Often the reason a school-wide discipline plan is not implemented is due to the lack of administrative direction and leadership, skepticism regarding universal interventions, or philosophical differences (Lohrman et al., 2008). To contend with behavior problems in schools, educators are valiantly trying to implement

"universal interventions to promote a positive school climate" (Lohrman & Talerico, 2004, p. 113).

Sugai and Horner (2007) state one of the benefits of implementing a school-wide discipline plan is a decrease in office discipline referrals of approximately 40%-60%. Not only does a school-wide discipline plan decrease office discipline referrals, but also decreases the number of referrals which result in suspensions (Lohrman et al., 2008). A study conducted by McCurdy, Mannella, and Eldridge (2003) found a forty-six percent decrease in office discipline referrals at an urban elementary school after two years of implementing a school-wide discipline plan. Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006) noted significant decreases in office discipline referrals and suspensions after implementing a school-wide discipline plan at an urban middle school. Scott and Barrett (2004) discovered teachers were able to increase instructional time since classroom disruptions had decreased with the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan. Hawken and Horner's (2003) research found "students became more consistent in participating in class without problem behavior" (p. 237). "Prevention of problem behavior is now identified as our best hope for decreasing serious problem behaviors in schools" (Hawken & Horner, 2003, p. 225).

Office Discipline Referrals

Irvin et al. (2004) believe without a school-wide behavior plan, high office discipline referrals and disruptive and dangerous behaviors will likely continue. A common data collection system to record disciplinary actions is the office discipline referral form. "Office discipline referrals are a readily available source of information of student problem behaviors" (Tidwell, Flannery, Lewis-Palmer, 2003, p. 20). Typically,

an office discipline referral includes information such as the student's name, gender, age or grade level, referring teacher, the time of day the offense was committed, and the nature/location of the offense committed. Sugai et al. (2000) found the main advantage of using office discipline referrals as data is "they already are collected in most schools and provide an efficient source of information for documenting whether reform efforts result in system change" (p. 3). Tobin, and Sugai (1996) noticed "when students with problems are observed over time and compared to other students, patterns may emerge that can help identify those individuals who are having difficulty adjusting to the complex public school environment" (p. 2). Characteristically an office discipline referral represents a behavioral event in which "(a) a student engaged in a behavior that violated a rule or social norm in the school, (b) the problem behavior was observed or identified by a member of the school staff, and (c) the event resulted in a consequence delivered by administrative staff who produced a permanent (written) product defining the whole event" (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 96). Discipline reports often serve as an atypical metric for data collection in studies to determine the effectiveness of school-wide discipline plans (Cohen, Kincaid, Childs, 2007; Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003; Sugai et al., 2000). Since the inception and implementation of school-wide discipline plans, office discipline referrals have been used as an instrument to determine the effectiveness of plans and to identify areas which may need more support or better supervision. Educators can use the information collected from office discipline referrals to evaluate school safety as well as the behavioral climate of the school. The information yielded from the office disciple referrals can form the foundation of the school-wide discipline plan. Office discipline reports have also been used to identify individuals who may need more

supports and interventions than those provided at the primary prevention level. “Office discipline referrals appear to be a valuable data source both in identifying school-wide patterns of problem behaviors and for monitoring individual student interventions “(Irvin et al., 2006, p. 10).

Office discipline reports are an accessible data source for educators and researchers, yet there is a limitation. Referrals to the office are completed by a wide variety of teachers, administrators, or other school personnel. In particular a student’s behavior may elicit a different response from one teacher than it does from another teacher in another school. Each school and teacher may define and make use of disciplinary referrals differently (Sprague et al., 1999). A study conducted by Wright and Dusek (1998) evaluated office discipline referrals over a three year period at two urban elementary schools and found significant variability between the referral patterns of the two schools. Yet, they also established that the referral rates and patterns at each individual school were considerably stable over the three year period. Wright and Dusek’s conclusion was that a relatively uniform database can be used “in making predictions about future teacher-initiated disciplinary referrals among selected subgroups of students” (p 144). Numerous studies have been conducted utilizing office discipline referrals as the data measure from one targeted school due to the uniformity of the information collected (Hawken and Horner, 2003; Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998; McCurdy, Mannella, and Eldridge, 2003; Putnam et al., 2003; Tobin and Sugai, 1996).

Early Intervention

Early intervention means addressing challenging, disruptive behaviors when children are young to prevent the behaviors from intensifying. Normally, if problem

behaviors are not addressed and resolved between third and fifth grade, the behaviors become resistant to change and could potentially escalate (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007). Walker, Irvin, and Sprague (1997) believe disruptive and violent behaviors will continue to escalate until coordinated plans of prevention and early interventions are developed. Walker et al. (2005) stated that "despite an emphasis on early intervention for students at risk of developing emotional or behavioral problems, few schools have implemented systematic early identification and intervention programs" (p. 195). The lack of early identification may occur for many reasons. First, teachers and administrators may perceive the early identification of students as profiling or labeling at a young age. Next, early identification of students may result in an increase for the need of specialized supports and interventions which requires additional resources. Lastly, "administrators may fear that identifying students with emergent social or behavioral problems, before they become severe enough to qualify for special education, may put additional financial pressure on their already strained budgets (Walker et al., 2005, p. 195).

Sugai and Horner (2000) found students who enter school with risk factors are usually unresponsive to primary prevention. Sugai and Horner (2007) believe students who progress to secondary prevention are at risk for developing more severe behavior problems due to their poor social relationships, low academic achievement, and/or chaotic home environments. Walker et al. (1996) believe schools have a critical task:

> in addressing the rising tide of at-risk students who bring antisocial, aggressive behavior patterns with them to the schooling experience due to the multiple, nonschool risk factors to which they have been exposed early in their lives like

> poverty, abuse and neglect, family conflict, weak or incompetent parenting, drug and alcohol involvement of primary caregivers, and dysfunctional family situations that are chaotic and highly unpredictable (p.197).

Schools have at-risk students enrolled on a daily basis and have the opportunity to identify these students and offer supports to address their needs before risk factors make a permanent, irreversible impact. Typically, schools wait until students fail or accrue multiple office discipline referrals before addressing the problems. Early intervention could decrease the harmful effects risk factors pose to young children which could eventually lead them to violence and crime (Tobin et al., 2004; Tobin & Sugai, 1999; Walker, et al., 1996). Children who demonstrate antisocial behaviors and high levels of aggression early in life are among the best predictors of delinquent and violent behaviors later in life (Fagan, 1996; Sprague & Walker, 2000). Often students who come from homes where divorce, poverty, abuse and neglect, as well as other conditions, are inadvertently taught destructive behaviors from their caregivers (Walker et al., 1996). Over time the disruptive behaviors become more destructive and aversive, greatly impacting the school environment (Sprague & Walker, 2000). Sadly, the learned behaviors alienate peers and teachers. Most often these students have not been provided the opportunity to learn socially appropriate behaviors when interacting with teachers and peers. Therefore, these students must be systematically taught socially appropriate behaviors for different settings. “Such students need to be directly taught an adaptive, positive pattern of behavior for home, school, and other settings, be given the opportunities to display what they have learned, and receive feedback regarding the effectiveness of their efforts” (Walker et al., 1996, p. 199).

Walker et al. (1996) suggests schools consider making four instrumental changes in their school-wide practices in order to curtail the harmful effects of risk factors. First, they recommend the proactive screening of all students upon entering school. The screener should be able to identify students who show early signs of antisocial and aggressive behaviors. Next, primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention levels should be implemented with consistency to divert students from inappropriate behaviors as well as provide needed supports and interventions. Finally, reactionary discipline practices such as OSS should cease and alternative schools should be reinstituted.

According to Morrison and Skiba (2001), the best predictors of future behaviors are past behaviors. They concluded students who had previous disruptive behaviors at school would more than likely continue to exhibit the same behaviors the remainder of their school career as well as after their formal schooling had concluded. Walker et al. (2005) and Irvin et al. (2004) consider office discipline referrals a means to identify students who are in need of more intensive interventions and supports. “Any student with 10 or more disciplinary referrals to the principal’s office within a given school year, for which a written record exists, is seriously at risk for school failure and related negative outcomes” (Sprague & Walker, 2000, p. 369). Tobin and Sugai (1999) have found that by sixth grade office discipline referrals serve as a significant predictor of chronic discipline problems in middle school. They also discovered if a student has accumulated three or more suspensions by ninth grade this was a strong predictor for failure in high school. “Other research findings have shown that the behavior problems that result in ODRs [office discipline referrals] in school are likely to persist into adulthood. Discipline problems for boys at 8 to 10 years of age have been shown to predict (a) self-reported

violence at 16 to 18 years of age and at 32 years of age and (b) violent crime convictions between ages 10 and 32." (Tobin et al., 2004, p. 137). Overall, if a boy had multiple office discipline referrals in elementary school he would be twice as likely to have disciplinary issues as an adult than a boy who did not have disciplinary referrals.

Early identification of students, who have distinct characteristics which might make them prone to behavioral problems, is essential to reduce the likelihood of subsequent behavior issues. The use of office discipline referrals has been the primary source of data used to monitor the effectiveness of school-wide discipline plans and identify students who may require more supports and interventions. Walker et al. (2005) conclude office discipline referrals are effective for identifying students at risk for developing behavioral problems. Currently in education there are several tools utilized regularly by educators to screen students for potential academic or health issues. Office discipline referrals may act as a screening tool to identify students who are at risk of having discipline issues. The early identification of levels of academic achievement has critical implications for the provision of specialized supports and interventions for the prevention of future behavioral problems.

Academic Achievement

Schools across the country are attempting to educate students from more diverse backgrounds than ever before. Teachers are faced with students who have mild to moderate learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral issues, various ethnic and racial backgrounds, and a multitude of other characteristics. According to the NCLB Act, educators have been charged with closing the achievement gap which may exist between high and low performing students including all minority and disability groups. One factor

needed to achieve this task is a safe and orderly classroom. “The most critical factor in learning is on-task instructional time. The more students are focused on learning, the more they accomplish. And one of the main factors for on-task time is good discipline” (Alderman, 2001, p.38).

Students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in school generally also demonstrate poor academic performance (Najaka, Gottfredson, & Wilson, 2001). Recent studies have found a link between academic achievement and behavior (Fleming, Harachi, Cortes, Abbott, & Cantalano, 2004; Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004). The relationship between academics and behavior starts as early as school entry in kindergarten with academic variables having the capability to predict problem behavior at the end of elementary school (McIntosh, Horner, Chard, Boland, & Good, 2006). The relationship between academics and behavior continues to grow and increases once students enter middle and high school. Children who performed poorly academically during elementary school are more likely to engage in delinquency, violence, and substance abuse during adolescence (Fleming, et al., 2004). Maguin and Loeber’s (1996) meta-analysis concluded students who performed below average academically had an increase number of disruptive behaviors and outburst which increased in intensity and frequency over time. The relationship between academic achievement and disruptive behavior appears to be the most intense with students who exhibit external behaviors, such as fighting, noncompliance, and other outward disruptive behaviors (Nelson, et al., 2004; McIntosh, Horner, Chard, Dickey, & Braun, 2008).

