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# Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Program in Minneapolis- St. Paul Metropolitan Area High Schools (Grades 9-12)

Olga Savva

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**Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of the School-wide Positive  
Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) Program in Minneapolis-  
St. Paul Metropolitan Area High Schools (Grades 9-12)**

by

Olga Savva

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

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Doctor of Education

in Educational Administration and Leadership

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program to manage student behavior successfully in schools (grades 9-12). The results of the study showed that teachers believed factors of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al., McKevitt and Braaksma were present in their schools. The majority of teachers (73.6%) positively rated the successful implementation of the SWPBIS program in their schools. The findings of the study also revealed five important factors teachers believed contribute to successful implementation of SWPBIS and five barriers preventing SWPBIS implementation.

The findings of the study contribute to existing research on SWPBIS implementation in high schools. The study concludes with recommendations to high school administrators, SWPBIS leadership teams and staff for improving and sustaining the program in high schools.

### **Acknowledgement**

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### **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to all educators who strongly believe in positive approaches to discipline in schools and who are willing to change their discipline practice by teaching appropriate behavioral expectations to students of all ages so that they can succeed socially and academically in schools.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Background

School discipline is a significant concern for teachers and administrators in the United States (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Charles, 2002; Gagné, 1982). Dr. Charles (2002), one of the recognized leaders in educational psychology, states that “poor discipline, meaning chronic student misbehavior, is severely damaging education everywhere” (p. 97). Furthermore, educators are not equipped with necessary skills to deal with student behavior problems. Poor classroom management, caused by a lack of teacher training in managing disruptive classroom behavior and inconsistency in following rules and procedures, often results in teacher frustration, stress, burnout, and a loss of instructional time due to these problems (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

Some teachers believe in a punitive discipline approach and do not support rewarding students for appropriate school behavior (Feuerborn, Wallace, & Tyre, 2016). As P. Short, R. Short and Blanton (1994) explained, “Historically, schools were founded on an authoritarian model (which is still alive and well today) that promotes a punitive approach to discipline and produces little self-discipline” (p. 1). Although some teachers use punitive discipline strategies, such as reprimanding and suspending students, these approaches are only effective for a short period of time (Charles, 2002). Research reveals that suspensions have a negative impact on students and can result in student arrests and failure to graduate (Flannery, Fenning, Kato, & McIntosh, 2014; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004; Losen, 2015).

Stavinoha and Au (2015), Strain and Hemmeter (1999), and Arnall (2010) emphasized another approach to discipline—a positive, proactive discipline with rewards and

encouragement. Strain and Hemmeter (1999) confirmed that by using positive approaches, teachers reduce challenging behaviors in classrooms and suggested that “preventing challenging behaviors depends upon the extent to which we teach appropriate behaviors” (p. 23). Educational psychologist Stephen Greenspan at the University of Connecticut (2013) highlighted that children learn what adults teach them. Consequently, if parents or teachers use a punishing approach to discipline, children may become aggressive and behave in the same manner with their children later in life (Greenspan, 2013).

School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is an effective positive school discipline program (Flannery, Guest, & Horner, 2010; Simonsen, Sugai, & Negrón, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2002). SWPBIS is “a proactive, systems level approach that enables schools to effectively and efficiently support student (and staff) behavior” (Simonsen et al., 2008, p. 33). Today, thousands of schools in the United States are implementing this program (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [PBIS], n.d.). Research showed that “teachers who interact more positively with students have students who do better academically and socially” (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013, p. 39). Moreover, the U.S. Department of Education encourages states to use SWPBIS in their schools to improve discipline and reduce suspensions (US DOE, 2014).

Teachers choose SWPBIS in their classrooms because it may improve student behavior and academic performance (Warren et al., 2003). According to Ravensberg and Blakely (2017), “Rooted in the principles of behavior analysis, SWPBIS emphasizes school-wide, targeted, and individualized interventions and supports to create a coherent social climate to benefit all students” (p. 3). Schools implementing SWPBIS use a multi-tiered method to prevent discipline

problems by teaching students behavior expectations and rewarding them for positive performance (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Ravensberg & Blakely, 2017). As McKevitt and Braaksma (2008) noted, “School-wide PBS is a structured way to promote positive relationships in schools and to provide students with social and behavioral skills to be successful learners and school citizens” (p. 735). Additionally, numerous studies revealed the positive effect of SWPBIS on reducing discipline referrals (Algozzine et al., 2010; Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Colombi & Osher, 2015; Schachter, 2010; Scott & Barrett, 2004; Simonsen et al., 2008). However, most of these studies were conducted in elementary and middle schools but not in high schools (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013; Scott & Barrett, 2004).

Limited research exists on SWPBIS implementation in high school settings (Flannery, Fenning, McGrath Kato, & Bohanon, 2013). Flannery et al. (2010) noted, “High schools will be successful learning environments when they are also effective social environments” (p. 41). Thus, focusing on social culture in high schools during the implementation of SWPBIS is a crucial element in improving student achievement and behavior (Flannery et al., 2010).

Unfortunately, it takes longer to implement SWPBIS in high schools compared to the program implementation in elementary schools (Flannery et al., 2014). Several studies agreed on the slower adoption of SWPBIS in high schools due to the developmental level of students and more problem behaviors as compared with elementary schools (Bohanon et al., 2012; Feuerborn et al., 2016; Flannery, Frank, et al., 2013). Additionally, because high schools are large and complex systems, where staff support and communication are more difficult than in elementary schools, the implementation of SWPBIS may be more challenging and may take more time to achieve sustainability (Flannery, Frank, et al., 2013; Flannery et al., 2014).

Staff support is an essential component in successful SWPBIS implementation in secondary schools (Algozzine et al., 2010; Feuerborn et al., 2016; Flannery, Frank, et al., 2013; Newcomer & Barrett, 2009). Limited number of studies have documented the recognition and respect by school leadership teams for the views and beliefs of the school staff who are asked to change their practices by implementing SWPBIS (Feuerborn, Wallace, & Tyre, 2013; Feuerborn et al., 2016; Newcomer & Barrett, 2009). Feuerborn et al. (2013) underline:

By proactively achieving a full understanding of staff needs, concerns, and overall perceptions of SWPBS, teams can be more open to creative ways to empower staff and thereby enhance meaningful, lasting change in the manner we support the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. (p. 32)

A study conducted on the perceptions of the high school teachers regarding SWPBIS implementation also indicated the importance of teachers' feedback and support in promoting change (Feuerborn et al., 2016).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although the literature reveals positive effects and successful implementation of SWPBIS in elementary and middle schools, there is limited research about the successful implementation of SWPBIS at the high school level and significantly less research about high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of SWPBIS program (Bohanon et al., 2006; Bohanon et al., 2012; Bradshaw, Pas, Debnam, & Johnson, 2015; Feuerborn et al., 2013). The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP; 2017) technical assistance center on SWPBIS reports:

Thousands of high schools in the U.S. are engaged in implementing PBIS, but the research specific to high school implementation is still emerging. The time required to achieve adequate implementation of PBIS in high schools is consistently longer than that reported for elementary and middle schools, and a growing literature base suggests that PBIS implementation at the high school level involves attention to a set of variables beyond those found in elementary and middle schools. (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [PBIS], n.d.)

Research indicates that an important factor contributing to the successful SWPBIS implementation in high schools is teachers' beliefs about the program (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016; Lohrmann, Forman, Martin, & Palmieri, 2008; Short et al., 1994). As Feuerborn and Tyre (2016) stated, "Gathering data in the spirit of attaining a better understanding of staff perceptions may be an important yet overlooked step in the implementation of SWPBS" (p. 58). Understanding this limitation, high school leadership teams should be more proactive in collecting data about teachers' opinions and concerns regarding SWPBIS, analyzing the results and making necessary changes in the program implementation. Feuerborn and Tyre (2016) pointed out the importance for SWPBIS leadership teams to understand challenges that high school teachers experience in the process of change and support them during the program implementation. Therefore, if school administrators can better understand teachers' beliefs regarding SWPBIS, they can achieve its full implementation in high schools (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016).

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was taken from the studies of Horner et al. (2004) who determined seven key practices of successful SWPBIS implementation. These practices are:

1. Define 3 to 5 school-wide expectations for appropriate behavior.
2. Actively teach the school-wide behavioral expectations to all students.
3. Monitor and acknowledge students for engaging in behavioral expectations.
4. Correct problem behaviors using a consistently administered continuum of behavioral consequences.
5. Gather and use information about student behavior to evaluate and guide decision-making.
6. Obtain leadership of school-wide practices from an administrator who
  - a. establishes a team to develop, implement, and manage the school-wide behavior support effort in a school;
  - b. serves as a member of the team;
  - c. allocates sufficient time to implement behavior support procedures; and
  - d. allocates school-wide behavior as one of the top three improvement goals for the school.
7. Obtain district-level support in the form of
  - a. training in school-wide behavior support practices,
  - b. policies emphasizing the expectations that schools are safe and organized for effective learning, and

c. expectation that information on problem behavior patterns be gathered and reported.

(p. 4)

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program to manage student behavior successfully in their schools (grades 9-12).

### **Assumptions of the Study**

The assumptions of the study were the following:

1. Participants were honest in their responses in the survey.
2. Participants were familiar with the SWPBIS practices in their schools.
3. The sample of 9-12 grade teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area in Minnesota was representative for teachers in that area.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The delimitations of the study were the following:

1. The study was limited to the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area in the state of Minnesota.
2. The study was limited to high schools (grades 9-12).
3. The study focused only on teachers' perceptions regarding SWPBIS implementation.
4. Schools in the initial stage of the implementation of SWPBIS were excluded from the study. The researcher selected only the schools that have been using the program for more than two years to better evaluate the program implementation.



5. Five schools have not implemented SWPBIS successfully according to their principals; therefore, they could not participate in the study.
6. The findings of the study cannot be generalized to elementary or middle school teachers' perceptions as high school teachers' beliefs about student behavior management and discipline philosophies may be different from those of elementary and middle school teachers.

### **Research Questions**

The study examined the following research questions:

1. What did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) report as successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools?
2. How did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) rate the implementation of SWPBIS in their schools?
3. What five key factors did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify of successful implementation of SWPBIS?
4. What five key barriers did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify to successful implementation of SWPBIS?

### **Definition of the Terms**

*School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (SWPBIS / PBIS):* “a proactive, systems level approach that enables schools to effectively and efficiently support student (and staff) behavior” (Simonsen et al., 2008, p. 33). SWPBIS and PBIS terms are used interchangeably in the study.

*Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) technical assistance center on PBIS:* “a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Education and 11 technical assistance units across the United States. The Center is directed by Drs. George Sugai (University of Connecticut, Rob Horner, (University of Oregon) and Tim Lewis (University of Missouri)” (Digital Chalkboard, n.d.).

*MN SWPBIS Cohort schools:* schools “that have completed a two-year training sequence with the state or a regional implementation project” (Minnesota PBIS, n.d.).

*Professional development:* “the strategy schools and school districts use to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career” (Mizell, 2010, p. 1).

*SWPBIS implementation team:* a group of 10 school members “comprised of administrators, classified, and regular and special education teachers” (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [PBIS], n.d.). “The team works to assess school needs, develop and operationalize expectations, train staff to implement the strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of efforts by reviewing student data regularly” (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008, p. 737).

*Office discipline referrals (ODR):* “ODRs are written records of schoolwide behavioral issues commonly collected in most schools and are a source of data already available to school personnel” (Flannery, Fenning et al., 2013, p. 139).

*The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET):* “a research-validated instrument that is designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of school-wide positive behavior interventions and support across an academic school year” (Todd et al., 2012, p. 1).

*Staff perceptions of behavior and discipline (SPBD) survey:* “The SPBD is a staff survey that provides information to help school teams implement schoolwide positive behavior supports

(SWPBS or PBIS). The SPBD helps schools understand staff beliefs about behavior and discipline, including their beliefs about schoolwide expectations, school climate, and supports and resources” (Staff Perceptions of Behavior and Discipline [SPBD] Supports and Resources, n.d.).