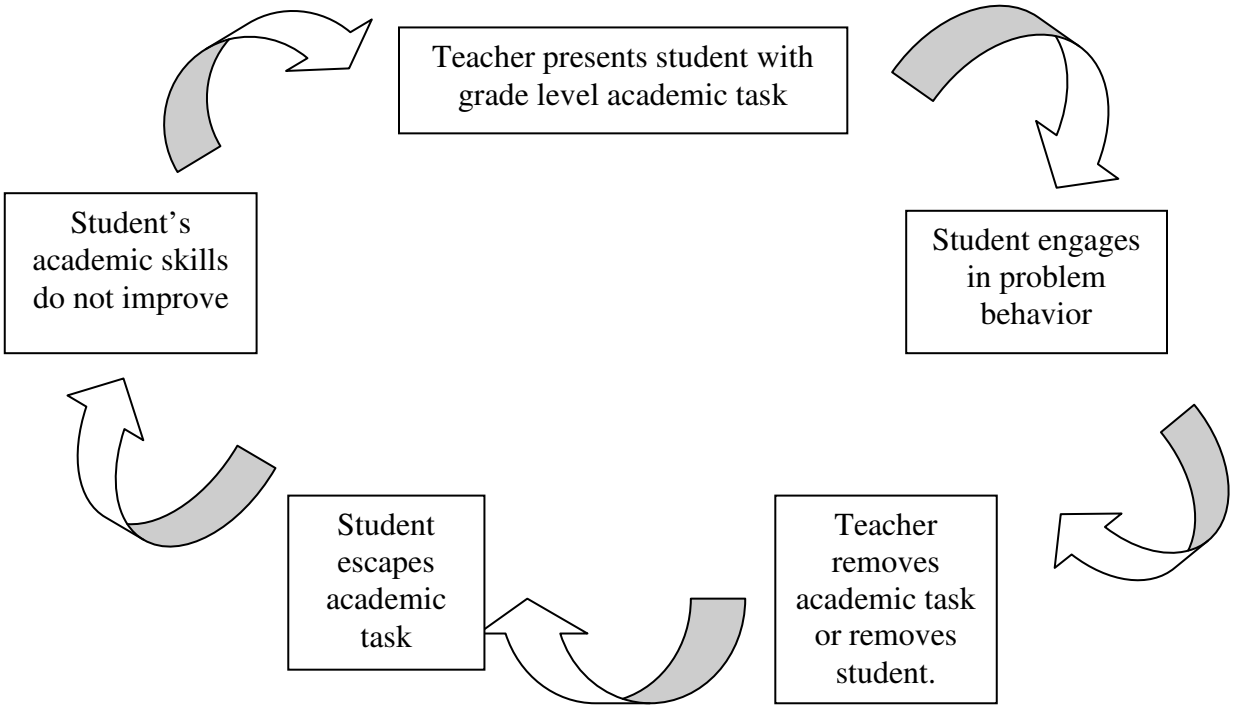
A research study conducted by Morrison and D’Incau (1997) sought to identify early indicators of students at risk for being expelled from school. Their research findings

revealed that students who had the most expulsions from school on average had below average grades and low achievement scores on standardized tests. The students' mean grade point average was a 1.45 or D+, which is on the verge of failing. Achievement percentile scores on the California Test of Basic Skills in the areas of reading, math, and language arts for the targeted group were all below the 50th percentile mark. Hinshaw (1992) found children considered academically deficient were at risk for special education classes, retention, low grades, ISS, OSS, and low standardized test scores. Furthermore, research conducted by Tidwell, Flannery, and Lewis-Palmer (2003) found students who had experienced academic difficulties were at greater risk for becoming involved in juvenile crime, displaying behavior problems at school, and leaving school before graduation than their peers who did not experience academic difficulties.

McIntosh et al. (2008) believe there may be three causes which accounts for the relationship between academic achievement and disruptive behaviors. They doubt any one of the possible causes could fully explain the relationship, although it does begin to reveal that academic achievement may have a direct correlation with behavior problems. The first cause may be underlying attention issues (Hinshaw, 1992). The suspected attention deficits may interfere with the student's learning ultimately leading to disruptive behaviors. Next, a pre-existing behavior issue may be present which may restrict the student's access to the learning environment. McIntosh et al. (2008) found "when students disrupt the educational environment, they stop teaching from occurring, thereby preventing their own learning" (p. 132). Finally, the third cause may be the student's low academic abilities might prompt disruptive behaviors in order to escape academic tasks. This final cause is based on negative reinforcement which suggests if the student displays

unwanted disruptive behaviors the teacher will remove him from the learning environment. Over time the behaviors will continue to escalate in an effort to escape the demands of the learning environment. McIntosh et al. (2008) described the cycle of behavior a coercive cycle of academic and behavioral failure (Figure 2) in which a student with low academic skills engages in disruptive behaviors to escape from the academic task.

Figure 2 A Coercive Cycle of Behavioral and Educational Failure by Kent McIntosh, Robert H Horner, David J Chard, Celeste R Dickey and Drew H Braun (2008).



Generally, by the time a child is identified as being nonresponsive to universal systems of discipline they have become accustomed to being negatively reinforced for disruptive behaviors which makes interventions more difficult (McIntosh et al., 2006). Students who are not responsive to universal academic instruction, and experience repeated failure may eventually demonstrate behavior problems. Typically, academic failure leads to

externalizing behavior problems such as acting out, classroom disruptions, aggression, and others (Hinshaw, 1992). McIntosh et al. (2006) research indicates that by third grade behavioral and academic interventions begin to lose their effectiveness supporting the need for early interventions in the elementary school settings. The relationship between academic achievement and behavior problems is evident and the need for early interventions is at critical levels to avoid future problems, such a substance abuse, violence, and delinquency during middle school and high, and often through adulthood (Fleming et al., 2004).

Summary

Schools continue to deal with changing behaviors demonstrated by students. With the plethora of disciplinary strategies available to educators it is imperative to know what strategies are effective and their possible outcomes. Researchers suggest positive behavior supports in the form of a school-wide discipline plan is effective, will reduce the number of office referrals, and will aid in the identification of students who do not respond to primary prevention and continue to receive ISS and OSS. Currently, the identification process is the number of discipline referrals accumulated by students. The number of office discipline referrals accumulated provides the data to place students into secondary and tertiary prevention of the behavior pyramid to receive specialized interventions and supports. Research is emerging establishing a correlation between academic achievement and disruptive, dangerous behaviors and suspensions. Yet, research using office discipline referrals as predictors for chronic discipline referrals is limited. If educators could use office discipline referrals as a means to identify correlations which may determine which students are predestined to have behavior

problems, then early interventions could be employed. The early identification of students is imperative to prevent movement into secondary prevention. The purpose of this research is to examine whether school-wide discipline plans reduce office discipline referrals and those which result in ISS or OSS, and if a correlation exists between students with two or more office discipline referrals than other students without office discipline referrals in terms of academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Study

Since the inception of the NCLB Act of 2001 and the expectations set forth by this legislation, school systems across the nation have been evaluating their current educational practices. One of the areas educators have examined is existing disciplinary practices. Many school systems have relied on reactive approaches to discipline, a direct contrast to the proactive approaches the national reforms are asking schools to implement. Positive Behavioral Support is founded on scientifically based strategies, utilizing problem solving methods, and teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors. In 2008, the Georgia Department of Education established Response to Intervention which corresponded with methods advocated by Positive Behavior Support (PBS). Georgia's Response to Intervention is based on the Pyramid of Intervention and at the base of the pyramid is tier one or primary prevention. Tier one's foundation is the creation of a school-wide discipline plan. Proponents of PBS and school-wide discipline plans believe schools which utilize this model will notice a reduction in office discipline referrals and have a means of documenting students who continue to have behavioral issues.

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan on the number of office discipline referrals in an elementary school. This research explored the possibility that the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan would reduce the number of office discipline referrals which result in ISS and OSS. The research would reveal, after the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan, those students who did not respond to

primary prevention and continued to receive ISS or OSS. The research would determine if a correlation exists between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and number of office discipline referrals.

The study attempted to answer the following:

Did the implementation of a school-wide discipline in an elementary school significantly reduce the number of office discipline referrals and the number which resulted in ISS and/or OSS? Did a significant correlation exist between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and number of office discipline referrals?

In addressing the research question, the study will retain or reject the following null hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant difference in the number of office referrals in a K-5 elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan.
2. There will be no significant difference in the number of office referrals which result in In-School Suspension and/or Out-of-School Suspension in a K-5 elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan.
3. There will be no significant correlation between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and number of office discipline referrals.

Discussion will vary based on the rejection or the retention of the null hypotheses. If the hypotheses are retained and the school-wide discipline plan does not decrease the

number of office discipline referrals nor does it decrease the number of office referrals which result in ISS and/or OSS then disciplinary procedures and consistency may need to be examined. The rejection of the hypothesis will support research which suggests implementing school-wide discipline plans does reduce office discipline referrals and without a plan office discipline referrals will continue to increase. If null hypothesis number three is retained then a school-wide discipline plan does not reveal a correlation between students with two or more office discipline referrals and other students without office discipline referrals in terms of academic achievement as measured by the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. Educators will then need to examine other factors which may contribute to chronic office discipline referrals. If null hypothesis number three is rejected, then office discipline referrals do show a correlation between students with two or more office discipline referrals in terms of academic achievement and will support further research on the importance of early intervention.

Design of the Study

The causal-comparative and correlational study compared the office discipline referrals of two pre-existing school groups to determine if the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan reduced the number of office discipline referrals and the number of office referrals which result in ISS or OSS. The study also examined if a correlation existed between students with two or more office discipline referrals than other students without office discipline referrals in terms of academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. The data gathered was from two consecutive school years at the same elementary school of over 900 students. The first group was the 2007-2008 school year student body before the implementation of

a school-wide discipline plan. The second group was the 2008-2009 school year student body as the treatment group which implemented a school-wide discipline plan for one academic year.

Setting

The school was one of five public elementary schools located in a rural northwest Georgia county with approximately 53,000 residents. The school houses kindergarten through fifth grade as well as five lottery funded pre-kindergarten classes. In 2004 the school underwent renovation, and upon completion the maximum capacity of the building was set at 700 students. The area where the school is located experienced a surge in new home construction starting in 2005 which resulted in the development of multiple subdivisions. The unexpected expansion in this area significantly impacted the school's enrollment. In the fall of 2007, the school reached an enrollment of over 900 students. The school had historically operated with teachers creating a discipline plan for their individual classrooms. The school administration provides teachers behavior guidelines detailing the three types of behavior offenses. Appendix A shows the offenses which constitute an office discipline referral followed by the consequence. The administration of the school decided at the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year to implement a school-wide discipline plan to aid in the reduction of the office discipline referrals as well as comply with Georgia's Response to Intervention guidelines.

During 2007-2008 school, and every year prior, every teacher was responsible for creating a behavior system for their individual class. As the school began to grow exponentially and along with mandates from the Georgia Department of Education to implement RTI, the school's administration decided to implement a school-wide

discipline plan. The school-wide discipline plan's framework was based on the work of researchers George Sugai and Robert Horner (2001) from the University of Oregon called Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Sugai and Horner's (2001) research on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports maintains that school-wide discipline plans, which focus on a proactive approach to discipline, will significantly decrease office discipline referrals. According to OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2007), Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is based on a problem-solving model and strives to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a process similar to RTI because it identifies students who may be unresponsive to traditional disciplinary practices and utilizes a variety of interventions in an effort to improve behavior problems. Both PBS and RTI are based on a pyramid of intervention which utilizes a three-tiered continuum of supports and interventions (Walker et al., 2005). The first level of support is tier one or primary prevention which is universal interventions for all students. At tier one a school-wide discipline plan is created based on positive school-wide expectations, teaching of social skills, and the development of a school-wide reinforcement system. According to Simonsen, Sugai, and Horner (2008) if primary prevention is implemented effectively and accurately approximately 89% of all students should respond at this level. For those students who are nonresponsive at the primary level, they then move to the secondary intervention level. At the secondary intervention level the school implements individual behavior plans, such as point systems, counselor referrals, and more frequent reinforcers, among others.

The school selected for the study began the process of creating a school-wide discipline plan in the spring of 2008. The school's assistant principals chose a group of teachers, which represented every grade level and special areas, like music and physical education, to form the discipline committee. Over the course of five weeks this group of teachers met on several occasions to develop the school's expectations and the reinforcement system. The discipline committee selected four school-wide expectations, discussed them amongst their respective grade levels, and voted upon the final draft. The school decided the expectations that would be taught to all students were: (1) We are kind and respectful. (2) We listen and follow directions. (3) We are prepared for class and learning. (4) We strive to have good manners and character.

The committee then created a school currency which would be the reinforcement system utilized by all faculty and staff members to reinforce desired behaviors. The currency developed was paper money named Cardinal Cash printed in the school's color with the school's logo in the center in denominations of ones, fives, and tens. The discipline committee was asked to create rewards students could purchase with their money, along with fines. The rewards and fines, shown in Figure 3, illustrate the school-wide reinforcement system.

Figure 3 Cardinal Cash Rewards and Fines

Individual Rewards:		**Cash Earned For:**	
Candy in class (teacher provided)	**30**	Daily Attendance	**1**
Visit the library	**15**	Great Character/Manners	**1**
Write in pen/marker on special assign.	**20**	All Daily Homework Completed	**1**
Shoes off (w/ socks) in classroom for 1 day	**20**	Sheet of box tops (if applicable)	**1**
Drink a coke in class (teacher provided)	**125**	No Tardies for the month	**5**
Bring a snack from home	**50**	Earning a "great day" call	**2**
Drink tea at lunch (note required)	**125**	Tennis Shoes every day in PE/ 9 wks	**5**
Choice of specials class (per approval)	**75**	School Charity Donations	**2**
Monthly outside play time	**35**	Character Club Member	**10**
Sit with friend in lunchroom (teacher note)	**50**	Merit List	**10**
Treasure Chest	**50**	Honor Roll	**15**
Special event for the 9 week period	**75**		
Sit at the teachers desk or chair for the day	**50**	**Fines For:**	
Help a teacher/visit previous teacher	**50**	Interruptions	**-1**
Library Assistant (per approval)	**50**	Unclean Work Area per occurrence	**-1**
Office Assistant (per Approval)	**150**	Inappropriate behavior(including LR)	**-10**
Eat lunch with administrator	**100**	Disrespectful	**-10**
Eat lunch with teacher	**100**	Inappropriate bathroom behavior	**-10**
End of Year Field Trip	**350**	Immediate Office referral	**-75**
Special Lunch from Local Restaurant	**250**	Altercations/bullying	**-50**
Special meal with administrators	**350**	Bus Referral	**-20**
Principal for the day	**400**	Lunchroom - out of seat	**-20**
		Running (not in PE)	**-20**
		Stealing	**-50**

Over the course of the 2008-2009 school year, the discipline committee met three times to evaluate the success of the program. At the mid-year meeting in December, committee members determined some of the Cardinal Cash rewards and fines needed to either increase or decrease in value.

Subjects

The 2007-2008 school year's total student population of 955 acted as the control group for the study since a school-wide discipline plan had not been implemented. The 2008-2009 school year's total student population of 993 acted as the treatment group. The treatment group had been exposed to the school-wide discipline plan for a full academic year. All students in the treatment group start at the primary prevention level of the school-wide discipline plan. Both school years used in the study, as illustrated in Table 1, show over 50% of the student population was considered living in poverty based on the number who qualified for free or reduced price lunches.

Table 1

Demographic Information

		2008-2009 school year	2007-2008 school year
Total number of students		993	955
Gender	Males:	52%	52%
	Females:	48%	48%
Free Lunches		45%	40%
Reduce Price Lunches		15%	13%
Living in Poverty		60%	53%

The composition of each group by ethnicity, in Table 2, shows the lack of diversity within the school population. Both school years enrolled predominately more white

students and demonstrated only a slight increase in the Hispanic population between the 2007- 2008 and 2008-2009 school years.

Table 2

Ethnicity

	2008-2009 school year	2007-2008 school year
Ethnic Breakdown		
Asian	0.9%	0.8%
Black	0.9%	1%
Hispanic	16%	14%
Native American	0.3%	0.1%
Multiracial	3%	3%
White	79%	80%

The number of office discipline referrals accumulated by students during each school year, in Table 3, will be examined to determine if the number of office discipline referrals decreased in relationship to enrollment growth and with the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. The same office discipline referrals will be examined to determine if the number of office discipline referrals which resulted in students receiving ISS or OSS decreased after implementing the school-wide discipline plan. Students who receive two to three discipline referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS will then be examined to determine if a correlation exists between the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan and academic achievement.

Table 3

Office Discipline Referrals

	2008-2009 school year	2007-2008 school year
Total number of students	993	955
Total number of referrals	343	167

Data Gathering Methods

Student information was exported from School MAX, a computer system which manages student information and reports school data directly to the Georgia Department of Education. Data was grouped according to the total number of office discipline referrals for every student enrolled in the school for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years. The data was sorted by students whose office discipline referrals resulted in ISS or OSS. All students' office discipline referrals, during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years, were examined to determine if a correlation existed between office discipline referrals and academic achievement. Recent research uses discipline reports as an atypical metric for data collection in studies to determine the effectiveness of school-wide discipline plans (Cohen, Kincaid, Childs, 2007; Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003; Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000). In Appendix B written permission to utilize student data was given by the principal and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. All student data was assigned a code to maintain confidentiality. Each student was assigned a code and then specific information was retrieved from the school's computer system.

The Georgia CRCT scores for each student were retrieved from Performance Matters, a computer information system which houses all assessment scores for the county. The CRCT was designed by the Georgia Department of Education to measure the extent to which students acquired skills outlined by the Georgia Performance Standards. Georgia uses the information yielded from the CRCT to determine students' academic achievement. Students who score over 800 are considered meeting expectations for that particular grade level. Students scoring over 850 are deemed exceeding expectations, and students falling below 800 are considered not meeting the standards set forth by the Georgia Performance Standards and are coded academically at risk. All students' CRCT scores were retrieved to review academic achievement and to determine if any of these students scored below 800 and then categorized as academically at risk.

Instrumentation

The instruments used to collect data will be the county's office discipline referral forms and the School MAX computer information system, which records all information listed on the office discipline referrals for the school system and reports to the Georgia Department of Education. Office discipline referrals will be used as a measure of behavior since they provide a detailed account of problem behavior for student for every school year (Sugai, et al., 2000). The use of office discipline referrals has been evaluated in comparison to other behavior measures and deemed a valid and reliable measurement of problem behavior (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004; Tobin & Sugai, 1999; Walker, Cheney, Stage, & Blum, 2005). To ensure reliability of office discipline data, the school involved in the study received training on how to determine which behaviors warrant an office discipline referral. A behavior guidelines handout, Appendix

A, was given to each teacher detailing the major behavioral offenses, such as fighting, harassment, use of weapons, bullying, blatant disrespect, and noncompliance which warrant an office discipline referral.

School years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 will be compared to determine if a decrease occurred since the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan. Discipline referrals from 2008-2009 which resulted in two to three ISS or OSS and the Georgia CRCT will be used to establish a correlation between the school-wide discipline plan and academic achievement. The Georgia Department of Education oversees the development of the CRCT and follows the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999) as established by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). To ensure the CRCT is a valid measure, the Georgia Department of Education has clearly stated the purpose of the test which is to measure how well students have mastered the state's curriculum. Next, a committee of Georgia educators is assembled to review the curriculum and determine what will be assessed and how. Test items are then created by assessment specialists, followed by committee review of the test questions, and then a field test is conducted. The results from the field test are then analyzed by another committee composed of Georgia educators. The questions are reviewed to ensure they accurately assess the curriculum, at this time questions are either discarded or included in the testing protocol. The test is then administered to all students in the state of Georgia in grades first through eighth (Georgia Department of Education Assessment Research and Development Division, 2008).

Every year the Technical Division of the Georgia Department of Education tests the CRCT for reliability. The CRCT is testing using two measures, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient and the standard error of measurement (SEM). The following tables show the reliability indices in terms of Cronbach's alpha for all grades and subjects of the 2007 and 2008 CRCT.

Table 4

2007 CRCT

Grade	Reading	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
1	.883	.911	.919	NA	NA
2	.869	.881	.914	NA	NA
3	.892	.879	.917	.915	.906
4	.893	.910	.916	.904	.906
5	.858	.890	.920	.898	.908
6	.859	.893	.926	.928	.918
7	.878	.867	.921	.932	.914
8	.873	.879	.919	.903	.903

Table 5

2008 CRCT

Grade	Reading	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
1	.88	.90	.91	NA	NA
2	.86	.90	.91	NA	NA
3	.89	.90	.93	.91	.92
4	.89	.90	.91	.92	.91
5	.86	.89	.92	.90	.92
6	.88	.90	.91	.90	NA*
7	.87	.88	.92	.93	NA*
8	.87	.89	.91	.90	.88

Note. From the Georgia Department of Education's Assessment and Research Development Division of Validity and Reliability brief for the 2007 and 2008 CRCT. Reprinted with permission.

The reliability coefficient of the CRCT can be compared yearly from test to test with a range from 0 to 1. The tables show the 2007 and 2008 CRCT ranges in all subject areas fall between .858 to .93. The reliabilities and SEM for the 2008 and 2007 CRCT are therefore consistent with previous administrations and suggest that the CRCT assessments are sufficiently reliable for predicting academic achievement and providing an accurate picture of student performance (Georgia Department of Education, 2008).

Data Analysis Procedures

A causal-comparative and correlational design was used given that the entire elementary school student population were subjects and are in preexisting groups which makes random assignment impossible. The first group will be the 2007-2008 school year where enrollment reached over 900 students and did not have a school-wide discipline plan. The second group, or treatment group, was the 2008-2009 school year which implemented a school-wide discipline plan, and enrollment was similar to the 2007-2008 school year enrolling over 900 students. The independent variable for the first and second hypothesis was the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan, and the dependent variable was the number of office discipline referrals and the number of office discipline referrals which resulted in either ISS or OSS. After 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 office discipline referrals were collected, each student was assigned a code, and the number of office discipline referrals each student received for each year was recorded. If they did not have a referral it was coded as a zero. The total number of office discipline referrals for the year was then calculated. The offense for each office discipline referral was also noted and if the referral resulted in ISS or OSS. After discipline data was recorded, each student's CRCT test scores for reading, English, and math were recorded. At the

conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year, a t test was used to interpret the discipline data collected during the two year period to determine the level of significance when comparing the number of office referrals before and after the school implemented a school-wide discipline plan. A t test for dependent samples was selected given that both groups for each school year are similar in composition and size, merely under different school conditions. Next, a t test was used to determine the level of statistical significance when comparing the number of office discipline referrals given in 2007-2008 and then in 2008-2009, which resulted in either In-School Suspension or Out-of School suspension.

To determine if a school-wide discipline plan had correlative ability, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient regression was used to examine the relationship between the dependent variable and one independent variable. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient regression was selected because it allows researchers to examine the relationship between one dependent and one independent variable. In the case of this study, the independent variable is academic achievement, and the dependent variable is the school-wide discipline plan measured by office discipline referrals. The objective is to determine the correlative ability of a school-wide discipline plan by determining if the independent variable has an effect on the data.

Summary

The study examined two consecutive school years, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, with 2007-2008 being the control group without a school-wide discipline plan, and 2008-2009 the treatment group with a school-wide discipline plan. The data from office discipline referrals during the two school years studied was exported from School Max, and a t test was conducted to determine if the school-wide discipline had an effect on

student behavior and a reduction in ISS or OSS. If there is significant statistical evidence which demonstrates implementing a school-wide discipline plan does reduce the number of office discipline referrals and the number which result in ISS or OSS, then the research will support the literature encouraging schools to create a school-wide discipline plan. Yet if a statistical difference is not found, then disciplinary practices and procedures may need to be examined.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to determine whether the implementation of a universal school-wide discipline plan based on positive behavior support processes would significantly lower the number of office discipline referrals and the number of referrals which resulted in In-School Suspension and/or Out-of-School Suspension. The research also sought to determine if a significant correlation would exist between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and number of office discipline referrals.

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Sample

This causal-comparative and correlational study compared the office discipline referrals of two pre-existing school groups, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, to determine if the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan reduced the number of office discipline referrals, the number of office referrals which result in ISS or OSS, and if a correlation existed between students with office discipline referrals than other students without office discipline referrals in terms of academic achievement as measured by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. The data gathered was from two consecutive school years at the same elementary school. The first group was the 2007-2008 school year student body with an enrollment of 955 pre-kindergarten through 5th graders before the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. All students' discipline records were retrieved at the conclusion of the school year. Those students who did not have an office discipline referral were coded with a zero noting they did not have any referrals for the year. Students who received an office discipline referral during the 2007-2008 school

year were collected and sorted by offense. The total number of office discipline referrals for the year was then calculated to determine the mean.

The second group was the 2008-2009 school year student body with an enrollment of 993 pre-kindergarten through 5th graders as the treatment group after implementation of a school-wide discipline plan for one academic year. During the first three weeks of the 2008-2009 school year, every student in the school was taught the school-wide expectations, which included: (1) We are kind and respectful., (2) We listen and follow directions., (3) We are prepared for class and learning., and (4) We strive to have good manners and character. Students were provided instruction by their homeroom teachers on the school currency, rewards, and fines. At the conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year all students' discipline records and office discipline referrals were collected by the assistant principal and sorted by offense (e.g. inappropriate behaviors, altercations, dishonesty). The total number of office discipline referrals for the year was then calculated to determine the mean. Percentages, shown in Table 6, indicate an increase from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009 in students receiving one to four office discipline referrals.