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, statement of the problem, conceptual framework, purpose of the study, assumptions, delimitations, research questions, and definition of the terms. Chapter 2 presents a review of related literature about SWPBIS implementation in schools. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Chapter 5 summarizes the results of the study and provides recommendations for future research and practice.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

Student behavior is a major issue in public education (Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014). Research has confirmed the challenge of managing school discipline for most educators (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Charles, 2002; Losen, 2015). Well-known leader in educational psychology Dr. Charles (2002) stated, “Our schools are in the grip of a serious problem that is wreaking havoc on teaching and learning. That problem is student misbehavior” (p. 1). Similarly, Simonsen et al. (2008) indicated the frustration of school personnel “with the impact of student behavior on their schools. More than ever, the public perception is that student behavior is out of control” (p. 32). Consequently, teachers leave their profession due to burnout and stress caused by discipline issues at schools (Charles, 2002; Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2012).

Prior research substantiated the belief that not only teachers but also parents need to use effective discipline methods with rules and policies to influence the development of children (Greenspan, 2013; Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014). As Stavinoha and Au (2015) noted, “Many behaviors that we consider inappropriate are simply part of child development” (p. 11). Supporting this, professor of psychiatry Daniel Siegel and psychotherapist Tina Payne Bryson emphasized in their parenting guide how important it is that parents understand the neuroscience of adolescent brain development and how emotions, behavior and learning are interrelated so they can better understand and manage a child’s behavior and emotions (Siegel & Bryson, 2014). Therefore, knowledge of children’s social and emotional development is important for educators in preventing disciplinary problems and teaching appropriate behavior at schools (Greenspan, 2013; Siegel & Bryson, 2014).

Prevention of student misbehavior plays a vital role in moving towards a change in discipline at school and at home (Horner et al., 2004). According to Putnam and Knoster (2016), “the focus on prevention, proactive teaching, and reinforcement provides a contrast to what is often seen in schools in response to behavior—reactive, punitive, and exclusionary discipline practices” (p. 99). Moreover, the key to effective school discipline is the agreement among teachers, parents and administrators on acceptable behavior in their school (Short et al., 1994).

Research has shown that collecting discipline and school climate data, revising student code and conduct, and implementing disciplinary alternatives and positive approaches will reduce behavior problems and also improve academic achievement (Colombi & Osher, 2015). Alternately, punitive forms of discipline and suspensions have negatively affected academic achievement. As Colombi and Osher (2015) stated, "When students are suspended or expelled, they lose valuable instructional time, cannot benefit from class participation, are less likely to complete schoolwork, and are more likely to subsequently skip school" (p. 6). Students who are suspended are less likely to develop skills necessary to succeed at school, are not able to communicate socially with their peers, are not able to use school resources, and are not able to improve their behavior (US DOE, 2014). This leads to a cycle of poor performance and diminished academic outcomes.

Semali and Vumilia (2016) concluded that good discipline is one of the main factors to affect students' academic performance and school climate. According to Semali and Vumilia (2016), fear will not help students build good habits and discipline. Administering punishment is quicker than teaching students good habits, but it creates a threatening learning environment and does not promote instruction. The findings of their study further showed the influence of

effective discipline on student academic performance (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). In other words, poor school discipline and ineffective code and conduct can easily impact academic performance and negatively affect the learning environment at school (Thapa, Cohen, Higgins-D'Alessandro, & Guffey, 2012).

### **School Discipline in the United States**

**Punitive approaches to school discipline.** Researchers have investigated the discipline reforms in the past 20 years and raised the issues about negative outcomes of suspensions, referrals and punitive discipline. Semali and Vumilia (2016) revealed the negative impact on students of frequent suspension and zero tolerance policies, especially among African-American children. Correspondingly, Osher, Bear, Sprague and Doyle (2010) did not support punitive discipline strategies as evidenced by their assessment: "Schools typically respond to disruptive students with external discipline, which consists of sanctions and punishment such as office referrals, corporal punishment, suspensions, and expulsions" (p. 48). As Losen (2015) noted, office discipline referrals are commonly used in schools to teach students behavioral expectations.

After analyzing code and conduct in various schools, as well as legislative changes in discipline policies in different states, Skiba and Losen (2015) determined that most of the codes were punitive, even for a minor violation such as tardiness. Also, the codes were frequently worded in a manner that provoked a negative reaction from students. Therefore, Skiba and Losen (2015) emphasized the importance of positive school climate and a safe learning environment to promote students' learning and foster good discipline at school. According to Skiba and Losen (2015), "District, state, and federal policymakers have pressed for more constructive alternatives

that foster a productive and healthy instructional climate without depriving large numbers of students the opportunity to learn" (p. 4). All these alternatives require strong training and support for teachers and school leaders.

Several studies have reported a strong correlation between suspensions and negative outcomes in high schools (Flannery et al., 2014; Irvin et al., 2004; Losen, 2015). Suspensions and office discipline referrals (ODR) are commonly used in high school settings to measure student behavior, which ultimately could lead to student dropout (Flannery et al., 2014; Irvin et al., 2004). Looking at the data on the impact of suspensions on high school outcomes, Losen (2015) concludes, "each suspension decreases a student's odds of graduating high school by an additional 20%" (p. 22). Thus, students suspended from high school have fewer chances to graduate with their peers (Losen 2015).

According to research, punishment is not an effective tool in managing school discipline; in fact, punitive strategies do even more harm to students (Matjasko, 2011; Short et al., 1994). The study conducted by Sadruddin (2012) confirmed the relationship between punishment and student motivation:

The students were more relaxed when the positive reinforcement was adopted and when the routine plan was made keeping in mind the interest of the students. They were more engaged in class when the punishment and de-motivation were reduced, and when their opinions were valued. (p. 36)

To sum it up, student suspension and expulsion do not bring a safe environment and appropriate behavior; they only provide short term results (Greenspan, 2013; Stansberry-Brusnahan & Neilsen-Gatti, 2009).

**Positive approaches to school discipline.** Chang and Chou (2014) and Greenspan (2013) made a similar statement in their research on discipline pointing to rewards rather than punishment as the best way to promote good discipline at school. According to research, the most effective strategies in managing discipline were praising students orally, granting awards and work incentives, adjusting students' seating, integrating life events in classroom management, and leading students to participate in volunteer activities. They also recommended for the teachers, administrators, and other school staff to learn more about their students as individuals, participate in their lives, communicate with parents and create a positive learning atmosphere at school (Chang & Chou, 2014; Warren et al., 2003). Moreover, if teachers use positive approaches to manage discipline, the students most likely will use the same methods with their own children when they grow up (Greenspan, 2013).

Some research has shown that establishing strong relationships between teachers, students and parents results in fewer behavioral problems at school, creates a positive learning environment, and encourages students to learn (California Department of Education, 2011-2012; Dubin, 2016; Thapa et al., 2012). The students in such schools are not only provided equal and respectful learning opportunities, but also are involved in making decisions and policies in school (California Department of Education, 2011-2012). Changing discipline policies, analyzing data, and training staff on positive strategies may lead to a healthy school climate and academic achievement (Colombi & Osher, 2015; Skiba & Losen, 2015).

Other researchers recommended "three approaches to improving school discipline practices and student behavior: ecological approaches classroom management; schoolwide positive behavioral supports; and social and emotional learning" (Osher et al., 2010, p. 48). The



executive summary in the U.S. Department of Education (2014) also states:

Schools must be both safe and supportive for effective teaching and learning to take place. Three key principles can guide efforts to create such productive learning environments. First, work in a deliberate fashion to develop positive and respectful school climates and prevent student misbehavior before it occurs. Ensure that clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences are in place to prevent and address misbehavior. And finally, use data and analysis to continuously improve and ensure fairness and equity for all students. (p. 2)

Greenspan (2013) pointed out that happy and well-behaved children are in families where adults use positive strategies to manage behavior. As Putnam and Knoster (2016) noted, it is important for parents and teachers to create a positive learning environment at home and at school in order to prevent behavioral problems. According to Stansberry-Brusnahan and Neilsen-Gatti (2009), “One way schools shift from a punishment modality to a more positive approach is through SWPBS where there is a focus on teaching expectations” (p. 29). In fact, SWPBIS can help schools prevent problem behavior and create a positive school environment (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016).

By teaching appropriate behavior, we are helping students manage their poor behavior successfully (Howard et al., 2004; Stansberry-Brusnahan & Neilsen-Gatti, 2009). Teachers can better manage their students’ behavior if they use positive enforcements in classrooms and create a positive school climate (Butchart & McEwan, 1998). Punishment is a quick and preferable consequence for educators; however, for a child, it is embarrassing and humiliating and leads to aggression in children (Butchart & McEwan, 1998).

## **SWPBIS Implementation in US Schools**

**SWPBIS overview.** School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (SWPBIS) is a positive approach to manage school discipline and teach appropriate behavior to students (Simonsen et al., 2008). According to Ravensberg and Blakely (2017), “Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) comes directly from the language used in the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)” (p. 3). About 26,000 schools in the United States are currently implementing PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [PBIS], n.d.). As Osher et al. (2010) stated, “The primary aim of SWPBS is to decrease problem behavior in schools and classrooms and to develop integrated systems of support for students and adults at the schoolwide, classroom, and individual student (including family) levels” (p. 50). Therefore, the SWPBIS framework’s main focus is to prevent problematic behavior by teaching appropriate expectations to all students and rewarding them for following these expectations.

Effective management of school discipline takes time. Taylor-Greene et al. (1997) recommended that “A school in behavioral crisis should plan on at least a three-year period to assess, design, and implement systems of effective behavioral support” (p. 110). Overall, as Freeman et al. (2015) noted, “Schools that implemented SWPBIS with fidelity for longer periods of time experienced marginally statistically significant improvements in the rate of decline for their dropout rates” (p. 306). In several other studies, the findings showed that as a result of the effective SWPBIS training in schools and effective SWPBIS implementation, the number of office discipline referrals and suspensions decreased significantly (Bohanon & Wu, 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Schachter, 2010; Scott & Barrett, 2004).

According to research, SWPBIS has a positive effect on teachers due to opportunity to build positive interactions and relationships with students (Ross et al., 2012). As noted by Warren et al. (2003), “The premise of school-wide PBS is a change of school culture, moving away from coercion as a means of managing difficult and off-task behavior and toward building positive relationships and teaching appropriate responses to school and classroom expectations” (p. 86). In addition, SWPBIS can affect staff well-being in a positive way. As Ross et al. (2012) indicated:

A major impact of SWPBIS on teacher well-being occurs through the development of team skills, collaboration, and positive relationships, as well as the use of effective practices. The better a school staff learns to teach and reinforce appropriate behavior, discourage inappropriate behavior, monitor students and use data for decisions, the more efficacious they will feel and the more supportive they will perceive the rest of the school. (p. 120)

SWPBIS schools develop classroom behavior rules, school discipline policies and expectations which are constantly taught to students (Flannery et al., 2010; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; McKeivitt & Braaksma, 2008; Osher et al., 2010; Tyre, Feuerborn, & Pierce, 2011). Collecting data on students’ attendance, discipline and suspensions is an important part of SWPBIS to ensure its successful implementation in schools (Feuerborn et al., 2013; Flannery et al., 2010; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Brian McKeivitt and Angelisa Braaksma (2008) stressed the following key considerations in successful SWPBIS implementations: creating a PBIS implementation team, obtaining staff support, instituting clear school policies, offering staff development, engaging families and

community members, and achieving SWPBIS sustainability. Similarly, Horner and his colleagues (2004) determined seven key practices of successful SWPBIS implementation. These practices are:

1. Define 3 to 5 school-wide expectations for appropriate behavior.
2. Actively teach the school-wide behavioral expectations to all students.
3. Monitor and acknowledge students for engaging in behavioral expectations.
4. Correct problem behaviors using a consistently administered continuum of behavioral consequences.
5. Gather and use information about student behavior to evaluate and guide decision-making.
6. Obtain leadership of school-wide practices from an administrator who
  - a. establishes a team to develop, implement, and manage the school-wide behavior support effort in a school;
  - b. serves as a member of the team;
  - c. allocates sufficient time to implement behavior support procedures; and
  - d. allocates school-wide behavior as one of the top three improvement goals for the school.
7. Obtain district-level support in the form of
  - a. training in school-wide behavior support practices,
  - b. policies emphasizing the expectations that schools are safe and organized for effective learning, and

c. expectation that information on problem behavior patterns be gathered and reported.