Table 6

Percentage of Office Discipline Referrals by Total Number per Student

	2008-2009 school year	2007-2008 school year
Percentage of students with 0 referrals	81.5%	91.8%
Percentage of students with 1 referral	8.8%	4.2%
Percentage of students with 2 referrals	4.5%	1.3%
Percentage of students with 3 referrals	1.6%	0.9%
Percentage of students with 4 referrals	1.2%	0.1%

Office discipline referrals were written by teachers following the behavior guidelines handout, shown in Appendix A, provided by the school's administration. Percentages, shown in Table 7, were also calculated to illustrate the frequency of specific offenses which resulted in an office discipline referral. Inappropriate behavior and altercations accounted for the majority of office discipline referrals.

Table 7

Offenses Resulting in Office Discipline Referrals

	2008-2009 school year	2007-2008 school year
Inappropriate behavior	40.23%	44.91%
Altercations	15.45%	23.35%
Dishonesty	3.79%	5.98%
Cafeteria Violations	10.20%	9.5%
Insubordination	4.08%	0%
Failure to Follow Directions	4.37%	2.99%
Habitual Offenders	2.90%	7.18%
Petty Theft	4.08%	1.80%
Harrassment	4.08%	0%
Accessory to Misbehavior	3.50%	0%
Vulgar Language/Gestures	4.66%	0%
Destruction of Property	1.17%	1.80%
Unauthorized Areas	≥ 1%	1.80%
Knife-Simple Possession	≥ 1%	1.80%

After 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 office discipline referrals were collected, each student was assigned a code, and the number of office discipline referrals each student received for each year was recorded. If they did not have a referral it was coded as a zero. The offense for each office discipline referral was also noted and if the referral resulted in ISS or OSS. The total number of office discipline referrals for the year was then calculated. After discipline data was recorded, each student's CRCT test scores for reading, English, and math were recorded.

Hypothesis #1

Null hypothesis #1 stated there would be no significant difference in the number of office referrals in a K-5 elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan. Initial data collection of students with no office referrals to up to 4 referrals, as seen in Table 6, did demonstrate a marked increase in office discipline referrals between the two school years. A paired *t* test ($p \leq .001$) revealed that there was a statistically significant increase in the number of office discipline referrals written from 2007-2008 (M=.15, SD=.80) to 2008-2009 (M=.42, SD=1.44), $t(732) = -6.57$, $p \leq .001$. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. These findings are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Mean Office Discipline Referrals from 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009

	Number of Students Present For Both Years	Number of Office Discipline Referrals	M	SD	df	t
2007-2008 school year	733	110	.15	.80		
					732	-6.57
2008-2009 school year	733	343	.42	1.44		

$p \leq .001$

When students with 15 or more referrals during 2008-2009 (M=.38, SD=1.12) were removed, these differences remained significant. The mean number of visits during 2007-2008 (M=.13, SD=.61) were still significantly less than during the 2008-2009 school year (M=.38, SD=1.12), t(730) = -6.78, $p \leq .001$.

Hypothesis #2

Null hypothesis #2 stated there would be no significant difference in the number of office referrals which result in In-School Suspension and/or Out-of-School Suspension in a K-5 elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan. At the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year, there was a total of 167 office discipline referrals. Of these, 93, or 55.69% resulted in ISS or OSS. During the 2008-2009 school year, 343 office discipline referrals were submitted to the office resulting in 206, or 60.05%, in ISS or OSS. A *t* test was conducted (Table 9) and revealed office discipline referrals led to significantly more ISS and/or OSS in 2008-2009 (M=.24, SD= 1.25) than in 2007-2008 (M= .13, SD=.78), $t(732) = -3.15$, $p \leq .01$. Therefore null hypothesis #2 was rejected.

However, this difference should be interpreted with caution as only 69 of 741 students received ISS or OSS in either or both years.

Table 9

Mean Office Discipline Referrals Resulting in ISS/OSS in 2007-2008 compared to 2008-2009

	Number of Students Present For Both Years	Number of Office Discipline Referrals Resulting in ISS/OSS	M	SD	df	t
2007-2008 school year	733	93	.13	.78		
					732	-3.15
2008-2009 school year	733	206	.24	1.25		

$p \leq .01$

When students with 15 or more office discipline referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS during the 2008-2009 school year were removed the differences remained significant. The mean number of office discipline referrals in 2007-2008 was significantly less than in 2008-2009, $t(730) = -2.93$, $p \leq .01$.

Hypothesis #3

Null hypothesis #3 stated there would be no significant correlation between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia CRCT and number of office discipline referrals. The Georgia CRCT tests three specific academic areas; reading, English/language arts, and math in all grade levels kindergarten through 5th. A score of 800 in any of the academic areas is considered meeting the standards for that particular grade level. Students scoring over 850 are deemed exceeding expectations, and students falling below 800 are considered not to be meeting the standards set forth by the Georgia

Performance Standards and are coded as being academically at risk. All students' CRCT scores from the spring 2009 test administration were retrieved. Table 10 summarizes CRCT scores for those students who were present to take the test.

Table 10

Mean CRCT Test Scores

	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
Reading	759.00	920.00	829.02	27.97
English	754.00	884.00	818.24	23.32
Math	727.00	920.00	838.37	31.55

To examine whether there was a significant correlation between students' academic achievement and number of office discipline referrals, a Pearson's correlation was conducted. The correlation revealed that reading, English, and math scores were not only significantly correlated with each other, but were each also significantly correlated 2008-2009 office discipline referrals. A negative correlation between students' academic test scores and office discipline referrals was confirmed. The Pearson correlation between reading and office discipline referrals was -.183, English and office discipline referrals was -.146, and math and office discipline referrals was -.277. As students' scores decreased the number of office discipline referrals increased. Table 11 summarizes the Pearson's correlations between reading, English, math, and 2008-2009 office discipline referrals. The results signify the researcher could have administered one of three academic areas and yielded the same results. The level of significance was less than the

0.01 critical value chosen. Therefore, the negative correlation was statistically significant, and not an occurrence of chance.

Table 11

Correlations Between Test Scores and Office Referrals

	Reading	English	Math	2008-2009 Discipline Referrals
Reading	1.0	.963	.969	-.183
English	.963	1.0	.943	-.146
Math	.969	.943	1.0	-.277
2008-2009 Discipline Referrals	-.183	-.146	-.277	1.0

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As seen in Table 11 all scores in reading, English, and math are negatively correlated with the number of 2008-2009 office discipline referrals, indicating that no matter the specific academic area tested or the school year, as test scores decrease the number of office discipline referrals increases. Therefore, null #3 was retained since a correlation was established.

Since all test scores were significantly correlated with number of office referrals, a multiple regression analysis with reading, English, and math scores entered as predictor variables and 2008-2009 as a criterion variable was conducted indicated that all three test scores predicted a significant amount of variance in number of office referrals for the academic year in the study. Overall, the model was a good fit for the 2008-2009 academic year, however, not only was the overall model a good fit (R^2 = .23, F(3, 732) =

71.55, $p < .001$), but all three subject scores predicted a significant amount of variance in number of office referrals. Reading ($B = .875$, $p < .001$), English ($B = .659$, $p < .001$) and math ($B = -1.75$, $p < .001$) were all significant predictors of office referrals.

Summary of Data Analysis

The statistical analyses represented are from the three null hypotheses posed at the beginning of the research project. An analysis of office discipline referrals for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 revealed that there was not a decrease in referrals after the implementation of a school-wide discipline. Office discipline referrals were significantly more after the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan during the 2008-2009 school year. Statistical analysis also revealed that there was not a decrease in office discipline referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS after the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan. Again, there were significantly more referrals which led to ISS or OSS during the 2008-2009 school year. Therefore, both null hypothesis #1 and #2 were rejected. A Pearson's correlation revealed a significant correlation between students' academic achievement and office discipline referrals. Test scores were negatively correlated with the number of office discipline referrals, indicating that as test scores decreased the number of office discipline referrals increased. During the 2008-2009 school year in which the school-wide discipline plan was implemented all three subject areas tested; reading, English, and math predicted a significant amount of variance in the number of office discipline referrals.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary and Results

This chapter reviews the research problems, summarizes the methodology, and concludes with a detailed discussion about the results. The field of education changes continuously to meet the needs of a wide variety of students, and new initiatives are constantly being developed to provide educators with more effective proactive disciplinary strategies. Across the nation schools are valiantly trying to guarantee students are provided quality academic instruction along with a safe learning environment. Studies by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) suggest discipline problems in schools contribute to school violence and crime. In addition, the NCES found students with low academic achievement tend to be those at risk for disciplinary problems. Furthermore, Lannie and McCurdy's 2007 study revealed classroom disruptions are directly associated with lower academic achievement for the offending student.

Research conducted by George Sugai and Robert Horner (2001) from the University of Oregon has formed the foundation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Sugai and Horner's (2001) research on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports maintains that school-wide discipline plans, which focus on a proactive approach to discipline, will significantly decrease the number of office discipline referrals. This study sought to advance the literature on the effectiveness of a proactive school-wide discipline plan in decreasing the number of office discipline referrals and

establishing a correlation between academic achievement and the number of office discipline referrals.

Statement of the Problem

The problem was centered on whether there would be a significant decrease in the number of office discipline referrals and in the number of office referrals which result in In-School Suspension and/or Out-of-School Suspension in an elementary school with a school-wide discipline plan as compared to the same school previously not implementing a school-wide discipline plan. Next, the research focused on whether there would be a significant correlation between students' academic achievement as measured by the Georgia CRCT and number of office discipline referrals.

Review of the Methodology

The subjects for this study were the 2007-2008 school year's total student population of 955. They acted as the control group for the study since a school-wide discipline plan had not been implemented. The 2008-2009 school year's total student population of 993 acted as the treatment group. The subjects attended one of the five public elementary schools located in a rural northwest Georgia county. The treatment group had been exposed to the school-wide discipline plan for a full academic year. All students in the treatment group started at the primary prevention level of the school-wide discipline plan. The school-wide discipline plan was based on Sugai and Horner's (1999) school-wide positive behavior support framework. The discipline plan was based on the creation and teaching of the school's expectations and positive reinforcement system.

The school's office discipline referrals for the two school years, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, provided the data for ISS and OSS. The Georgia CRCT provided individual

scores for each student identifying their level of academic achievement in the areas of reading, English, and math. CRCT scores for each student were retrieved from Performance Matters, a computer information system which houses all assessment scores for Gordon County. Some student CRCT scores were missing due to moving outside of the county or being permanently expelled.

Office discipline referrals were used to document specific behaviors, outlined in Appendix A, which warranted an office referral. Research suggests the use of office discipline referrals has been evaluated in comparison to other behavior measures and deemed a valid and reliable measurement of problem behavior (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004; Tobin & Sugai, 1999; Walker, Cheney, Stage, & Blum, 2005). After 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 office discipline referrals were collected, each student was assigned a code, and the number of office discipline referrals each student received for each year was recorded. If they did not have a referral it was coded as a zero. The offense for each office discipline referral was also noted and if the referral resulted in ISS or OSS. The total number of office discipline referrals was used for the t test. After discipline data was recorded, each student's CRCT test scores for reading, English, and math were recorded.

A *t* test was used to determine if the implementation of a school-wide discipline decreased the number of office discipline referrals. The total number of office discipline referrals received for each year was used for the t test. Another *t* test was used to determine if the school-wide discipline plan decreased the number of office discipline referrals which resulted in ISS and OSS. A Pearson's correlation was conducted to determine if a correlation existed between students' academic achievement as measured

by the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and number of office discipline referrals. A correlation between academic achievement and office discipline referrals did exist. Therefore, a multiple regression was performed to examine the relationship between the two variables.

Summary of the Results

A *t* test conducted on office discipline referrals for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 revealed that there was not a decrease in referrals after the implementation of a school-wide discipline. Office discipline referrals were significantly higher after the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan during the 2008-2009 school year. After removing students with 15 or more office discipline referrals, these differences continued to remain significantly higher during the 2008-2009 school year which had the school-wide discipline plan implemented. Statistical analysis using a *t* test also revealed that there was not a decrease in office discipline referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS after the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan. Again, there were significantly more referrals which led to ISS or OSS during the 2008-2009 school year. When students with 15 or more referrals were removed the differences remained significant. Therefore, both null hypothesis #1 and #2 were rejected.

Next, a Pearson's correlation was conducted and revealed a significant correlation between students' academic achievement and office discipline referrals. Test scores were negatively correlated with the number of office discipline referrals, indicating that as test scores decreased the number of office discipline referrals increased. During the 2008-2009 school year in which the school-wide discipline plan was implemented, all three subject areas tested; reading, English, and math predicted a significant amount of

variance in the number of office discipline referrals. The correlations between reading, English, and math were almost perfect in so much that statistically only one academic test could have been administered and the same results would have been yielded. Therefore, null hypothesis #3 was retained, proving a correlation did exist between students' academic achievement and number of office discipline referrals.

Discussion of the Results

The study followed an elementary school for one year without a school-wide discipline plan and then examined the implementation of a school-wide discipline in the same elementary school for a complete academic year. It was hypothesized that the school-wide discipline plan would significantly reduce the number of office discipline referrals and the number of office discipline referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS. In addition, the study also examined if a correlation existed between academic achievement and number of office discipline referrals.

After the first year of implementation the school-wide discipline did not decrease the number of office discipline referrals nor did it reduce the number of office discipline referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS. There are several possible explanations why the school-wide discipline did not produce a decrease in referrals. First, the elementary school created school-wide expectations which clearly stated the behaviors expected of every student. These expectations were implicitly taught to students over a period of several weeks. The expectations were also posted throughout the building and classrooms. Students and teachers were aware specifically what behaviors were expected of every student. Next, the assistant principal instructed teachers how to complete an office discipline referral and what offenses warranted an office discipline referral. The

assistant principal also provided a chart, Appendix A, of behavioral guidelines which stated specifically which offenses resulted in an office discipline referral and offenses which would receive ISS or OSS. The school had historically operated with teachers being responsible for their own classroom expectations and judgment regarding office referrals that the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan created a universal, consistent system for the entire school. The behavior guidelines instructed teachers when referrals were to be made to the office. The clearly defined guidelines and set expectations may have contributed to the increase in office referrals because teachers knew certain offenses such as refusing to obey a reasonable request, persistent classroom disruptions or defiance, cheating, etc. resulted in an office referral. Before the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan some teachers would deal with these issues in their classrooms and some would send them to the office. However, with the specific guideline all teachers were consistent in their practices which could explain the increase.

A second explanation was the school's rapid growth which resulted in overcrowding. The school's maximum building capacity was 700 and during the 2007-2008 the school's enrollment had grown to 955. The next year, 2008-2009, saw enrollment reach almost a thousand students. Therefore, the year the school-wide discipline plan was implemented the school had 300 more students than it could physically accommodate. The overcrowding may have contributed as well to the increase in office discipline referrals and those referrals resulting in ISS or OSS. In an overcrowded school students are in spaces that were not meant to be classrooms such as library workrooms and in some cases closets. The limited amount of space puts students

in close proximity allowing little personal space. There were too many students in the classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and cafeteria which may have provoked unwanted behaviors such as altercations, inappropriate behaviors, and cafeteria violations. Due to the high volume of students in these areas it may have been difficult for teachers and administrators to maintain order.

A third explanation for the increase was the addition of a second assistant principal. Due to the rapidly growing population the school's numbers justified the addition of another administrator. During the 2007-2008 only one assistant principal was managing 955 students' behavior. Often the assistant principal was unable to address disciplinary issues due to the volume of referrals. Teachers often dealt with these issues in their classroom rather than referring to the office for disciplinary action. With the addition of a second administrator, the volume of office discipline referrals became more manageable and more students could be seen in the office for serious offenses. The second administrator was also able to supervise the ISS rooms.

A correlation did exist between academic achievement and number of office discipline referrals. The statistical analysis showed as academic achievement decreased office discipline referrals increased. The current research findings are significant for educators. The findings support that if a student begins to accumulate office discipline referrals, then teachers and administrators need to examine the student's CRCT scores to determine if an academic deficit exists. If an academic deficit does exist then educators can begin intensive academic interventions in an effort to decrease unwanted behaviors. A study conducted by Najaka, Gottfredson, and Wilson (2001) found similar results noting that students who exhibit disruptive behaviors in school generally also

demonstrate poor academic performance. Other studies have also found a similar link between academic achievement and behavior (Fleming, Harachi, Cortes, Abbott, & Cantalano, 2004; Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004). The results from the current study also suggest teachers and administrators should examine CRCT scores and note those students scoring under 800 to determine if any of those students are exhibiting unwanted or inappropriate behaviors. In the event inappropriate behaviors are beginning to emerge, early academic interventions need to begin.

Relationship of the Current Study to Prior Research

School-wide Discipline Plans

In the last seven years, the use of PBS has emerged as an important policy and practice in public school settings. One of the major constructs of the PBS system is the establishment of a school-wide discipline plan. Sugai et al. (2000) research on the creation of school-wide discipline plans centers on the establishment of school expectations which are systemically taught and reinforced to ensure consistency and success. "The foundation of all effective school-wide discipline plan efforts lies in systematic attention to the universal training, monitoring, and reinforcement of expected social behavior" (Sugai et al., 2000, p. 2). Research states school rules should be clearly defined and routines should be established and enforced by school personnel (Walker et al., 2005). The use of positive reinforcement begins at the primary prevention level and is structured to encourage appropriate school behavior (Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003). At the primary prevention level schools also create a school-wide bullying prevention program, establish classroom positive behavior systems, and provide

professional learning and behavioral supports for all teachers (Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007).

One problem noted in prior research was the lack of detailed descriptions of school-wide discipline plans which are being utilized in other schools. Several studies begin by discussing the components needed for the development of a school-wide discipline plan, yet fail to adequately describe those plans (Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007; Hawken & Horner, 2003; Irvin et al., 2004; Sugai et al., 2000). The Office of Special Education Programs Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2007) provided guidelines regarding factors which need to be present to ensure successful implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. Six conditions were given which must be in place when developing a school-wide discipline plan. The first is the creation of a team which problem solves and uses data to drive decisions regarding the school-wide discipline plan. Next, administrators must be active in the planning process and provide consistent active support. Then stakeholders must be committed to improving the climate of the school. The school's administration must guarantee adequate personnel are available to plan and implement the school-wide plan and that funds are budgeted to support professional learning and purchase materials. Lastly, an information system must be established to collect data. Once the six conditions are evident a school is able to proceed in developing the school-wide discipline plan. The six conditions are useful for preparing the learning environment for the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan, as are the clear behavioral expectations, and positive behavioral system. However, there remains a lack of specific details in prior studies describing each school's school-wide discipline plan. There was a very limited amount of

literature describing whether the positive behavioral system utilized a token economy, tickets, certificates, or other methods. Another component absent was the frequency in which positive reinforcers were provided. It was not evident if the reinforcers were provided daily, weekly, monthly, or if it varied. It is difficult to compare the results from previous studies to this study when specific school-wide discipline plan details are not defined.

Simonsen, Sugai, and Negron (2008) research provided a brief description of a school-wide discipline and how it was implemented. The researchers provided three positively stated school-wide expectations and a five part lesson plan format to teach social skills in an academic setting. However, there was still a lack of details explaining the reinforcement system used and if it was based on school currency, positive behavior tickets, or social recognition. Therefore, the current study clearly defined the school-wide discipline plan implemented at the school in the study.

Reduction of Office Discipline Referrals and Suspensions

The current study adds to the growing body of research on positive behavior supports, specifically the use of school-wide discipline plans. The theory behind school-wide discipline plans based on Sugai and Horner's (2001) positive behavior supports is not a new concept. They are practical extensions of the basic principles of behavior posed by B.F. Skinner (Irvin, et al., 2004). These principals applied in a school setting include: providing clear behavioral expectations, clearly defining appropriate behavior, reinforcing appropriate behavior, and interventions to prevent problem behaviors. This study examined an existing school for a full academic year before the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. Next, the researcher created a school-wide discipline plan

based on research conducted by Sugai and Horner (2001) and implemented the plan in the same school.

A growing body of research on school-wide discipline plans suggests that it is an effective approach to reducing and preventing problem behaviors in schools (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998, Sugai & Horner, 2001; McIntosh, Chard, Boland, & Horner, 2006). Historically, schools have reacted to students' problem behaviors in the form of punishment based strategies such as reprimands, loss of privileges, and suspensions (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Reactionary measures like suspensions, may in fact negatively impact offending students as they are removed from constructive learning environments (Sugai & Horner, 1999; Morrison, Anthony, Storino, & Dillon, 2001). Sugai and Horner (2007) stated teaching students behavioral expectations and rewarding them for appropriate behavior is more effective than reacting to problem behavior. Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker (2000) assert primary prevention in the form of a school-wide discipline plan should improve the behavior of 80% of the school population.

Research which examined the effectiveness of school-wide positive behavior support which includes the implementation of a school-wide disciple plan promised results such as a decrease in office discipline referrals and suspensions (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge, 2003) Sugai and Horner (2007) stated one of the benefits of implementing a school-wide discipline plan is a decrease in office discipline referrals between approximately forty to sixty percent. Lohrman et al. (2008) study discovered the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan decreased the number of referrals which previously would have resulted in suspensions. Research

conducted by Eber, Lewis-Palmer, and Pacchiano (2001) showed most schools experience an overall decrease in the number of office discipline referrals in the first and second year of implementation. McCurdy, Mannella, and Eldridge (2003) discovered significant decreases in altercations such as fighting and classroom disruptions. In a two year study conducted by Tobin, Lewis-Palmer, and Sugai (2002), a decrease in office discipline referrals was reported and a teacher perception survey found teachers believed their students' behavior had improved since the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan.

The first and second hypotheses suggested there would be a significant reduction in office discipline referrals and those referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS with the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan. Eber et al (2001) found a significant decrease in the total number of OSS given as a consequence and a decrease in the number of daily office discipline referrals which resulted in OSS. The study yielded different findings than current literature on school-wide positive behavior supports. Even though the study did not replicate findings by previous researchers, the findings are still important, contribute to the existing body of research, and pose new thoughts not previously examined.

The study showed an increase in office discipline referrals from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009 as well as an increase in office discipline referrals which resulted in ISS or OSS. As stated previously there are several possible reasons for the increase in office discipline referrals, from overcrowding to the additional of an additional administrator. One factor which remained amiss in all but one study examined in the review of literature was if any school experienced an increase in behaviors during the first year of

implementation or if a gradual decrease in problem behaviors was documented as the program was implemented year after year. Often when new programs are implemented the opposite effect is found during the first year of implementation. Ervin et al. (2007) research on school-wide discipline plans in four elementary schools, found an increase in problem behaviors the first year of implementation. They found in the initial project year that office discipline referrals increased at a significantly higher rate. During the three year implementation period, an increase was documented the first year followed by a significant decrease during the second and third years. The current study may have experienced the same findings as Ervin et al (2007) that during the first year of implementation an increase may be experienced first before a decrease becomes evident. The reason for this increase may result from very specific behavioral guidelines and expectations. Students are taught school expectations and teachers are given a clear guide of offenses which constitute an office discipline referral. The concise parameters may lend themselves to more referrals the first year since previously there had not been uniform or universal expectations and guidelines.

Existing studies were often longitudinal lasting three years and documented a reduction in problem behavior over this time period (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge, 2003). Lassen, Steele, and Sailor's (2006) research on multiple inner city school was conducted over a three year period. McCurdy, Mannella, and Eldridge (2003) found in their study of an urban school a reduction in overall problem behavior as measured by office discipline referrals over a three year period. Similar results were also found by Ervin et al (2007) in four suburban schools over a three year period. With the exception of Ervin et al.'s study there was no discussion

regarding the first year of implementation, just the final results after a three year period. The time period is noteworthy, because as is evidenced in Ervin et al.'s project the first year did result in an unexpected increase of office disciple referrals. Yet, the researchers continued with the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan ultimately obtaining the desired results; a decrease in office discipline referrals. The scope of this study was one full year with a school-wide discipline plan. The study may have yielded different results over a longer implementation period time, such as three years.