(p. 4)

### **Elements to a Successful SWPBIS Implementation**

**PBIS implementation team.** A SWPBIS approach should focus on the commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders in effective program implementation and sustainability (Combs & Martin, 2011; Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014; P. Short et al., 1994). As Sugai and Horner (2002) stated, “Individual staff members cannot affect change that substantially improves the manner in which systems function. School-wide leadership teams are needed to guide the implementation of school-wide PBS” (p. 39). Therefore, it is important for the SWPBIS leadership team to include a representative of each department in the school (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013).

It is recommended to include not only teachers but also counselors, psychologists, and family members on the leadership teams in order to consider the opinions and concerns of as many stakeholders as possible (Garbacz et al., 2016; Lewis et al., 2016; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2002). School psychologists can serve as facilitators and coordinators in SWPBIS implementation, and they “are well suited to be members of leadership teams, to assist with needs assessment data collection and analysis, to consult with teachers regarding procedures, and to analyze school-wide data for decision making” (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008, p. 739). Additionally, in middle and high schools, it is important to include students on the leadership team so they can participate in their school’s decision making regarding SWPBIS implementation to establish behavioral expectations and consequences in cooperation with teachers (Flannery et al., 2010; Flannery, Frank et al., 2013; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008).

**Family involvement.** According to Flannery et al. (2010), all stakeholders should be involved in establishing good discipline at school, especially parents. Likewise, Skiba and Losen (2015), emphasized the important role of educators in collaborating with families and other parties. As Skiba and Losen (2015) state, "Together, these developments represent a fundamental sea change toward more effective and equitable school discipline, one that holds promise for reducing the loss of educational opportunity and increasing the likelihood of safe and healthy learning environments for all students" (p. 11). Parental engagement in SWPBIS implementation not only helps prevent problem behavior, but it also promotes successful academic outcomes for students.

Sackey, Amaniampong, and Abrokwa (2016) concluded in their study the importance of collaboration between teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members to solve student behavior problems. They further suggested that teachers should model good behavior to students and teach behavioral expectations, procedures, and rules to students and parents. Schools should increase parent participation by including parents or guardians on the SWPBIS implementation team to share experience and knowledge and form strong partnerships (Flannery et al., 2010; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008; US DOE, 2014; Warren et al., 2003).

**Support from administration.** Administrative support and active engagement are important components of effective school discipline (Flannery et al., 2010; P. Short et al., 1994; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Flannery et al. (2010), pointed out that "The principal has the role of establishing the learning climate, hiring and supporting personnel, and modeling instructional leadership. The principal can use the SWPBS framework to establish a positive school climate and support students and staff members" (p. 39). By establishing a clear vision, outlining goals

for discipline improvement, and fostering communication with teachers, the principal can facilitate the process of SWPBIS implementation in school.

Several studies revealed the significant responsibility a principal plays in fostering a culture of change by communicating regularly with staff, sharing data and asking teachers' input, especially, if they are actively involved in SWPBIS implementation (Combs & Martin, 2011; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). In addition, teachers need time to learn about SWPBIS and understand the value of making changes that are consistent with SWPBIS successful adoption. As Flannery et al. (2010) noted, "The exploration period may take up to a year, and principals can create opportunities for staff members to engage in conversations about change" (p. 40). More importantly, principals should help teachers understand the importance of the schoolwide behavioral program implementation for improving academics and school climate (Flannery et al., 2010).

**Staff support.** It is a challenge for teachers to change their current discipline practice to SWPBIS (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016). New initiatives are usually faced with the staff resistance; therefore, seeking staff support is crucial in successful SWPBIS implementation (Feuerborn et al., 2013; Lohrmann et al., 2008; Warren et al., 2003). However, some school staff members do not believe in positive reinforcements and acknowledgements of appropriate behavior and do not teach behavioral expectations to students (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). In fact, SWPBIS leadership teams are concerned about staff support and inconsistency in implementing SWPBIS (Feuerborn et al., 2016).

Prior research confirms the belief about a strong relationship between teacher views about discipline and successful school discipline implementation (Feuerborn, Tyre, & Beaudoin,

2018; P. Short et al.,1994). Teachers have different beliefs about school discipline; therefore, administrators should take this into account when implementing a new discipline program (Short et al., 1994). Teachers with a positive attitude toward managing student behavior are able to implement SWPBIS successfully (Ross et al., 2012).

Much attention has been drawn to shared vision and values to achieve a common purpose. As Short et al. (1994) indicated, “The crucial key to an effective total school discipline program is shared values among students, teachers, parents, and administrators about what is acceptable, appropriate behavior in the particular school setting” (p. 13). McKevitt and Braaksma (2008) stated that “Schools that have less than 80% of staff committed may experience difficulties with implementation, sustainability, and effectiveness” (p. 437). Therefore, more than 80% of teachers in a school should be committed to SWPBIS implementation in order to ensure the program’s successful implementation.

**School policy.** In their report, the US Department of Education and Department of Justice discussed the excessive number of school suspensions and emphasizes the importance of training teachers with the skills to manage behavior (US DOE, 2014). Consequently, the US Department of Education and the Department of Justice (2014) emphasized the following:

The widespread overuse of suspensions and expulsions has tremendous costs. Students who are suspended or expelled from school may be unsupervised during daytime hours and cannot benefit from great teaching, positive peer interactions, and adult mentorship offered in class and in school. Suspending students also often fails to help them develop the skills and strategies they need to improve their behavior and avoid future problems.

(p. ii)



One strategy to reduce suspensions and expulsions in schools is to teach appropriate discipline rules to students and consistently enforce the policies (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Flynn, Lissy, Alicea, Tazartes, & McKay, 2016; Schachter, 2010; Thapa et al., 2012). The purpose of the rules at school is to protect students and all staff; therefore, breaking rules may result in not only behavioral problems, but school safety issues, injuries, and bullying. For this reason, as indicated by Short et al. (1994), “Rules, procedures, and policies should be carefully explained to students. There should be consistency in behavioral expectations both in and out of the classroom as well as among classrooms” (p. 12). School staff should be consistent in teaching behavioral expectations to all students in school and should regularly remind students about school discipline rules and procedures to improve student behavior.

Not only school personnel, but families and community members should also be involved in the discipline policy decision-making process (Green et al., 2015; US DOE, 2014). The US Department of Education and Department of Justice (2014) stressed that:

To effectively develop and implement these policies, schools should involve families as partners to the greatest extent possible. For example, families, along with students and staff, should be involved in the development and review of the school’s discipline policy, schools should regularly communicate with families, including about specific disciplinary incidents, and schools should ensure transparency about the school’s behavior expectations and discipline policies and procedures. (p. 3)

Parents should be aware of behavioral issues in school and join the SWPBIS implementation team to be actively involved in school decisions regarding new discipline

policies and procedures, and to provide input, which will reduce problem behavior in school.

Families are also encouraged to teach behavioral expectations to their children at home.

**Staff development.** Professional development has gained much importance in recent years. According to research, “School-wide Positive Behavior Support offers a systemic solution but because the philosophies and skills depart from the traditional reactive, punitive practices, educators need professional development in order to change the paradigm” (Marchant, Christensen, Womack, Conley, & Fisher, 2010, p. 44). Scott, Nelson, & Zabala (2003) indicated that training can help individuals understand a new initiative better and provide with support through explanation, standards, patterns, and models.

Training is necessary for everyone engaged in shifting to SWPBIS to ensure an easy change process (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; McKeivitt & Braaksma, 2008; Mizell, 2010; Reglin, Akro-Sanni, & Losike-Sedimo, 2012). A wide range of resources, trainings and other support are necessary for staff to effectively implement and sustain SWPBIS program in schools (Feuerborn et al., 2013). The US Department of Education emphasized the following:

Finally, to effectively implement a schoolwide behavior program and create a safe and positive school climate, schools should provide professional development and training opportunities for all staff, including principals, teachers, school support staff, and, if present on campus, school-based law enforcement officers. This training should include clear guidance on how to engage students, promote positive behavior, and respond appropriately—and consistently with any staff member’s role—if students misbehave.

(US DOE, 2014, p. 3)

Algozzine et al. (2010) also stressed that “High quality implementation of PBS programs begins with professional development and focused support” (p. 3). Unfortunately, many school staff lack the experience of managing school discipline and implementing SWPBIS effectively (Sugai & Horner, 2006). In reality, as Greenspan (2013) stated, “teachers coming out of our combined B.A./M.A. program were receiving almost no training in behavior-management techniques or concepts” (p. 1). Likewise, Merrett and Wheldall (1993) noted that teachers lack readiness to manage discipline at school and their concern about behavior management as they were not equipped with the knowledge and skills. As concluded by Short et al. (1994), “Without such training, it may be easier to resort to force and corporal punishment as a behavior control strategy” (p. 90). Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to get training in SWPBIS to ensure the successful implementation of the program in schools.

Another key point is the necessity for teachers to learn about normal child behavior and development in teacher preparation programs (Stavinoha & Au, 2015). It can be helpful for teachers to learn about students’ physical, emotional, social, and behavioral changes in order to better understand students’ behavior at different stages of the development and be able to teach them effective social skills so that they can communicate with teachers and peers successfully.

On the positive side, teachers seek to obtain training on discipline (Brown & Payne, 1988). Based on the results of the survey, teachers in the United States expressed an interest in classroom management professional development due to their lack of knowledge and skills to manage behavior in classrooms (Wei et al., 2009). According to the United States Department of Education (2014), “As part of a school’s ongoing training for staff, schools should equip them with the skills and strategies to reinforce appropriate behaviors and respond to student

misconduct fairly and equitably” (p. 4). With this in mind, administrators should organize trainings for teachers with an opportunity for them to express their concerns, share effective strategies, exchange ideas, and work together as a team to create a successful SWPBIS implementation plan for their school.

In fact, collaboration in US schools is limited, and there are not sufficient professional learning opportunities compared to other countries in the world (Boardman, Arguelles, & Vaughn, 2005; Wei et al., 2009). Surprisingly, teachers in Europe and Asia have an opportunity to collaborate to improve their instruction during working hours (Wei et al., 2009). Wei and others recommend that schools in the United States also allow for professional development during the school day.

It is advised to build SWPBIS trainings into the school day. High school teachers have difficulties finding time to meet and discuss issues and share success on SWPBIS implementation (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013). Notably, professional development is built into teachers’ working time in other countries (Wei et al., 2009). For example, as analyzed by Wei et al. (2009), teachers in the United States spend “about 80% of their total working time teaching students as compared to about 60% for teachers in these other nations, who thus have much more time to plan and learn together, and to develop high-quality curriculum and instruction” (p. 20). Consequently, it will be beneficial for teachers in the United States to have more time to collaborate with other teachers and to share experiences and effective strategies, which can contribute to student academic and social success.

The role of administration is vital in SWPBIS implementation. For instance, principals should emphasize the goals of training and regularly organize small targeted trainings instead of

long in-service days, which could be a burden for teachers (Bohanon et al., 2012; Marchant et al., 2010). According to Bohanon and Wu (2014), “focused professional development allows school personnel to identify their school’s own specific needs and connect SWPBS with their goals” (p. 224). In the high school context, leadership teams should provide more internal and focused trainings to staff (Bohanon et al., 2012). Traditional SWPBIS trainings are not sufficient; trainings focused on specific skills are necessary (Sugai & Horner, 2006).

The PBIS leadership team’s role is to continually plan and organize professional development for school personnel. However, PBIS teams do not always examine teachers’ needs, knowledge and beliefs before they plan professional development for staff (Feuerborn et al., 2013). Feuerborn et al. (2013) suggested that “teams consider the unique perspectives of staff and adjust professional development and supports more precisely. This approach may allow meeting the needs of staff both more effectively and more efficiently” (p. 28). Also, administrative teams should consistently follow up with teachers, provide constructive feedback on their discipline management practice, and offer effective techniques to sustain SWPBIS (Guskey, 2000; Marchant et al., 2010; McKeivitt & Braaksma, 2008; Short et al., 1994; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Wood, Goodnight, Bethune, Preston, & Cleaver, 2016).