Another key factor to consider is the size of the school's student enrollment in previous studies. Ervin et al. (2007) studied four schools with an average student population of 339 students. Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006) and McCurdy, Mannella, and Eldridge (2003) conducted their research in schools that averaged approximately six hundred students. Other studies on school-wide discipline plans conducted their research on schools with average enrollment sizes between four hundred and six hundred students (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998; Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000; Hawken & Horner, 2003; Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008). Although research does not address a school's total student enrollment, size may impact the effectiveness of a school-wide discipline plan. An overcrowded or larger school may have issues as too many students in common areas such as hallways, cafeteria, bathrooms, and even classrooms. This may contribute to students having limited personal space which could provoke aggression. The current study was conducted at an elementary school with over 900 students each year. The year the school-wide discipline plan was implemented there were weeks the total enrollment reached over 1,000 students. Prior research also did not discuss the total number of administrators in the building monitoring discipline. Therefore, the

overcrowding and additional staff could have contributed to the increase of office discipline referrals and those which ultimately resulted in ISS or OSS.

Correlation between Office Discipline Referrals and Academic Achievement

An emerging area of educational research is the relationship between student behavior and academic performance (Morrison & D'Incau, 1997; Fleming, Harachi, Cortes, Abbott, & Cantalano, 2004; Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004; Lassen, Steele, and Sailor, 2006). Prior research conducted by McIntosh, Chard, Boland, and Horner (2006) showed behavioral interventions and academic interventions begin to lose their effectiveness by third grade. Therefore, having the ability to detect those students at risk for both behavioral and academic challenges is essential to prevent more serious behaviors. They found by the time students are identified as nonresponsive to behavioral interventions, these students may have developed more serious behaviors impacting their academic achievement. Hinshaw (1992) suggested that students who continue to experience academic difficulties may begin to exhibit behavior problems, such as aggression, classroom disruptions, and other antisocial behaviors. NCES (2007) statistics show students with low academic achievement also tend to be those at risk for disciplinary problems.

McIntosh, et al (2008) research focused on improving behavior through academic interventions. The researchers used office discipline referrals to measure problem behavior and selected the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* to measure oral reading fluency. The study's results indicated those students with lower oral reading fluency typically had more office discipline referrals. The researchers did notice however, that those students with oral reading fluency scores well below average had

problem behaviors which were maintained by escape behaviors. This means these students acted out in an effort to be removed, or escape, from the reading tasks. Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006) also found students' academic performance on standardized tests could be predicted based on office discipline referrals and suspensions. The more office discipline referrals or suspensions a student received the lower their overall standardized test scores. They concluded the more time a student spends out of class due to an office discipline referral or a suspension their academic progress becomes compromised. Research is emerging demonstrating preliminary evidence that the implementation of a school-wide discipline plan may produce positive effects on students' academic achievement (Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; McIntosh, Chard et al, 2006; McIntosh et al, 2008). The current research contributed to the emerging body of existing research which demonstrates a relationship between problem behavior and academic achievement. The current data provided evidence that as problem behavior increased, as seen in the number of office discipline referrals, academic achievement decreased.

Implications of the Study

Discipline problems in schools continue to be of concern to educators, parents, and the community. Disruptive behaviors interfere with instruction and can impede the learning of every student in the classroom. Furthermore, disruptive student behavior consumes a significant amount of time from teachers and administrators (Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003). Therefore, the creation and implementation of school-wide discipline plans have been a priority for educational and behavioral research (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998; Walker et al., 1996).

Despite the fact the current study was unable to prove the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan would decrease the number of office discipline referrals or suspensions; it did encounter conditions which may impede its effectiveness. The study questioned the existing school-wide discipline plan body of research which stated its effectiveness in reducing office discipline referrals and suspensions (White et al., 2001; Tidwell, Flannery, & Lewis-Palmer, 2003; McCurdy, Mannella, & Eldridge, 2003; Irvin et al, 2004; Lassen, Steele & Sailor, 2006; Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2007; Lohrman et al., 2008). The researcher concurs that a school-wide discipline plan has merits, yet there may be conditions such as varying school-wide discipline plans, extremely large school populations, and first year implementation which may yield different results.

Prior research has proven the merits of implementing a school-wide discipline plan. It is evident school-wide discipline plans reap positive results, however what remains amiss are the specifics about the plans. The current study created a school-wide discipline plan based on school currency. The school created Cardinal Cash and set monetary values for desired behaviors. Cash could be earned for good manners, earning a good phone call, following directions, and other desired behaviors. The plan detailed rewards students could purchase with their Cardinal Cash. Fines were also set for behaviors such as interruptions, disrespectful behavior, bullying, and other offenses. Other components which were missing in the literature review were the frequency the positive reinforcement was provided and what were the positive reinforcers awarded for appropriate behavior. It is difficult to assume all school-wide discipline plans are equal. It could be argued that some positive reinforcement systems are more successful than others

and hypothetically may yield more effective results. The differences in school-wide discipline plans should be detailed in research studies so educators can replicate those school-wide discipline plans yielding stronger results.

All the existing research examined utilized school populations between 400-600 students. However, this study had a student body population of over 900 students in a school. Both the control and treatment year had enrollments over 950 students. The data did not reveal a decrease in office discipline referrals, but an increase. The same was true for suspensions; there was an increase in both ISS and OSS. For educators this data is important, because as some areas of the country continue to grow at exponential rates, schools may become overcrowded before new ones are built. The research supporting school-wide discipline plans is significant and substantiates its effectiveness. The plan clearly defines school expectations and offenses which will result in an office discipline referral. School-wide discipline plans establish consistency across the school. In some cases, as in an overcrowded school, the benefits of the school-wide discipline plan may be ineffective due to limited space and congestion in common areas such as hallways, bathrooms, and the cafeteria. Educators in schools with sizable student populations may need to refine the traditional school-wide discipline plan format and expectations, and expect different results.

Another difference which emerged in prior research was the three year implementation of the school-wide discipline plan. Of the research studied only one study, Ervin et al. (2007), discussed the first year of implementation. Ervin et al. noticed an increase in office discipline referrals and suspensions after the first year implementing a school-wide discipline plan. The current study also documented an increase in office

discipline referrals and suspensions at the conclusion of the first year of implementation. This is a significant finding which should be noted since that may be customary to notice and increase before a decrease occurs. Ervin et al, (2007) then discovered after the second and third year of implementation a decrease in office discipline referrals and suspensions. Therefore, it could be assumed had the current study continued over a longer period of time the same results could have been achieved.

The current study did verify a correlation between the number of office discipline referrals and academic achievement. As a student's total number of office discipline referrals increased their academic achievement decreased. For educators this correlation is important as it provides a predictor for students who may demonstrate disruptive behaviors and supports the need for early interventions. The relationship between behavior and academics appears to be reciprocal. Once a student begins to frequent the office with discipline referrals, it is evident that educators should examine their CRCT scores to determine if an academic deficit is present. According to the current study there is a correlation, as a result there should be a deficit in reading, English, or math. The student may present a deficit in one, two, or all three academic areas. Providing early intervention specifically through intensive needs based groups in the academic area where the weakness is demonstrated setting should reduce the number of office referrals.

Research by McIntosh et al. (2008) supports the reciprocal relationship between academic achievement and disruptive behaviors. Their findings suggest students demonstrating low academic abilities often demonstrate disruptive behaviors in order to escape academic tasks. The student displays unwanted disruptive behaviors resulting in the teacher writing an office discipline referral which may ultimately result in removing

the student from the learning environment. Over time the behaviors will continue to escalate in an effort to escape the demands of the learning environment. Hinshaw (1992) contributed academic failure to leading to externalizing behavior problems such as acting out, classroom disruptions, aggression, and others. The current research supports the possibility these students may be exhibiting escape behaviors and if early intensive academic interventions could be instituted these behavior problems could be prevented.

Upon receiving CRCT scores, educators could immediately begin forming intensive academic groups in an effort to not only remediate in areas of academic weaknesses, but to curtail potential disruptive behaviors which would require tier two interventions. Intensive academic groups could be formed based on the data provided by the CRCT. The CRCT provides student achievement data in the areas of math, reading, and English. Not only does the CRCT provide a general score in math, reading, and English, but also gives educators information in specific domain areas. If a student scores below 800 in any area of the CRCT they are considered academically at risk. The CRCT then delineates specific domain areas which the student demonstrates a significant weakness. The information provided by the CRCT could aid teachers in forming appropriate intensive intervention groups and target each student's specific weakness. By targeting a student's exact weakness, the teacher is able to provide explicit academic instruction which may circumvent underlying escape behavior being caused by the academic weakness. Furthermore, the intensive intervention group fulfills tier two of the academic RTI which requires teachers to provide small group instruction.

The correlation between the number of office discipline referrals and academic achievement is relevant in terms of future special education referrals. Students may be

exhibiting acting out or escape behaviors due to academic deficits. Educators may prematurely target these students' behavior rather than the underlying academic weakness. If a student is acting out in order to escape a difficult academic task, even positive reinforcers may not be powerful enough to detour the behavior. The student's behavior may then be misconstrued as unresponsive to the school-wide discipline plan warranting placement in tier two for more intensive behavioral interventions. If the escape behaviors continue in tier two, the student could progress to tier three, be eligible for behavioral testing, and ultimately considered for services in special education. The correlation between office discipline referrals and academic achievement provides teachers a starting point for dealing with unwanted behaviors. Educators may want to consider the function of the behavior, examine the time it is occurring, and how often. Then begin intensive academic interventions to prevent the continuation of unwanted behaviors. Simply by examining the behavior and reviewing CRCT test scores, a teacher could prevent a student from being mislabeled and referred for special education services in the area of behavior.

Although the study did not replicate previous findings, new conditions were revealed which may need to be studied further to aid schools with similar large populations. Furthermore, future research may need to discuss first year implementation. The study did replicate finding which suggests the number of office discipline referrals correlates with academic achievement. This finding was significant lending itself to potentially decreasing the number of office discipline referrals and increasing student achievement with CRCT data and early academic interventions.

Limitations of the Study

Whereas the current research contributed to the existing literature on school-wide discipline plans, the study does have four limitations that educators need to consider when interpreting the results. First, the study observed the implementation of the school-wide discipline plan over one academic year. Most research conducted on school-wide discipline plans is longitudinal in nature covering a three to five year time period. This study examined the year prior to implementing the school-wide discipline plan and then the first year of implementation. The results yielded from the first year of implementation were not what is typically achieved after implementing a school-wide discipline plan. Had the study been conducted for a longer time period it is possible the results would have been different. Therefore, educator should be cautious interpreting these results in concluding school-wide discipline plans are ineffective.

Second, there was one extremely large elementary school used in the study. The school was a rural elementary school and its student population may not replicate populations in other parts of the United States. The school's total enrollment during the study was close to a thousand students which may not be a typical number at elementary schools. This particular school was considered overcrowded and was awaiting the building of another elementary school to relieve its numbers. The large number provided a solid sample for the study, yet may have generated false results in the fact the overcrowding may have produced more discipline referrals simply due to the volume of students in small areas.

Third, even though the current study did discover a strong correlation between office discipline referrals and academic achievement, it must be noted that there may be other

underlying causes for disruptive behaviors. There may be pre-existing behavioral issues unrelated to academic achievement such as neurologic impairments. Attention deficits may also impede a student's ability to learn causing disruptive behaviors. Often students are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) which often can be treated with medication producing desirable affects allowing them the ability to focus and function in class. Often though parents are against medicating then child believing the child can control the impulsivity or the behavior is not demonstrated at home. These students may or may not suffer from academic weaknesses, but may demonstrate disruptive behaviors due to their inability to control their actions.