Ongoing support and training have a positive impact on managing school behavior (Reinke et al., 2013). Fabiano et al. (2013) states, “professional development approaches that are effective in encouraging teachers to use recommended strategies in these areas are likely to have positive outcomes for students in such classrooms, and they are logical targets for professional development efforts” (p. 452). Mizell (2010) believes professional development for teachers plays an important role in facilitating instruction and managing school discipline. In addition,

teachers should be able to get a technical assistance in school from a PBIS facilitator (Howard et al., 2004). Overall, participating in training brings positive outcomes to both students and staff (Fukkink & Lont, 2007; Norris, 2001).

The results of several studies about SWPBIS professional development demonstrated increased teacher confidence and skills (Marchant et al., 2010; Norris, 2001). Losen (2015) recommended, “policymakers can see that sustained teacher training programs that help close the school discipline gap are not only real and viable but also can contribute to improved academic outcomes” (p. 177). In fact, after one year of training program implementation, the students of SWPBIS trained teachers had better scores on the tests than students of nontrained teachers (Losen, 2015).

In conclusion, Guskey (2003) highlighted that “Educators at all levels value opportunities to work together, reflect on their practices, exchange ideas, and share strategies” (p. 749). Although professional development requires time and good organization, it is crucial for teachers and parents to learn positive behavior management skills and practice them at home and school (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

### **PBIS Implementation in High Schools**

There is a limited research on the SWPBIS implementation in high schools as opposed to elementary schools (Bradshaw et al., 2015). In fact, few schools are using it: “According to data reported to the OSEP PBIS Technical Assistance Center, we know that PBIS is being implemented in 3138 high schools across 35 states, representing approximately 7% of total U.S. high schools” (Freeman, Wilkinson, & Vanlone, 2016, p. 9). Feuerborn et al. (2013) state the failure of numerous schools to implement SWPBIS with fidelity. Although the discipline

program may be successful in elementary and middle schools, it is quite challenging to implement SWPBIS in high schools (Flannery, Fenning et al., 2013).

Compared to elementary school teachers' focus on improving classroom behavior, creating a positive climate, and building strong relationships with students, secondary teachers place more value on instruction in content areas and student achievement (Gregory, Allen, Mikami, Hafen, & Pianta, 2013). Feuerborn et al. (2016) concluded:

Whereas teachers in elementary schools are more apt to view teaching social and behavioral expectations as a natural part of their role, teachers in middle and high schools tend to place increasing responsibility on students to manage their own behavior without supports. (p. 219)

In fact, some high school teachers reported it was not their responsibility to teach behavioral expectations to students (Flannery, Fenning et al., 2013). However, teaching students problem-solving skills and social skills can affect student emotional well-being in a positive way. For this purpose, as Wilson (2015) indicated, "Combining acceptance and mindfulness-based interventions into a PBIS model may assist educators in reaching students in a new and radical way" (p. 94). In addition to conducting lessons, teachers have a variety of duties and responsibilities, which they need to perform before and after school. Considering these obligations, principals can offer teachers incentives to participate in SWPBIS planning and implementation, such as extra pay or extra planning time (Flannery et al., 2010).

Feuerborn et al. (2016) emphasized that "A lack of support from teachers can stymie the change efforts of any school, but it may be more problematic in middle and high schools due to the complexities typical of middle and high school settings" (p. 219). According to Bohanon et

al. (2012), one of the reasons for the slower rate of SWPBIS implementation in high schools is that they are often complex organizations, with large campuses and many staff members, which creates difficulty in communicating, scheduling meetings, and reaching agreement. Since high schools are large and complex organizations involving different staff and departments, it will naturally take a longer time to implement SWPBIS (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009; Flannery, Frank et al., 2013; Howard et al., 2004).

The findings of the study conducted in eight high schools demonstrated that SWPBIS implementation takes longer in high schools, approximately two years total (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013). The study also reflected the period of almost one year to obtain staff support and develop an implementation plan, as compared with elementary and middle schools where a full SWPBIS implementation is reached faster (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013).

The principal's support is another important point in effective SWPBIS implementation in high schools (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Flannery et al., 2010). Feuerborn, Tyre, and King (2015) underlined support for SWPBIS from administration as key for teacher support of SWPBIS implementation in their high schools. Notably, Flannery et al. (2010) stated, "In successful high schools, the team has used a distributed leadership model with sub teams focused on specific areas of need, such as communication, data, or acknowledgements" (p. 40). Furthermore, Flannery, Frank et al. (2013) noted that the implementation of SWPBIS in high schools typically involves several administrators who may have different philosophical views about discipline and different perceptions regarding SWPBIS.

Resistance to change and lack of teacher support are some other challenging factors for program implementation in the high school setting. According to Lohrmann et al. (2008),



“Resistance is simply a reality of current social and organizational conditions in education. It represents people’s fears, concerns, and skepticism about yet another new initiative” (p. 267). Teachers may expect high school students to know appropriate behavior and often find teaching these skills directly as outside of their responsibility (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013; Flannery et al., 2014; Howard et al., 2004; Putnam et al., 2009). However, as Flannery et al. (2014) indicated, “the direct teaching of expected behaviors may be a necessary element of effective SW-PBIS implementation in high schools as in other settings” (p. 113). The problem is that it is difficult to persuade high school teachers to focus on discipline as well as content area (Bohanon et al., 2006). Feuerborn et al. (2015) attributed that problem to high school teachers’ belief that student behavior can only be changed at home and not in school.

### **Staff Perceptions Regarding SWPBIS**

A new initiative is always faced with the staff resistance to change, which ultimately can impede the realization of any promising program (Feuerborn et al., 2015). According to Feuerborn et al. (2015), “To fully bridge the research to practice gap and help bring SWPBS to scale, it may be just as important to understand the concerns, needs, and insights of the very people we are asking to change” (Feuerborn et al., 2015, p. 125). Thus, as Feuerborn et al. (2015) state, “Shifting from a traditional model of discipline to SWPBS requires a substantial change in the practices of staff, and obtaining full staff support and commitment to SWPBS can be a challenging endeavor” (p. 116). Feuerborn et al. (2013) emphasized the importance of staff perceptions and support in the successful implementation of the SWPBIS.

It is important to take into account all stakeholders’ concerns, perspectives, input, and beliefs when implementing new initiative - SWPBIS. As teachers are the ones who work closely

with students, they need intensive training and constructive feedback (Feuerborn et al., 2013; Feuerborn et al., 2016; Tillery, Varias, Meyers, & Collins, 2010). However, leadership team does not gather information from teachers regarding their views on the program as there was no tool available to understand teachers' perceptions (Feuerborn et al., 2015). Instead, as Feuerborn et al. (2016) noted, "Teacher concerns and needs are not well understood, and the function of their resistance to SWPBS is unknown" (p. 220). Even though this new initiative may have a positive impact on student behavior and academic performance, not all teachers support the program (Feuerborn et al., 2016).

### **SWPBIS Evaluation Tools**

Only few tools are available to evaluate the SWPBIS implementation progress. School-wide evaluation tool (SET), for example, measures the effectiveness of the SWPBIS implementation (Algozzine et al., 2010; Horner et al., 2004). According to Todd et al. (2012), "Its intended use is in conjunction with other measures to create a multi-perspective of school status of SW-PBIS. For example, combining SET results with office discipline referral patterns, staff survey results, safety surveys, team checklist information, etc. is encouraged" (p. 1). However, SET data are gathered by one evaluator who randomly chooses staff and students for an interview (Howard et al., 2004). Since SET is not offered to all teachers at school, the true perceptions of teachers about SWPBIS implementation are unclear. Consequently, the data on all staff perceptions regarding SWPBIS realization and sustainability are needed, especially in secondary school settings. Collecting data and continuous assessment are encouraged during each stage of SWPBIS implementation (Feuerborn et al., 2015).

Studies reveal the difficulty to implement SWPBIS in secondary schools (Flannery, Fenning et al., 2013; Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009; Howard et al., 2004). In their study of schools that had implemented SWPBIS, Feuerborn et al. (2013) highlighted that “high school behavior leadership teams rated staff commitment or buy-in to SWPBS as one of their most salient challenges and top priorities. In fact, only 30% of team members reported that they obtained a majority of staff support for implementation” (p. 27). Similarly, Feuerborn et al. (2015) noted that the lack of teacher support and knowledge of SWPBIS effective strategies were factors preventing successful implementation of the program in high schools.

A recent study conducted by Feuerborn et al. (2015) presented a new survey instrument, the Staff Perceptions of Behavior and Discipline (SPBD), which was designed to provide the leadership team with the information about staff views, beliefs, and concerns on SWPBIS. According to Feuerborn et al. (2015), “The SPBD shows promise as a tool to assist teams in making data-driven decisions for staff supports as they plan for and implement SWPBS” (p. 124). The findings from the SPBD can help PBIS leadership teams organize training for staff based on their needs and concerns (Feuerborn et al., 2015). The results also revealed that teachers in elementary schools had more positive views regarding PBIS than teachers in secondary schools, who preferred punishment strategies in dealing with the discipline (Feuerborn et al., 2015; Flannery, Frank et al., 2013). However, teachers with more training on SWPBIS expressed more positive views on behavior than those who received little or no training (Feuerborn et al., 2015). To conclude, the results of the survey showed that secondary teachers found SWPBIS implementation more challenging than elementary school teachers (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2016).

**Summary**

The literature reviewed for this study reveals that a shift towards more positive discipline prevails in elementary schools, unlike secondary schools, where teachers tend to use punishment-based disciplinary approaches. In addition, it is more challenging and takes more time to implement the SWPBIS program in high school settings due to the schools' larger size, students' age and developmental stage, a lack of staff support, and other factors. Therefore, it is crucial to gather data on teachers' perceptions regarding SWPBIS in high schools and provide ongoing professional development to successfully implement and sustain SWPBIS.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to examine Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program to manage student behavior successfully in their schools (grades 9-12).

The study reports factors of successful SWPBIS implementation, as defined by Horner et al. and McKevitt and Braaksma, that teachers believed were present in their schools. The results of the study also reveal major factors and barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation and provide recommendations to high school administrators and SWPBIS leadership teams on improving and sustaining the program in high schools. The findings of the study contribute to existing research on SWPBIS implementation in high schools.

Chapter 3 describes the research questions, participants, research design, instrument for data collection, data analysis, and procedures and timeline.

#### **Research Questions**

The study examined the following research questions:

1. What did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) report as successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools?
2. How did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) rate the implementation of SWPBIS in their schools?
3. What five key factors did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify of successful implementation of SWPBIS?
4. What five key barriers did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify to successful implementation of SWPBIS?

## **Participants**

The record of 199 school districts that completed a two-year SWPBIS cohort training in the state of Minnesota was accessed on the Minnesota PBIS website (Minnesota PBIS, n.d.). These schools were grouped into 14 cohorts and divided into three regions: southern, northern and metro. Each cohort indicates the year when schools started their two-year SWPBIS training. For example, Cohort one started their two-year SWPBIS training in 2005, while Cohort 14 started the training in 2018.

Of all participating high schools in SWPBIS in Minnesota (Cohorts 1-14, 112 high schools total), the researcher selected schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. A convenience sampling technique was used because the subjects of the study were in close geographical proximity and were willing to participate in the research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). As a result, 45 potential high schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area were identified for the study.

The sample population was narrowed by the number of years of SWPBIS implementation after a two-year training on SWPBIS. According to the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) developed by Horner et al. (2004) and a case study of 12 high schools done by Flannery et al. (2014), no significant results were found in the first year of SWPBIS implementation. Similarly, the findings of another study conducted in eight high schools demonstrated that SWPBIS implementation takes longer in high schools, approximately, two years total (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013). Therefore, the researcher only selected schools using SWPBIS longer than two years for the study to better evaluate program implementation.

The schools for the study were selected from the list of high schools in Cohort 1-10 (18 schools total) that had completed a two-year SWPBIS training. According to Algozzine et al. (2010), “Schools adopting SWPBS typically receive 2-3 years of training, technical assistance, and coaching support” (p. 8). Schools from Cohort 11, 12, 13, and 14 were not selected for the study because they were either in the initial stage of SWPBIS implementation or still participating in training on SWPBIS.

In addition, the representative sample was narrowed to only public schools (grades 9-12). Alternative learning centers, magnet, charter, and immersion schools were excluded from the study. An email with a detailed description of the research and benefits to participating schools was sent to superintendents and principals of the selected 18 schools with the request to participate in the study (see Appendix A).

Of 18 schools contacted, five volunteered to participate, three declined, five failed to respond to multiple emails, and five never implemented the program with fidelity according to the principals. The study on PBIS implementation conducted in 1668 high schools in 34 states in the United States explained the lack of implementation of the program with fidelity in some schools and concluded that “depending upon the fidelity measure being used, between 23% and 69% of schools reporting are meeting fidelity” (Freeman et al., 2016, p. 9).

Five schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area supported the participation in the study. Four were large schools with student populations over 1000, and one was a small school with over 500 students. A total of 470 potential teachers were identified for the study, and all five participating schools have been using SWPBIS for over two years.

After obtaining permission from both the superintendent and principals, the link to the survey was emailed to teachers with the request to complete a survey. The administrators of the five participating schools sent two reminders to teachers to complete the survey before the deadline (see Appendix B). The survey was sent to 470 teachers, and 187 teachers participated in the survey, which is a 39.8% response rate. Out of 187 teachers, 144 respondents completed 13 questions out of 15 total (a 30.6% response rate), 140 respondents completed 14 questions out of 15 total (a 29.8% response rate), and 133 respondents completed all 15 questions of the survey (a 28.3% response rate). Incomplete surveys were not included in the data analysis.

### **Human Subject Approval—Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

The researcher completed Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program courses and met all the requirements from the Human Subject Approval-Institutional Review Board to conduct a study on teachers' perceptions regarding SWPBIS implementation in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12). The study received IRB approval at St. Cloud State University (see Appendix C). The anonymity of all participants was protected. All respondents were provided a detailed description of the study and an implied consent form (see Appendix D) to participate in the study.

### **Research Design**

The researcher used a quantitative design to conduct a study on the implementation of SWPBIS in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. As defined by Creswell (2014), "Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures" (p. 4).



Quantitative research measures different variables, such as internal states: attitudes, values, beliefs (Bernard, 2006).

An online survey with a Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree was used to collect quantitative data on teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of SWPBIS in high schools. Creswell (2014) noted, "Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 13). Therefore, the study findings provide insight about attitudes of a larger population of high school teachers towards SWPBIS implementation by examining teachers' opinions in a sample population in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument was designed to gather teachers' perceptions regarding SWPBIS implementation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. The survey was developed based on the seven key practices of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner and his colleagues (2004):

1. Define 3 to 5 school-wide expectations for appropriate behavior.
2. Actively teach the school-wide behavioral expectations to all students.
3. Monitor and acknowledge students for engaging in behavioral expectations.
4. Correct problem behaviors using a consistently administered continuum of behavioral consequences.
5. Gather and use information about student behavior to evaluate and guide decision-making.
6. Obtain leadership of school-wide practices from an administrator who

- a. establishes a team to develop, implement, and manage the school-wide behavior support effort in a school;
  - b. serves as a member of the team;
  - c. allocates sufficient time to implement behavior support procedures; and
  - d. allocates school-wide behavior as one of the top three improvement goals for the school.
7. Obtain district-level support in the form of
- a. training in school-wide behavior support practices,
  - b. policies emphasizing the expectations that schools are safe and organized for effective learning, and
  - c. expectation that information on problem behavior patterns be gathered and reported. (p. 4)

In addition, the survey included the following key components for a successful implementation of SWPBIS determined by Brian McKevitt and Angelisa Braaksma (2008):

1. PBIS implementation team
2. staff support
3. school policy
4. staff development
5. families and community members
6. SWPBIS sustainability

SurveyMonkey was used as an online tool to gather data (see Appendix F). Online surveys save researchers time in collecting data and are simple for respondents to complete at their convenience (Evans & Mathur, 2005). According to Evans and Mathur (2005):

Online surveys can be constructed so that the respondent must answer a question before advancing to the next question or completing the survey, and so that instructions are followed properly (such as providing only one answer to a question). This eliminates item non-response and the necessity to throw out answers that been entered improperly. (p. 200)

Therefore, forced responses on all questions were implemented in the survey to make sure that respondents did not leave any questions unanswered.

The instrument contained 15 questions. The rating scale measured agreement to the statements in the survey via four choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. *Not applicable* was not included as an option in the survey because “Doing so requires no retrieval or judgement, so it would constitute a form of strong satisficing” (Krosnick, 1991, p. 219). The term *satisficing* was introduced by an American economist Herbert Simon (1956) as the choice an individual makes to reach the goal: “a path that will permit satisfaction at some specified level of all of its needs” (p. 9). However, as noted by Callebaut (2007), “that is not guaranteed to be either unique or ‘the best’ in the sense of a global optimum in mainstream rational choice theory” (p. 77). Moreover, satisficing will only give a researcher unreliable data.

The survey items were pilot tested for clarity with 15 high school teachers not involved in the study. After respondents’ feedback, changes to the instrument were made to improve the survey (see Appendix E). The approximate time to complete the survey was from 5 to 7 minutes.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative research includes variables to measure the results of the study and to learn about a large population when investigating a sample population (Martin & Bridgmon, 2012). Data collected from the online survey were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. According to Loeb et al. (2017), “A range of empirical techniques supports effective descriptive analyses. Simple statistics that describe central tendencies and variation (for example, means, medians, and modes) are the most common tools of descriptive work and can be very helpful for describing data...” (p. 6).

The statistical analysis of the data was completed at the Statistical Consulting and Research Center at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software platform. Basic descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and identify patterns among high school teachers’ perceptions in relation to the SWPBIS implementation. Loeb et al. (2017) emphasized:

The goal of quantitative description is not deep understanding of personal perspectives of a phenomenon, but a more general understanding of patterns across a population of interest. Quantitative descriptive analysis characterizes the world or a phenomenon by identifying patterns in data to answer questions about who, what, where, when, and to what extent. (p. 1)

In the statistical analysis of the data, Cronbach’s alpha was used as an index of reliability to measure the internal consistency of the instrument. According to Bland and Altman (1997), the acceptable numerical value of alpha ranges from 0.7 to 0.95, which means the scale has a good reliability. An alpha value of the survey (.898) was in the acceptable numerical range,

which showed the accuracy in the measurement of teachers' perceptions regarding SWPBIS implementation and the correlation of the survey items with each other.

### **Procedures and Timeline**

In early January 2019, the researcher contacted the administrators of 18 potential high schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area with the request to participate in the study, but only five administrators supported the participation of their schools in the study. An email with a detailed description of the study and benefits to PBIS leadership teams was sent to the superintendent and building principal of each participating school.

A link to the survey was sent to all teachers in five schools (470 teachers total) at the end of January 2019. The survey contained the implied consent to participate in the study, a detailed description of the study, and the researcher's contact information.

Two reminder emails were sent one week apart by the administrator of each participating school to teachers with the request to complete the survey before the deadline, March 1, 2019.

In early March 2019, the data were processed and analyzed in the Statistical Consulting and Research Center at St. Cloud State University using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software platform.

### **Summary**

This chapter comprises the methodology of the quantitative study on the teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12). The chapter described participants, research design, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, procedures and timeline. Chapter 4 provides the results of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is a positive school discipline program employed by schools to improve student behavior and academic performance (Sugai & Horner, 2002). While thousands of schools in the United States are using this program, high schools are facing challenges in SWPBIS implementation and sustainability over time as compared to elementary and middle schools (Flannery et al., 2014). As the Literature Review chapter showed, less research exists on SWPBIS implementation in high schools and teachers' perceptions of SWPBIS (Flannery, Fenning et al., 2013).

This study examined the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' beliefs regarding SWPBIS implementation in their schools. The study also reported factors high school teachers believed contributed to successful SWPBIS implementation and barriers teachers believed prevented successful SWPBIS implementation.

Chapter 4 reports demographic and descriptive findings of the study organized by the research questions. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software platform with assistance from the Statistical Center at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Cronbach's alpha value of the survey was .898, which showed good reliability and internal consistency of the instrument. The acceptable numerical value of Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.7 to 0.95 to indicate the scale has a good reliability (Bland & Altman, 1997).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high

school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program to manage student behavior successfully in their schools (grades 9-12).

### **Research Questions**

The study examined the following research questions:

1. What did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) report as successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools?
2. How did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) rate the implementation of SWPBIS in their schools?
3. What five key factors did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify of successful implementation of SWPBIS?
4. What five key barriers did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify to successful implementation of SWPBIS?

### **Description of the Sample**

The record of 199 school districts that completed a two-year SWPBIS cohort training in the state of Minnesota was accessed through the Minnesota PBIS website (Minnesota PBIS, n.d.). All schools from that list were grouped into 14 cohorts and divided into three regions: southern, northern and metro. Each cohort indicates the year when schools started their two-year SWPBIS training. For example, Cohort one started their two-year SWPBIS training in 2005 when Cohort 14 started the training in 2018.

Of all Minnesota high schools participating in SWPBIS (Cohorts 1-14, 112 high schools total), the researcher selected schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. A convenience sampling technique was used because the subjects of the study were in close

geographical proximity and were willing to participate in the research (Etikan et al., 2016). As a result, 45 potential high schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area were identified for the study.

The sample population was narrowed down to those schools that had a minimum of two years of SWPBIS implementation after the two-year SWPBIS training period. According to studies on SWPBIS in high school settings, SWPBIS implementation takes approximately two years in high schools (Horner et al., 2004). Therefore, the schools for the study were selected from the list of high schools in Cohort 1-10 (18 schools total) which had completed a two-year SWPBIS training and had been using the program for more than two years. Alternative learning centers, magnet, charter, and immersion schools were excluded from the study, and the representative sample was narrowed to only public schools (grades 9-12).

An email with a detailed description of the research and potential benefits to participating schools was sent to superintendents of 18 schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area (see Appendix A). After receiving support from the superintendent, an email was sent to the building principal of each school with the request to participate in the study. After sending multiple emails to principals, five schools agreed to participate in the study. These five schools had a total of 470 teachers who could participate in the survey.

The administrators of the five participating schools sent the survey link to teachers with the request to complete a survey. The administrators also sent two reminders to teachers to complete the survey before the deadline (see Appendix B). After the Survey Monkey link was sent to 470 teachers in five schools, 187 teachers participated in the survey, which is a 39.8% response rate. Out of 187 teachers who participated in the survey, 144 respondents (77%)



answered 13 questions in full out of 15 questions total, 140 respondents (74.8%) answered 14 questions out of 15 total, and 133 respondents (71%) completed all 15 questions of the survey. Thus, 144 responses for the survey questions 1-13 were used to answer research question one and two. One hundred and forty responses for the survey question 14 were used to answer research question three, and 133 responses for the survey question 15 were used to answer research question four.

### **Research Method and Instrument**

A quantitative design was used for the research method to conduct a study on the implementation of SWPBIS in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. Quantitative research measures different variables, such as internal states: attitudes, values, and beliefs; and analyzes statistical data (Bernard, 2006). The study provides insights about a larger population of high school teachers on SWPBIS implementation by examining the opinions of a sample population of teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools.

An online survey was used as a quantitative method to collect data for the study. It was a 15-question perception survey designed to gather feedback about teachers' perceptions of the SWPBIS implementation in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. The researcher developed survey questions based on the key practices of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner and his colleagues (2004): setting and teaching school-wide behavioral expectations, monitoring and correcting student behavior, gathering discipline data, and obtaining district and school leadership support; and also based on the key components for a successful implementation of SWPBIS determined by Brian McKevitt and Angelisa Braaksma (2008): creating a PBIS implementation team, obtaining staff support, instituting clear school

policies, offering staff development, engaging families and community members, and achieving SWPBIS sustainability.

Teachers were asked to respond to the first 13 questions using a 4-point Likert scale. In survey question 14, respondents were asked to choose top five factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools. In survey question 15, respondents were asked to choose top five barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools.

### **Data Analysis**

The responses for each question were gathered and analyzed with descriptive statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software platform with assistance from the Statistical Center at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Only valid responses were included in the data analysis: 144 responses to answer research question one and two, 140 responses to answer research question three, and 133 responses to answer research question four.