Last, instructional strategies, student motivation, and test-taking skills play a role in academic outcomes. Students may have been provided strong instructional strategies where an academic weakness is not a predictor of disruptive behavior. The student may display disruptive behaviors for other reasons which will not be predicted from academic achievement. Students' motivation is an area which cannot be measured. Some students are highly motivated to achieve and do well in test situations, again meaning their behavior may stem from other reasons. Students are also taught test taking strategies which improve their test scores in order for school districts to meet adequate yearly progress. Some students may demonstrate academic weaknesses in class as well as problem behavior, yet will meet expectations on the CRCT from the test taking strategies they were taught. Therefore, the reciprocal relationship between behavior and academic achievement has been substantiated, but there may be students who fall through the proverbial crack because they have honed their test taking strategies, are highly

motivated by testing, and may have received sufficient educational instruction despite their behavior.

Recommendations for Further Research

As with many studies, the results raise many important questions which could be explored in future research. One recommendation would be to study large school populations such as the one in the current study. An examination of larger schools may produce different findings and the potential need for variations to school-wide discipline plans due to the volume of students. Another interesting study would be to examine the different types of school-wide discipline plans being implemented in schools and determine which system is the most effective in reducing the number of office discipline referrals. This study would examine if schools are using token economies, tickets, or other systems, and which of these is more successful. This study could also include examining the frequency the reinforcement is awarded and what were the positive reinforcers students were earning.

The current study demonstrated a correlation between the number of office discipline referrals and academic achievement, but a recommendation would be on other factors that evoke disruptive behavior. Other variables that may impact behavior or contribute to problem behavior may include, but are not limited to, family dynamics or family structure such as single parent households, grandparents raising children, or foster homes. Other potential variables which may influence behavior and also warrant further research are socio-economic level and school attendance. Lastly, a continuation of this study would be to implement intensive needs based academic groups for those students who had high office discipline referrals and low CRCT scores to determine if the

interventions could decrease the number of office discipline referrals and lessens the probability these students would need tier two behavioral interventions.

References

Alberto, P. & Troutman, A. (1990). *Applied Behavior Analysis for Teachers.* New York, NY:MacMillan Publishing Company.

Alderman, T. (2000). Total school discipline includes us all. *Education Digest, 65 (9),* 21-26.

Alderman, T. (2001). In good discipline, one size doesn't fit all. *Education Digest, 66 (8),* 38-41.

Axelrod, S. (1996). What's wrong with behavior analysis? *Journal of Behavior Education, 6,* 247-256.

Bender, W. & Shores, K. (2007). *Response to Intervention: A practical guide for every teacher.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Binns, K. & Markow, D. (1999). The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1999: Violence in America's public schools –five years later. New York: Louis Harris. Retrieved March 15, 2009 from http://espanol.metlife.com/WPSAssets/187292879610184008 26V1Freport9-1999.pdf

Blomberg, N. (2004). *Effective discipline for misbehavior: In School vs. Out of School suspension.* Retrieved March 21, 2009 from Villanova University Publications Web site: http://www.publications.villanova.edu/Concept/2004/Effective_Discipline.pdf

Brown-Chidsey, R. (2007). No more "waiting to fail". *Educational Leadership, 65* (2), 40-46.

Cohen, R., Kincaid, Childs, K. (2007). School-wide positive behavior support implementation: development and validation of the benchmark of quality. *Journal of Positive Behavior Intervention, 9*(4), 203-213.

Conte, A. (2000). In loco parentis: Alive and well. *Education*, *121 (1),* 1-5.

Dupper, D. & Dingus, A. (2008). Corporal punishment in the U.S. public schools: A continuing challenge for school social workers. *Children and Schools, 30(4),* 243-250.

Eber, L., Lewis-Palmer, T., Pacchiano, D. (2001, February). School-wide positive behavior systems: Improving school environments for all students including those with EBD. Paper presented at the 14th Annual Research Conference, Tampa, FL.

Ervin, R., Schaughency, E., Matthews, A., Goodman, S., & McGlinchey, M. (2007). Primary and secondary prevention of behavior difficulties: developing a data-informed problem-solving model to guide decision making at a school-wide level. *Psychology in Schools, 44*(1), 7-18.

Evans, H. & Fargason, C. (1998). Pediatric discourse on corporal punishment: A historical review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 3*, 357-368.

Fagan, J. (1996, May). Recent perspectives on youth violence. Keynote address to Pacific Northwest Conference in Youth Violence, Seattle.

Fleming, C., Harachi, T., Cortes, R., Abbott, R., & Catalano, R. (2004). Level and change in reading scores and attention problems during elementary school as predictors of problem behavior in middle school. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 12,* 130-144.

Fuchs, D., & Deshler, D. (2007). What we need to know about responsiveness to intervention (and shouldn't be afraid to ask). *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, *22*, 129–136.

Georgia Department of Education Assessment Research and Development Division. (2008). *Assessment and Accountability Brief.* Retrieved June 29, 2009, from http://www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx?PageReq=CI_TESTING_CRCT

Gresham, F. (2004). Current status and future direction of school-based behavioral interventions. *School Psychology Review, 33,* 326-343.

Hawken, L., MacLeod, K., & Rawlings, L. (2007). Effects of the Behavior Education Program (BEP) on office discipline referrals of elementary school students. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 9*(2), 94-101.

Hawken, L. & Horner, R. (2003). Evaluation of a targeted intervention within a School-wide system of behavior support. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 12*(3), 225-240.

Hawken, L., Vincent, C., & Schumann, J. (2008). Response to Intervention for social behavior. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 16(4),* 213-*235.*

Hinshaw, S. (1992). Academic underachievement, attention deficits, and aggression: Comorbidity and implications for intervention. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 60,* 893-903.

Holifield, C. (2009). *The ABC's of Response to Intervention and Behavior. Next Steps a Practitioner's Guide to Implementation.* Denver, CO: Outskirts Press, Inc.

Horner, R & Sugai, G. (2000). School-wide behavior support: An emerging initiative. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 2*(4), 231-232.

Hyman, I. (1995). Corporal punishment, psychological maltreatment, violence, and punitiveness in America: Research, advocacy, and public policy. *Applied and Preventative Psychology, 4*, 113-130.

Irvin, L., Horner, R., Ingram, K., Todd, A., Sugai, G., Sampson, N., & Boland, J. (2006). Using office discipline referral data for decision making about student behavior in elementary and middle schools: An empirical evaluation of validity. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 8*(1), 10-23.

Irvin, L., Tobin, T., Sprague, J., Sugai, G., & Vincent, C. (2004). Validity of office discipline referral measures as indices of school-wide behavioral status and effects of school-wide behavioral interventions. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 6*(3), 131-147.

Kearsley, G. (2006). Operant Conditioning: B.F. Skinner. *Explorations in Learning & Instruction: The Theory Into Practice Database.* Retrieved December 31, 2008, from http://tip.psychology.org/skinner.html

Kennedy, J. (1995). Teachers, student teachers, paraprofessionals, and young adults, judgments about the acceptable use of corporal punishment in the rural south. *Education & Treatment of Children, 18*(1), 53-62.

Lannie, A., & McCurdy, B. (2007). Preventing disruptive behavior in the urban classroom: effects of the good behavior game on student and teacher behavior. *Education and Treatment of Children, 30*(1), 85–98.

Lassen, S., Steele, M., & Sailor, W. (2006). The relationship of school-wide positive behavior support to academic achievement in an urban middle school. *Psychology in Schools, 43,* 701-712.

Lewis, T, Sugai, G. & Colvin, G. (1998). Reducing problem behavior through a school-wide system of effective behavioral support: Investigation of a school-wide social skills training program and contextual interventions. *School Psychology Review, 27*, 446-459.

Lohrman, S., Forman, S., Martin, S., & Palmieri, M. (2008). Understanding school personnel's resistance to adopting schoolwide positive behavior support at a universal level of intervention. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 10*(4), 256-269.

Lohrman, S. & Talerico, J. (2004). Anchor the boat: A classwide intervention to reduce problem behavior. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 6(2),* 113-120.

Luiselli, J., Putnam, R. Handler, M., & Feinberg. (2005). Whole-school positive behavior support: Effects on student discipline problems and academic performance. *Educational Psychology, 25*(2), 183-291.

Maag, J. (2001). Rewarded by punishment: Reflections on the disuse of positive reinforcement in schools. *The Council for Exceptional Children, 67(2),* 173-186.

Maguin, E., & Loeber, R. (1996). Academic performance and delinquency. In M. Tonry (ed.), *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* (Vol. 20, pp. 145-264). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McCurdy, B., Mannella, M. & Eldridge, N. (2003). Positive behavior support in urban schools: Can we prevent the escalation of antisocial behavior? *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions,5,*158-170.

McIntosh, K. Horner, R., Chard, D., Boland, J., & Good, R. (2006). The use of reading and behavior screening measures to predict non-response to school-wide positive behavior support: A longitudinal analysis. *School Psychology Review, 35,* 275-291.

McIntosh, K., Horner, R., Chard, D., Dickey, C., & Braun, D. (2008). Reading skills and function of problem behavior in typical school settings. *The Journal of Special Education, 42*(3), 131-147.

Morrison, G., Anthony, S., Storino, M. & Dillon, C. (2001). An examination of the disciplinary histories and the individual and educational characteristics of students who participate in an in-school suspension program. *Education and Treatment 24*(3), 276-293.

Morrison, G. & D'Incau, B. (1997). The web of zero tolerance: Characteristics of students who are recommended for expulsion from school. *Education & Treatment of Children, 20,* 316-335.

Morrison, G. & Skiba, R. (2001). Predicting violence from school misbehavior: promises and perils. *Psychology in the Schools, 38*(2), 173-184.

Mowrer, O. (2001). The present state of behaviorism. *Education,* 97(1), 4-23.

Muscott, H., Mann, E., & LeBrun, M. (2008). Positive behavioral interventions and supports in New Hampshire. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 10(3),* 190-205.

Najaka, S., Gottfredson, D., & Wilson, D. (2001). A meta-analytic inquiry into the relationship between selected risk factors and problem behavior. *Prevention Science, 2*(4), 257-271.

National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools. (2002). *Discipline at home.* Retrieved December 30, 2008 from http://stop hittingathome/factsandfiction

National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2007.* Retrieved March 9, 2009 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/crimeindicators2007/ind_12.asp

National School Boards Association. (2008). *Corporal punishment still popular in many schools* (American School Board Journal). Alexandria, VA: Author.

Nelson, J., Benner, G., Lane, K., & Smith, B. (2004). Academic achievement of K-12 students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Exceptional Children*, *71,* 59-73.

Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. (2007). *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.* Retrieved December 30, 2008, from http://www.pbis.org/rti/default.aspx

Owen, S. (2005). The relationship between social capital and corporal punishment in schools: A theoretical inquiry. *Youth & Society*, *37*, 85-112.

Owen, S. & Wagner, K. (2006). Explaining school corporal punishment: Evangelical Protestantism and social capital in a path model. *Social Justice Research,* 19, 471-499.

Parker-Jenkins, M. (1997). Sparing the rod: Schools, discipline, and children's rights in multicultural Britain. *School of Education and Social Science*, 1, 3-22.

Putnam, R., Luiselli, J., Handler, M., Jefferson, G. (2003). Evaluating student discipline practices in a public school through behavioral assessment of office referrals. *Behavior Modification, 27*(4), 505-523.

Sandomierski, T., Kincaid, D., & Algozzine, B. (2007). Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Support: Brothers from Different Mothers or Sisters with Different Misters? *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Newsletter,* 4(2). Retrieved December 30, 2008, from http://www.pbis.org/news/New/Newsletters/Newsletter4

Scott, T. & Barrett, S. (2004). Using staff and student time engaged in disciplinary procedures to evaluate the impact of school-wide PBS. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 6,* 21-27.

Simonsen, B., Sugai, G., & Negron, M. (2008). School-wide Positive Behavior Supports. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 40*(6), 32-40.

Skiba, R. & Peterson, R. (2000).School discipline at a crossroads: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children, 66*, 335-346.

Skiba, R. & Sprague, J. (2008). Safety without suspensions. *Educational Leadership, 66*(1), 38-42.

Society for Adolescent Medicine. (2003). Corporal punishment in schools: Position paper of the Society for Adolescent Medicine. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 32*, 385-393.

Sprague, J., Sugai, G., Horner, R., & Walker, H. (1999). Using office discipline referral data to evaluate school-wide discipline and violence prevention interventions. *Oregon School study Council, 42,* 4-18.

Sprague, J. & Walker, H. (2000). Early identification and intervention for youth with antisocial and violent behavior. *Exceptional Children, 66*(3), 367-379.