In the statistical analysis of the data, Cronbach's alpha was used as an index of reliability to measure the internal consistency of the instrument. According to Bland and Altman (1997), the acceptable numerical value of alpha ranges from 0.7 to 0.95, which means the results have a good reliability. The alpha value of the survey (.898) was in the acceptable numerical range, which showed the accuracy in the measurement of teachers' perceptions regarding SWPBIS implementation and the correlation of the survey items with each other.

The results of the survey questions 1 through 12 present teachers reported successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools based on key features of successful SWPBIS implementation as defined by Horner et al. (2004) and McKeivitt and Braaksma (2008).

The results of the survey question 13 report the overall rating of the SWPBIS implementation based on the teachers' perceptions. Respondents answered questions 1 through 13 using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). In the survey question 14, respondents selected the top 5 factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools. In the survey question 15, respondents selected the top five barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation.

### Demographic Results

Demographic information on participating schools was accessed through the Minnesota PBIS website (Minnesota PBIS, n.d.). Teachers in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) in the state of Minnesota, who completed a two-year training sequence on SWPBIS and had been using the program for over two years, were surveyed. Demographic information including the cohort number of each high school, the years of their two-year cohort training, the number of SWPBIS implementation years, and total number of teachers who could participate in the study is reported in Table 1.

Table 1

#### *Demographic Information on Study Schools*

School	Cohort	Two-year training cycle	SWPBIS implementation years as of March 2019	Teachers
1	4	2008-2010	9 years	174
2	6	2010-2012	7 years	100
3	7	2011-2013	6 years	60
4	9	2013-2015	4 years	100
5	10	2014-2016	3 years	36

The cohort number is associated with the year the schools entered their two-year

SWPBIS training cycle. The total number of potential high school teachers who could participate in the study was 470 in all five schools. The table also shows total number of SWPBIS implementation years, which ranges between three and nine years.

## **Descriptive Results**

**Research question one.** *What did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) report as successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools?*

Research question one was designed to measure high school teachers' perceptions of the success of SWPBIS implementation in their schools based on the key practices of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner and his colleagues (2004) and McKevitt and Braaksma (2008). The following are key practices defined by Horner et al. (2004): setting and teaching school-wide behavioral expectations, monitoring and correcting student behavior, gathering discipline data, obtaining district and school leadership support. The following are key practices defined by McKevitt and Braaksma (2008): creating a PBIS implementation team, obtaining staff support, instituting clear school policies, offering staff development, engaging families and community members, and achieving SWPBIS sustainability.

The key features of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al. (2004) and McKevitt and Braaksma (2008) are reflected in the first twelve perception survey questions. The findings for research question one are based on the responses of 144 teachers who answered 1-12. Perception survey questions 1-12 asked the participants to rate their perceptions by choosing one of the four options: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The results reported in the tables use frequency counts and percentages.

Table 2

*Teachers' Knowledge of SWPBIS and Training*

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	M (SD)
I have an in-depth knowledge of the appropriate behavior expectations in our school.	49 (34.03%)	86 (59.72%)	6 (4.17%)	3 (2.08%)	3 (0.63)
I have had training on SWPBIS.	25 (17.36%)	76 (52.78%)	32 (22.22%)	11 (7.64%)	3 (0.82)
I have become more confident in dealing with student discipline since the implementation of SWPBIS in our school.	12 (8.33%)	66 (45.83%)	53 (36.81%)	13 (9.03%)	3 (0.77)

*Note.* n = 144. Scale: Strongly Agree (SA): 4, Agree (A): 3, Disagree (D): 2, Strongly Disagree (SD): 1.

As shown in Table 2, 135 respondents (93.7%) agreed or strongly agreed about their in-depth knowledge of the appropriate behavior expectations in their school while nine respondents (6.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. One hundred and one respondents (70.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had had training on SWPBIS while 43 respondents (29.8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Seventy-eight respondents (54.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had become more confident in dealing with student discipline since the implementation of SWPBIS in their school while 66 respondents (45.8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 3

*Teachers' Commitment to SWPBIS and Support*

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	M (SD)
I teach behavioral expectations to my students on a regular basis.	38 (26.39%)	94 (65.28%)	11 (7.64%)	1 (0.69%)	3 (0.58)
I support SWPBIS in my school.	48 (33.33%)	88 (61.11%)	4 (2.78%)	4 (2.78%)	3 (0.64)
I reward students for following behavioral expectations.	21 (14.58%)	97 (67.36%)	25 (17.36%)	1 (0.69%)	3 (0.59)
I believe teachers in our school are regularly taking actions to correct student problem behaviors.	21 (14.58%)	94 (65.28%)	27 (18.75%)	2 (1.39%)	3 (0.62)

*Note.* n = 144. Scale: Strongly Agree (SA): 4, Agree (A): 3, Disagree (D): 2, Strongly Disagree (SD): 1.

Table 3 presents the results of teachers' feedback on their commitment to and support of SWPBIS. One hundred and thirty-two respondents (91.7%) agreed or strongly agreed to teaching behavioral expectations to their students on a regular basis while 12 respondents (8.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. One hundred thirty-six respondents (94.4%) supported SWPBIS in their school while eight respondents (5.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. One hundred eighteen respondents (82%) rewarded students for following behavioral expectations while 26 respondents (18.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement about rewarding students. One hundred and fifteen respondents (79.9%) believed teachers in their school were regularly taking actions to correct student problem behaviors while 29 respondents (20.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 4

*School Discipline Data*

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	<i>M (SD)</i>
There is a system in place to document discipline data in our school.	47 (32.64%)	81 (56.25%)	13 (9.03%)	3 (2.08%)	3 (0.68)
Our SWPBIS leadership team regularly shares discipline data and provides feedback to teachers on their classroom discipline management.	33 (22.92%)	52 (36.11%)	44 (30.56%)	15 (10.42%)	3 (0.94)

*Note.* n = 144. Scale: Strongly Agree (SA): 4, Agree (A): 3, Disagree (D): 2, Strongly Disagree (SD): 1.

As shown in Table 4, 128 respondents (88.9%) believed there was a system in place to document discipline data in their school while 16 respondents (11.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighty-five respondents (59%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their SWPBIS leadership team regularly shared discipline data and provided feedback to teachers on their classroom discipline management while 59 respondents (41%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 5

*District/School Administration Support*

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	<i>M (SD)</i>
Our district/school administration provides feedback and communicates regularly about the progress of the SWPBIS implementation to teachers.	28 (19.44%)	70 (48.61%)	34 (23.61%)	12 (8.33%)	3 (0.85)
Our district/school administration provides ongoing training on SWPBIS to all staff in our school.	17 (11.81%)	65 (45.14%)	53 (36.81%)	9 (6.25%)	3 (0.77)

*Note.* n = 144. Scale: Strongly Agree (SA): 4, Agree (A): 3, Disagree (D): 2, Strongly Disagree (SD): 1.

As shown in Table 5, 98 respondents (68%) believed their district or school administration provided feedback to teachers and communicated regularly about the progress of the SWPBIS implementation while 46 respondents (31.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighty-two respondents (56.9%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement about their district/school administration providing ongoing training on SWPBIS to all staff while 62 respondents (43.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 6

*Families' Support of SWPBIS*

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	<i>M (SD)</i>
Families support SWPBIS in our school.	10	102	28	4	3
	(6.94%)	(70.83%)	(19.44%)	(2.78%)	(0.59)

(Note. n = 144. Scale: Strongly Agree (SA): 4, Agree (A): 3, Disagree (D): 2, Strongly Disagree (SD): 1.

As shown in Table 6, 112 respondents (77.7%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement about families supporting SWPBIS in their school while 32 respondents (22.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

The means of the statements in Tables 2-6 produce the overall rating of each statement in the survey using a 4-point Likert scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (4). Each statement received the rating of 3, which indicates the average of teachers' answers was 'agree' with all twelve statements in the survey. The findings for questions 1-12 in the survey revealed all respondents (100%) believed the factors of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al., McKeivitt and Braaksma were present in their schools.

**Research question two.** *How did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) rate the implementation of SWPBIS in their schools?*



The findings for research question two are based on the responses of 144 teachers who answered the survey question 13. The survey question 13 asked the participants to rate the success of SWPBIS implementation in their schools by choosing one of the four options: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The results are reported in Table 7 using frequency counts and percentages.

Table 7

*Teachers' Perception about Successful Implementation of SWPBIS*

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M (SD)
I believe our school has successfully implemented SWPBIS	20 (13.89%)	86 (59.72%)	29 (20.14%)	9 (6.25%)	3 (0.75)

*Note.* n = 144. Scale: Strongly Agree (SA): 4, Agree (A): 3, Disagree (D): 2, Strongly Disagree (SD): 1.

The highest percentage of the survey respondents (59.7 %) reported that teachers believed their school had successfully implemented SWPBIS while the lowest percentage of participants (6.3 %) strongly disagreed with the statement. Statistical analysis revealed that 106 respondents (73.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that their school had successfully implemented the program while 38 respondents (26.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

**Research question three.** *What five key factors did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify of successful implementation of SWPBIS?*

Research question three was designed to identify the five key factors high school teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) believed contributed to successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools. Participants were asked to

select the top five factors from the provided list of factors they believed contributed to successful implementation of the SWPBIS in their schools. The findings for research question three are based on the responses of 140 teachers who answered the survey question 14.

Table 8

*Factors to Successful SWPBIS Implementation Identified by Teachers*

Factors	Answer	Percent
Teachers' support of the SWPBIS	111	79.29%
Teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students	106	75.71%
Support and feedback from administration	105	75.00%
Clear communication between teachers and administration	87	62.14%
Consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation	86	61.43%
Available resources for teachers to implement SWPBIS successfully	66	47.14%
Regularly shared data on the progress of the SWPBIS implementation	56	40.00%
Ongoing training on SWPBIS	50	35.71%
Support from parents	33	23.57%

*Note.* Total valid responses, where respondents selected 5 factors: 140. (The number of valid responses to this question is less than the total number of participants in the survey because some of the participants did not complete their answer by selecting 5 factors from the provided list.)

The information in Table 8 presents the respondents' choice of top factors in successful SWPBIS implementation in schools. Only the top five factors teachers believed contributed to successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools were chosen for the current study to answer research question three.

The findings of the survey showed the top five factors teachers believed contributed to successful implementation of SWPBIS in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high

schools. Out of 140 respondents (n = 140), 111 high school teachers (79.3%) chose *teachers' support of the SWPBIS*, 106 teachers (75.7%) selected *teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students*, 105 teachers (75%) chose *support and feedback from administration*, 87 teachers (62.1%) selected *clear communication between teachers and administration*, and 86 respondents (61.4%) chose *consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation* as five important factors to a successful implementation of SWPBIS.

**Research question four.** *What five key barriers did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify to successful implementation of SWPBIS?*

Research question four was designed to identify the five key barriers high school teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) believed prevented successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools. Participants were asked to select the top five barriers from the provided list of barriers they believed prevented successful implementation of the SWPBIS in their schools. The findings for research question four are based on the responses of 133 teachers who answered the survey question 15.

Table 9

*Barriers to Successful SWPBIS Implementation Identified by Teachers*

Barriers	Answer	Percent
Lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation	115	86.47%
Lack of communication between teachers and administration	86	64.66%
Lack of teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students	82	61.65%
Lack of support and feedback from administration	76	57.14%
Lack of teachers' support of the SWPBIS	71	53.38%
Lack of resources to implement SWPBIS successfully	66	49.62%
Lack of ongoing training on SWPBIS	66	49.62%
Lack of support from parents	59	44.36%
Lack of data on the progress of the SWPBIS implementation	44	33.08%

*Note.* Total valid responses, where respondents selected 5 factors: 133. (The number of valid responses to this question is less than the total number of participants in the survey because some of the participants did not complete their answer by selecting 5 factors from the provided list.)

The information in Table 8 presents the respondents' choice of the top barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation in schools. Only the top five barriers teachers believed prevented successful SWPBIS implementation in their school were chosen for the current study to answer research question four.

The findings of the survey showed the top five barriers teachers believed prevented successful implementation of SWPBIS in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. Out of 133 respondents (n = 133), 115 teachers (86.5%) chose *lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation*, 86 participants (64.7%) selected *lack of communication between teachers and administration*, 82 respondents (61.6%) chose *lack of*

*teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students*, 76 teachers (57.1%) selected *lack of support and feedback from administration*, and 71 respondents (53.4%) chose *lack of teachers' support of the SWPBIS* as five significant barriers to successful implementation of SWPBIS.

### **Summary**

Statistical analysis of the data gathered from the teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools revealed all respondents (100%) believed the factors of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al. (2004) and McKeivitt and Braaksma (2008) were present in their schools. The findings showed the majority of teachers (73.6%) positively rated the successful implementation of the SWPBIS program in their schools.

The results of the survey yielded the following top five factors teachers believed contribute to successful implementation of SWPBIS in their schools: teachers' support of SWPBIS, teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students, support and feedback from administration, clear communication between teachers and administration, and consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation.

The findings of the study also revealed the following top five barriers high school teachers believed prevented successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools: lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation, lack of communication between teachers and administration, lack of teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students, lack of support and feedback from administration, and lack of teachers' support of the SWPBIS.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, discussion, limitations, and recommendations for further research and practice.

## **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, Limitations, and Recommendations**

### **Summary**

Although the literature reveals positive outcomes for SWPBIS implementation and successful behavioral problem prevention in elementary and middle schools, there is limited research on teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of SWPBIS program in high school settings (Osher et al., 2010). The current study was focused on teachers' perceptions in high school settings.

The purpose of the study was to examine Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program to manage students' behavior in their schools (grades 9-12).

Sample population was narrowed by the number of years of SWPBIS implementation after a two-year training on SWPBIS. According to studies on SWPBIS in high school settings, SWPBIS implementation takes approximately two years in high schools (Horner et al., 2004). Therefore, the schools for the study were selected from the list of high schools in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area that have completed a two-year SWPBIS training and have been using the program for more than two years. Out of 18 schools identified for the study, five agreed to participate in the survey.

A quantitative research design was used in the study to collect data on teachers' perceptions regarding SWPBIS implementation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. An online survey was used as a quantitative method to collect data for the study. A 15-question perception survey with a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) was designed to gather feedback about teachers' opinions of the SWPBIS

implementation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. The survey was developed based on key practices of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner and his colleagues (2004) and McKeivitt and Braaksma (2008).

The administrators of the five participating high schools sent the survey link to teachers with the request to complete a survey. After the Survey Monkey link was sent to 470 teachers in five schools, 187 teachers participated in the survey. The responses for each question were gathered and analyzed with descriptive statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software platform with assistance from the Statistical Center at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. The study provides findings about the beliefs of a larger population of high school teachers on SWPBIS implementation by examining the opinions of a sample teacher population in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools.

The findings of the study showed high school teachers' perceptions on SWPBIS implementation in their schools, five key factors of successful SWPBIS implementation, and five key barriers teachers believed prevented SWPBIS implementation. The results of the study can be used to guide SWPBIS implementation teams and school leaders in designing professional development on specific areas of the SWPBIS, and improving and sustaining the program over time.

### **Research Questions**

The study examined the following research questions:

1. What did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) report as successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools?



2. How did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) rate the implementation of SWPBIS in their schools?
3. What five key factors did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify of successful implementation of SWPBIS?
4. What five key barriers did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify to successful implementation of SWPBIS?

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

The conclusions derived from the study findings and answers to research questions are discussed in this part of the chapter and are supported by the literature review.

The results of the survey questions 1 through 12 present teachers reported successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools based on key features of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al. (2004) and McKeivitt and Braaksma (2008). The results of the survey question 13 report the overall rating of the SWPBIS implementation based on the teachers' perceptions. Respondents answered questions 1 through 13 using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). In the survey question 14, respondents selected the top 5 factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools. In the survey question 15, respondents selected the top five barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation.

**Research question one.** *What did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) report as successful practices in SWPBIS implementation in their schools?*

Research question one was designed to measure high school teachers' perceptions of the success of SWPBIS implementation in their schools based on the key practices of successful

SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner and his colleagues (2004): setting and teaching school-wide behavioral expectations, monitoring and correcting student behavior, gathering discipline data, obtaining district and school leadership support and the key practices of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by McKevitt and Braaksma (2008): creating a PBIS implementation team, obtaining staff support, instituting clear school policies, offering staff development, engaging families and community members, and achieving SWPBIS sustainability.

Research question one was answered by the survey items 1-12. Teachers were asked to respond to the questions one through 12 using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

The results demonstrated that the majority of teachers (93.7%) had a strong knowledge of the appropriate behavior expectations in their school. This can be explained by the fact that 70.2% of respondents had training on SWPBIS, which helped them in learning about positive behavioral strategies and implementing SWPBIS more successfully. At the same time, only 54.1% of teachers became more confident in dealing with student discipline after they completed training on SWPBIS. This finding relates to the frequency and quality of trainings. As suggested in literature, ongoing professional development is necessary for staff to effectively implement and sustain SWPBIS over time (Butchart & McEwan, 1998; McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008; Mizell, 2010).

It is worth noting that although 45.9% of teachers were still not comfortable managing student discipline after the training on SWPBIS, they did not believe professional development was one of the top five factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in their school (see Table 8).

The results of the study also showed teachers' strong commitment to and support of SWPBIS. It is challenging to obtain staff support due to different philosophical beliefs regarding discipline in high schools and lack of knowledge about SWPBIS factors leading to successful implementation in schools (Feuerborn et al., 2013). According to research, educators often prefer to focus more on content rather than on teaching behavioral skills directly to students because they believe students are expected to know appropriate behavior by the time they are in high school (Bohanon et al., 2006; Howard et al., 2004).

Contrary to the results reported by Bohanon and Howard et al., the study showed 94.4% of respondents supported SWPBIS by teaching behavioral expectations to students (91.7% of respondents) and rewarding students for following behavioral expectations (82% of respondents). In addition, 79.9% of participants believed teachers in their school were regularly taking actions to correct student problem behaviors.

It is recommended that 80% of teachers support the idea of SWPBIS before actual implementation (Newcomer & Barrett, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2006). This study showed that 94.4% of teachers supported SWPBIS implementation in their school, which is significant for successful program implementation, especially, in a high school setting.

The majority of respondents (88.9%) reported their schools had a system in place to document discipline data. However, only 59% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that their SWPBIS leadership team regularly shared discipline data and provided feedback to teachers on their classroom discipline management as opposed to the rest of the respondents (41%) who did not believe they received feedback from administration or had a chance to examine discipline

data. These results indicate that school administrators and their SWPBIS leadership teams need to prioritize the sharing of SWPBIS data to enhance the success of the program.

Previous studies had similar results regarding the role of administration in effective SWPBIS implementation (Feuerborn et al., 2015). Principals should be actively involved in the SWPBIS implementation process to ensure a success of this new initiative. In this study, 68% of respondents noted their district or school administration provided feedback to teachers and communicated regularly about the progress of the SWPBIS implementation while 31.9% of teachers did not receive feedback from administration. Additionally, 56.9% of teachers believed their district/school administration provided ongoing training on SWPBIS to all staff while 43.1% of respondents reported the opposite. Therefore, the results of this study supported findings of previous studies in the literature about the crucial role of administration in successful SWPBIS implementation.

Family support of SWPBIS and involvement in discipline policies is one of the essential features of successful SWPBIS implementation (Green et al., 2015; McKeivitt & Braaksma, 2008; US DOE, 2014). The literature review indicated the necessity for active family engagement in developing behavior expectations and supporting the program implementation (US DOE, 2014; Warren et al., 2003). As Garbacz et al. (2016) noted, “It is important that we extend key features of PBIS to the family system to acknowledge the family as an important part of the school community, and further enhance outcomes for children and families” (p. 67). According to the Department of Education (2014), families’ commitment and collaboration with staff and administration in developing discipline policies and procedures is an important step to successful SWPBIS implementation in schools.

Interestingly, 77.7% of teachers in the five participating schools believed families supported SWPBIS in their school; however, only 23.6% of teachers reported *parents' support* as a key factor in successful SWPBIS implementation (see Table 8). This means teachers considered *parents' support* as the least significant factor in the successful SWPBIS implementation even though the majority of respondents (77.7%) agreed that families supported SWPBIS in their schools and were actively involved in the program implementation. Teachers did not consider this factor as essential to successful SWPBIS implementation, which can be explained by teachers' disbelief that family engagement in SWPBIS implementation in their schools was effective.

To conclude, the results of the study revealed that teachers believed all the key factors for a successful SWPBIS implementation, defined by Horner et al. (2004) and McKeivitt and Braaksma (2008), were present in their schools.

**Research question two.** *How did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) rate the implementation of SWPBIS in their schools?*

Research question two was designed to provide an overall evaluation rating of teachers' perceptions about successful implementation of SWPBIS in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. Research question two was answered by the survey item 13. Teachers were asked to respond to the question 13 using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree).

Although a number of studies showed the challenge to implement SWPBIS with fidelity in a high school setting due to its large and complex organization (Bohanon et al., 2006;

Feuerborn et al., 2013; Flannery, Frank et al., 2013), the current study yielded the opposite findings.

The results of the survey revealed the majority of teachers (73.6%) in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) positively rated the implementation of the SWPBIS program in their schools. In fact, out of 144 total respondents to question 13, 106 teachers (73.6%) believed their school had successfully implemented SWPBIS.

As these were teachers' perceptions and beliefs about the SWPBIS program implementation, it would also be interesting to analyze office discipline referrals and suspensions data in the five schools to see if discipline referrals and suspensions have decreased since SWPBIS implementation.

**Research question three.** *What five key factors did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify of successful SWPBIS implementation?*

Research question three was designed to report the top five factors teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identified of successful implementation of SWPBIS. Research question three was answered by the survey item 14. In survey question 14, respondents were asked to choose the top five factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in their schools.

The results of the study reported the following five key factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) based on teachers' perceptions:

1. *teachers' support of the SWPBIS*
2. *teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students*
3. *support and feedback from administration*
4. *clear communication between teachers and administration*
5. *consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation*

The findings of the survey showed that 79.3% of high school teachers believed in the importance of *teachers' support of the SWPBIS* as one of the key factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools.

Staff support is more difficult to obtain in high schools than in elementary settings due to a complex organizational structure (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013). Some teachers simply do not understand the nature of SWPBIS and have misconceptions about the program; therefore, they do not support the SWPBIS framework (Feuerborn et al., 2016). On the contrary, the results of this study demonstrated that the majority of staff (79.3%) supported the program.

Teachers' support should be obtained before the program can be implemented (Coffey & Horner, 2012). However, as Feuerborn and Tyre (2016) stated, the data about teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding the implementation of SWPBIS in schools is seldom collected. Furthermore, "Once the decision is made to implement SWPBS, the principal must set the stage with a clear expectation that everyone will participate and actively work to get everyone on the same page" (Newcomer & Barrett, 2009, p. 31).

According to the findings of the survey, out of 144 respondents, 106 participants (75.7%) perceived *teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students* as an important factor in successful program implementation.

Teachers' commitment and devotion to teaching appropriate discipline to students can prevent problem behaviors and create a positive school climate. Lewis and Sugai (1999) claimed that educators' responsibility is not only teaching academics but also teaching students appropriate behavior in schools. Nevertheless, high school students do not have a positive social experience at school or support from teachers to practice appropriate behavior as teachers believe that it is not their responsibility to teach those skills. According to Lewis and Sugai (1999), "children and youth who are at risk of or display antisocial behavior are an ever-increasing concern in American schools and communities" (p. 2). Therefore, it is essential for all staff to define behavioral expectations and model positive behavior in order to achieve success in the SWPBIS implementation in high schools.

The results of the survey demonstrated the belief of 105 high school teachers (75%) that *support and feedback from administration* played a significant role in implementing SWPBIS successfully. Research also emphasized the essential role of the administrator in successful SWPBIS implementation, which involves regular meetings with teachers and SWPBIS leadership teams, active involvement in planning, providing constructive feedback to staff, and supporting staff (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; McGraw & Koonce, 2011). As Coffey and Horner (2012) concluded, "Schools that have implemented for 5 years or more have a greater level of administrative support, data-based decision making, and technical assistance" (p. 416). Newcomer and Barrett (2009) findings concluded that effective leadership consisted not only in communicating vision to staff, but also providing a path to the change, supporting SWPBIS implementation, and promoting ongoing staff development.