Sugai, G. & Horner, R. (1999). Discipline and behavior support: Practices, pitfalls, promises. *Effective School Practice, 17*(4), 10-22.

Sugai, G. & Horner, R. (2001). Features of an effective behavior support at the district level. *Beyond Behavior, 11*(1), 16-19.

Sugai, G. & Horner, R. (2001). *School climate and discipline: Going to scale*. National Summit on the Shared Implementation of IDEA, Washington, D.C.

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2007, September). Is school-wide Positive Behavior Support an evidence-based practice? Retrieved December 31, 2008, from http://www.pbis.org/files/101007evidencebase4pbs.pdf

Sugai, G., Sprague, J., Horner, R., & Walker, H. (2000). Preventing school violence: The use of office discipline referrals to assess and monitor school-wide discipline interventions [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders, 8*(2), 94-101.

Teicher, S. (2005, March 17). To paddle or not to paddle? It's still not clear in US schools. *Christian Science Monitor,* 97 (78). Retrieved December 31, 2008, from http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0317/p01s04-legn.html

The Center for Effective Discipline. (2009). *Discipline at Home*. Retrieved January 1, 2009, from http://www.stophitting.com/index.php?page=bebanned

Tidwell, A., Flannery, K., & Lewis-Palmer, T. (2003). A description of elementary school classroom discipline referral patterns. *Preventing School Failure,48 (1),* 18-26.

Tobin, T., Lewis-Palmer, T., & Sugai, G. (2002). School-wide and individualized effective behavior support: An explanation and an example. *Behavior Analysis Today, 3 (1),* 51-57. Retrieved December 31, 2008, from http://www.behavior-analyst.org

Tobin, T. & Sugai, G. (1996). Patterns in middle school discipline records. [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders, 4*(2), 1-26.

United States Department of Education. (n.d.). *Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004.* Retrieved February 28, 2009 from http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalArea%2C6%2C

United States Department of Education. (n.d.). *No Child Left Behind*. Retrieved February 28, 2009 from http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html

United States Department of Education. (2006) *Civil Rights Data Collection 2006*. Retrieved January 6, 2009, from http://ocrdata.ed.gov/ocr2006rv30/VistaApp/browsetables.aspx?

United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Youth violence: A report of the surgeon general.* Washington DC: Office of Surgeon General.

Walker, B., Cheney, D., Stage, S., & Blum, C. (2005). Schoolwide Screening and positive behavior supports: identifying and supporting students at risk for school failure. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 7*(4), 194-204.

Walker, H., Horner, R., Sugai, G., Bullis, M., Sprague, J., Bricker, D., Kaufman, M. (1996). Integrated approaches to preventing antisocial behavior patterns among school-age children and youth. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 4,* 194-209.

Walker, H. Irvin, L., & Sprague, J. (1997). Violence prevention and school safety: Issues, problems, approaches, and recommended solutions. *OSSC Bulletin*.

Watson, E. (1999). *John Watson*. Retrieved January 25, 2009 from http://www.muskingum.edu/~psych/psycweb/history/watson.htm.

Wedl, R. (2005). *Response to Intervention: An alternative to traditional eligibility criteria for students with disability*. Retrieved March 21, 2009 from Education Evolving Center for Policy Studies and Hamline University Web site: http://www.educationevolving.org/pdf/Response_to_Intervention.pdf

White, R., Algozzine, B., Audette, R., Marr, M., Ellis, E. (2001). Unified discipline: A school-wide approach for managing problem behavior. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 37*(1), 3-8.

Wright, J. & Dusek, J. (1998). Research into practice: Compiling school base rates for disruptive behaviors from student disciplinary referral data. *School Psychology Review, 27,* 138-147.

Appendix A

Behavior Guidelines

Behavior Guidelines

Types of Behavior Offenses

Type I Offenses

The following is a list of offenses that should never be sent to the office. These offenses should be dealt with in the classroom. The teacher should make these offenses known to the parents on each occurrence.

1. Unprepared for class
2. Minor disruptions (making noises, out of seat, talking without permission, etc.)
3. Not keeping hands and feet to self
4. Running in the hallways, to lunch, etc.
5. Loud noise in the hallway
6. Minor dress code violations
7. Possession of gum or candy
8. Possession of inappropriate devices or toys
9. Playing in the restroom
10. Failure to turn in assignments
11. Minor altercations (pushing and mouthing)

Type II Offenses

The following offenses may be reported to the office at the discretion on the teacher and according to the school-wide discipline plan. The teacher should notify the parents for each occurrence of these offenses.

1. Refusal to obey a reasonable request
2. Persistent classroom disruption (The reoccurrence of disruptive behavior over a period of several days)
3. Persistent defiance of authority (The reoccurrence of the defiant behavior over a period of several days)
4. Defacing school or personal property
5. Forgery
6. Persistent inappropriate cafeteria behavior
7. Cheating-Zero grade for assignment and parent contacted by parent. Referral reports to be filled with administrator. Penalty ranges from warning conference to ISS at the discretion of administrator.

Disciplinary Actions

Special Notice: The administrative staff holds the right to alter or progress through the procedures for any given behavior as deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of the students and staff.

Type II Offenses

Parents will be notified by mail and/or phone

1st offense	Verbal warning
2nd offense	1 hour ISS
3rd offense	½ day ISS
4th offense	1 day ISS
5th offense	2 day ISS
6th offense	1 day OSS
7th offense	1+ days OSS

- A parent conference may be requested at any step in this process
- An individual behavior plan may be developed at any step in this process or after 12 weeks in tier 1.

Type III Offenses

Parents will be notified by mail and/or phone

1.Vandalism

1st offense	Parent contacted; suspended remainder of day or next
2nd offense	2 days OSS
3rd offense	3 days OSS

2. Major Insubordination

1st offense	½ day ISS
2nd offense	1 day ISS
3rd offense	1 day OSS
4th offense	1 +days OSS

3. Flagrant Disrespect

1st offense	½ day ISS
2nd offense	1 day ISS
3rd offense	1 day OSS

4th offense	1 +days OSS

4. Leaving Class or Assigned Area Without Permission

1st offense	1 hour ISS
2nd offense	½ day ISS
3rd offense	1 day ISS

5. Attempts to Leave the School Grounds

1st offense	parent contacted; sent home
2nd offense	1 day OSS
3rd offense	1 + days OSS

6. Profanity, Vulgarity, or Inappropriate Gestures

1st offense	½ day ISS
2nd offense	1 day ISS
3rd offense	2 days ISS
4th offense	1 day OSS

Juvenile court referral may be made at any step in this process (items 7-11)

7. Sexual Harassment or Acts

Notification of counselor
Mandatory parent conference
Use of ISS or OSS
Possible referral to juvenile court

8. Possession of Firearms, Knives, or Weapons of Any Type

Parent contacted by phone, possession of gun, immediate suspension (Firearm possession results in immediate 1 year suspension or longer. Referral to tribunal.	
1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	1 day OSS
3rd offense	1+ days OSS

9. Possession of Tobacco, Alcohol, or Drugs

Parent contacted by phone, suspension (can be up to 10 days according to Board policy JD-R; stated in system calendar code of conduct)	
1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	1 day OSS
3rd offense	1+ days OSS

10. Theft

1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	1 day OSS
3rd offense referral	1 + days OSS and Juvenile court
Restitution if needed	

11. Verbal or Written Threats of Harassment, Intimidation, or Extortion Toward Students or Adults

1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	2 days ISS
3rd offense	1 day OSS

12. Any Racist Acts

1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	2 days ISS
3rd offense	1 day OSS

13. Fighting (Punches Thrown and /or Injury

1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	1 days OSS
3rd offense	1 + days OSS

14. Biting-with Injury

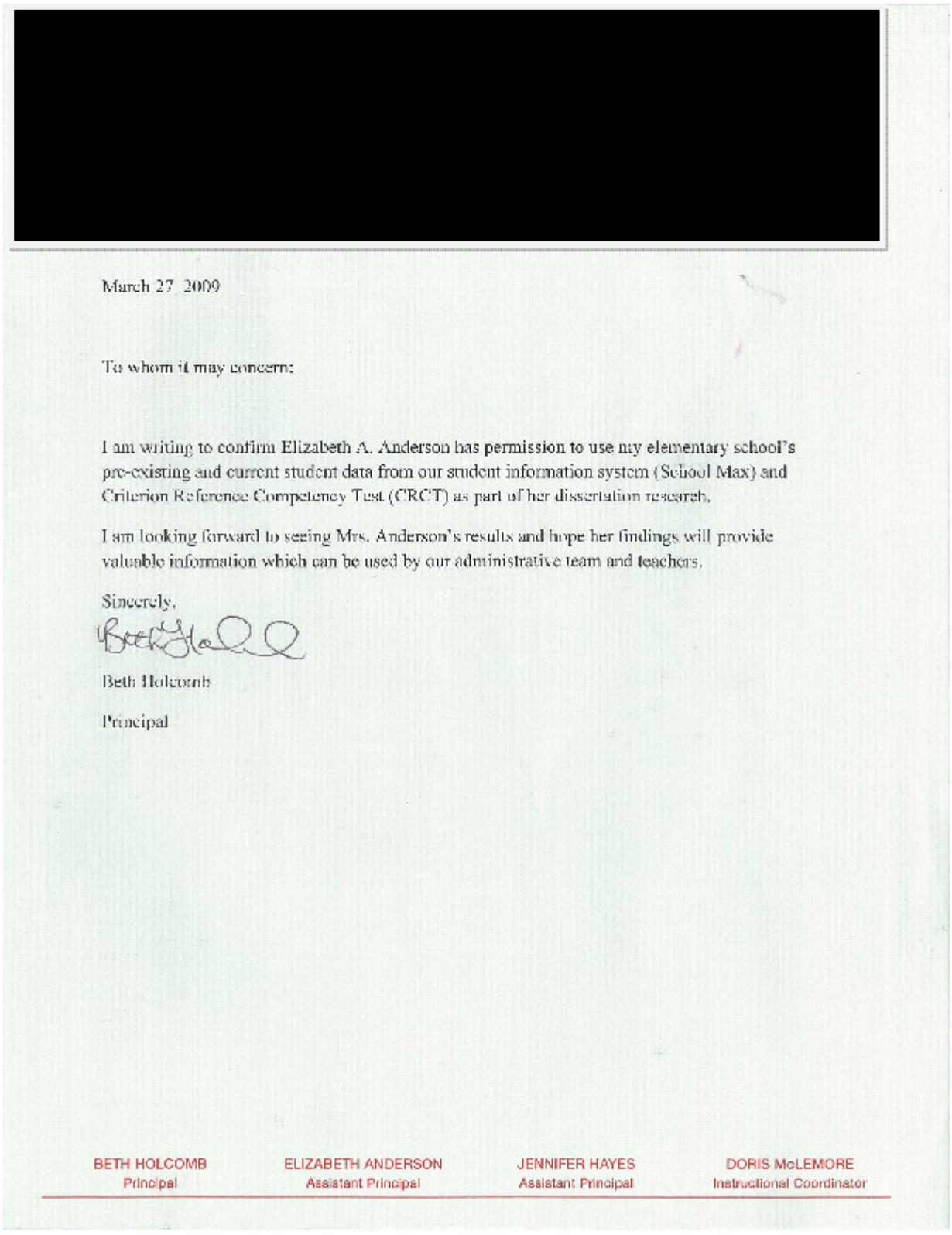
1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	2 days ISS
3rd offense	1 day OSS

15. Any Act that Jeopardizes the Safety of Another Individual

1st offense	1 day ISS
2nd offense	2 days ISS
3rd offense	1 day OSS

Appendix B

School Permission Letter


[redacted]

March 27, 2009

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to confirm Elizabeth A. Anderson has permission to use my elementary school's pre-existing and current student data from our student information system (School Max) and Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT) as part of her dissertation research.

I am looking forward to seeing Mrs. Anderson's results and hope her findings will provide valuable information which can be used by our administrative team and teachers.

Sincerely,

Beth Holcomb

Principal

BETH HOLCOMB
Principal

ELIZABETH ANDERSON
Assistant Principal

JENNIFER HAYES
Assistant Principal

DORIS McLEMORE
Instructional Coordinator