The findings of the survey showed that 62 % of high school teachers believed in the importance of *clear communication between teachers and administration* as one of the key factors of successful SWPBIS implementation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools. This factor is also presented in the literature among other factors, such as sharing and discussing data on student discipline, collaborating and communicating with staff, and making decisions based on data, as one of the factors leading to successful SWPBIS implementation and sustainability over time (Combs & Martin, 2011).

The last factor identified by teachers as one of the top five factors of successful SWPBIS implementation was *consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation*. More than half of the respondents (61%) believed all teachers should be consistent in following rules and policies at school in order to achieve successful student behavior outcomes.

It is essential for all staff to collaborate and be consistent in following rules, policies and procedures to successfully implement the program (McGraw & Koonce, 2011). As noted by Howard et al. (2004), “PBIS requires consensus and collaboration among faculty to create norms for expected behavior as well as procedures for teaching expectations, rewarding students who exhibit positive behaviors, and responding to rule-violating behavior” (p. 470). High school teachers’ commitment to and participation in the SWPBIS implementation plays an important role in the success of the program implementation (Newcomer & Barrett, 2009). It is crucial for teachers to be proactive in teaching positive behaviors to all students and practicing rules and procedures of appropriate behavior on a regular basis in order to prevent problem behavior in high schools (Marchant et al., 2009).

**Research question four.** *What five key barriers did teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identify to successful implementation of SWPBIS?*

Research question four was designed to report the top five barriers teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) identified to successful SWPBIS implementation. Research question four was answered by the survey item 15. In survey question 15, respondents were asked to choose the top five barriers to successful SWPBIS implementation.

The results of the study identified the following five key barriers that prevented a successful implementation of SWPBIS in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12):

1. *lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation*
2. *lack of communication between teachers and administration*
3. *lack of teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students*
4. *lack of support and feedback from administration*
5. *lack of teachers' support of the SWPBIS*

Out of 133 respondents, 115 teachers (86.5%) chose the *lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation* as one of the key barriers to a successful SWPBIS implementation. Indeed, consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation and cooperation are more challenging in secondary schools than elementary (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013).

The majority of teachers (86.5%) in the five high schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area that were surveyed strongly believed that the *lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation* was a significant barrier to a successful implementation of the positive behavioral program. The *lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation* received the highest rating by the majority of participants. According to Feuerborn et al. (2016), “Even though fellow staff may have voiced support for SWPBS publicly, teachers were skeptical that their colleagues would follow through with implementation once out of the sight of others” (p. 222). Inconsistency among staff in following school discipline protocols and procedures and lack of working as a team can cause confusion in students and can lead to serious discipline problems in schools.

The findings of the survey showed that 86 teachers (64.7%) chose the *lack of communication between teachers and administration* as one of the key barriers to a successful SWPBIS implementation. Similarly, lack of administrative communication with staff was also one of the barriers in the study conducted on PBIS implementation by Lohrmann et al. (2008). As some researchers pointed out, “Much of the work by the team in implementing SWPBS requires the establishment of a strong communication system and strategies for developing consensus among staff and students” (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013, p. 278). Unfortunately, high school teachers seldom communicate and share their needs and concerns with administration and other departments whereas communication should be happening on a school-wide level (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013).

Following the results of the survey, 82 teachers (61.6%) chose the *lack of teachers’ commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students* as one of the key barriers to a

successful SWPBIS implementation. The literature also supports this finding. For example, Newcomer and Barrett (2009) indicated, “Teaching academic content knowledge to students who are ready to learn takes priority over teaching social skills. Many teachers feel that their students have sole responsibility for their own behavior...” (p. 45). For this reason, teachers are not motivated to lecture high school students about rules and procedures at school; their focus is on academics only but not on social skills.

More than half of the respondents (57%) in the five high schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area believed that the *lack of support and feedback from administration* was also one of the five barriers to successful implementation of the positive behavioral program. Likewise, the results of the studies on SWPBIS implementation conducted by Feuerborn and Tyre (2016) in secondary schools reported lack of support from administration as one of the main challenges in implementing the program successfully.

The last factor the study participants selected as one of the top five barriers to a successful SWPBIS implementation was the *lack of teachers’ support of the SWPBIS*. The findings of the survey showed that 53% of high school teachers believed the program implementation would not have been successful without teachers’ support of the program. The results of the study are also supported by the literature about the importance of staff support to successfully implement SWPBIS (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Feuerborn & Tyre ,2016).

Interestingly, only 44 teachers (33%) chose the *lack of data on the progress of the SWPBIS implementation* as a barrier to a successful implementation, which contradicts with the study results of Lewis and Sugai (1999) who concluded that “Most schools collect information that can be used to assess the effectiveness of schoolwide procedures-for example, minor

behavior reports; office discipline referrals; and records of attendance, truancy, and tardiness” (p. 7). Additionally, as Evanovich and Scott (2016) confirmed, “Having systems in place for data collection allows for effective progress monitoring toward both school-wide PBIS goals and student behaviors” (p. 7). However, the results of this study indicated that only 33% of teachers believed SWPBIS data was important in the successful program implementation.

In conclusion, the findings of the current study revealed the majority of high school teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, who completed the online perception survey, supported SWPBIS and believed their schools had implemented SWPBIS successfully. Furthermore, most of the teachers agreed that all the key features of the successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al. (2004) and McKeivitt and Braaksma (2008) were present and practiced in their schools.

Interestingly, the top five factors teachers believed contributed to a successful SWPBIS implementation and the top five barriers preventing successful SWPBIS implementation were encompassed the same themes: teachers’ support of the SWPBIS (lack of teachers’ support of the SWPBIS), teachers’ commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students (lack of teachers’ commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students), support and feedback from administration (lack of support and feedback from administration), clear communication between teachers and administration (lack of communication between teachers and administration), and consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation (lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation).

## Limitations

According to Roberts (2010), “Limitations are particular features of your study that you know may negatively affect the results of your ability to generalize. Limitations are usually areas over which you have no control” (p. 162).

The limitations of the study were the following:

1. As the survey was voluntary, the sample size was small; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to a larger sample of high school teachers.
2. The principal of one of the five schools that participated in the study did not send the last two reminders to teachers to complete the survey before the deadline; therefore, this oversight impacted the number of respondents from that school.
3. The instrument was designed based on the key features of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al. (2004) and McKeivitt and Braaksma (2008). The survey could be revised to include more items related to successful practices in SWPBIS implementation described in the literature to better evaluate the program implementation in high schools.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The following topics are recommendations for future researchers based on the conclusions from the study:

1. A comparative study on teachers’ perceptions regarding SWPBIS implementation in the southern and/or northern area high schools with the teachers’ perceptions in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools.
2. A study on high schools designated as *Sustaining Exemplar Schools* by Minnesota SWPBIS for continuing the implementation of SWPBIS with fidelity. *Sustaining*

*Exemplar Schools* completed SWPBIS training and continue achieving positive results in managing student behavior. This study could be beneficial in identifying the key factors of effective SWPBIS implementation in schools and assessing the program sustainability over time.

3. A correlational study on the number of years of SWPBIS implementation and reduction of suspensions and office discipline referrals in high schools to study a relationship between these variables.
4. A qualitative study to explore teachers' perceptions on SWPBIS implementation in high schools in greater depth through interviews to provide more accurate data on the program implementation.
5. A study on the perceptions of school administrators, students and parents regarding SWPBIS implementation to increase a sample size and add a more comprehensive aspect to the study of SWPBIS in high schools.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The following are recommendations for high school administrators, SWPBIS leadership teams and teachers for implementing SWPBIS successfully and sustaining the program over time. These suggestions are based on the results of the studies in the literature review and the perception survey findings of the current study.

**Recommendations for high school administrators.** As the study was conducted in the state of Minnesota, it is recommended for high school principals in Minnesota to evaluate SWPBIS implementation in their schools and consider the following changes:

1. *Offer professional development to staff.* High school principals should offer ongoing professional development to staff on PBIS to learn effective strategies in managing

- student behavior successfully. Professional development for teachers is crucial for successful program implementation and student success in school (Flynn et al., 2016). The results of the international studies in Hong Kong and Wales also confirmed the importance of trainings for teachers and the strong correlation between training and perceptions of confidence in managing behavior (Cooper & Yan, 2015; Reid, 2011).
2. *Obtain support from staff.* The results of the study revealed teachers' support as one of the top five factors in successful SWPBIS implementation. One of the methods to obtain support from staff and persuade them to use SWPBIS in their classrooms is by presenting effective SWPBIS implementation data from other high schools (Newcomer & Barrett, 2009). Feuerborn et al. (2013) also suggested some ways to engage staff in SWPBIS by organizing informal meetings where teachers can share their needs and concerns and by providing trainings on specific needs.
  3. *Acknowledge efforts and celebrate success.* As consistently teaching behavioral expectations to all students in school was one of the main factors of successful program implementation, administrators should recognize and acknowledge teachers' efforts in teaching behavioral expectations, rules and procedures to students and implementing of the SWPBIS strategies in their classrooms. In addition, all staff and administrators should celebrate even a small success together as a team (Flannery et al., 2014).
  4. *Provide constructive feedback to staff and share student discipline data.* The results of the study showed the lack of feedback from administration as one of the top barriers to a successful SWPBIS implementation; therefore, it is recommended for



school administrators to regularly give advice and coach all staff on effective SWPBIS strategies (Coffey & Horner, 2012; Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Discussing school discipline goals with staff and collecting data can help administrators make decisions about effective SWPBIS implementation and improvement.

**Recommendations for SWPBIS leadership team.** The SWPBIS leadership team of each school is responsible for planning and assessing the positive discipline program implementation, organizing trainings for teachers, and sharing feedback and discipline data with staff. The following are recommendations for the SWPBIS leadership team:

1. *Include a representative of each department on the PBIS implementation team.* To hear the voice of each teacher at school regarding SWPBIS implementation in such a complex organization as a high school, it is recommended to include on the PBIS team a leader from each department to be able to share opinions and perspectives (Flannery, Frank et al., 2013). The role of psychologists is also crucial in the PBIS implementation as they possess knowledge regarding adolescent age development and can guide staff to manage student behavior successfully in schools (Mayworm & Sharkey, 2014). According to the US Department of Education (2014), “These professionals can serve as partners to teachers to help identify student needs and provide school-based emotional and mental health support for struggling and vulnerable students” (p. 7).
2. *Coach and mentor staff on a regular basis to achieve a successful implementation of the SWPBIS and sustain the program over time.* Coaching teachers on the best SWPBIS practices, and providing resources and technical assistance can increase the

- implementation of the program with fidelity in schools and sustain SWPBIS over time (Shields, Milstein, & Posner, 2010). In addition, new staff and substitute teachers should be trained on the SWPBIS framework (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008).
3. *Offer SWPBIS training opportunities for staff and parents.* The SWPBIS leadership team should offer trainings for all staff to learn about effective SWPBIS strategies in managing student behavior successfully. Additionally, parents are encouraged to participate in these trainings too. SWPBIS trainings have a positive impact on parents as they can continue using effective SWPBIS strategies to manage their child's behavior at home (Norris, 2001).

**Recommendations for high school teachers.**

1. *Teach behavioral expectations consistently to all students.* Since lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation was selected by the majority of respondents as one of the top barriers preventing SWPBIS implementation, it is recommended for high school teachers to teach not only academics but also behavioral expectations and social skills to students in order to prevent problem behavior. Additionally, classroom discipline has an impact on the development of students; therefore, teachers should use age appropriate reward approaches to teach problem-solving and successful interaction with others (Butchart & McEwan, 1998).
2. *Participate in PBIS trainings and review discipline policies.* According to the US Department of Education (2014), all school staff should participate in ongoing trainings to obtain skills in managing student misbehavior using positive strategies. Teachers should also review school discipline policies and procedures with their

students throughout the year to ensure a full understanding of school-wide discipline expectations and consequences and to enforce the rules (Lewis, & Sugai, 1999).

3. *Reward students for appropriate behaviors and provide incentives.* Incentives and positive behavior rewards can motivate students to practice appropriate behavior at school (Lewis, & Sugai, 1999). Consequently, high school teachers should use a reward system for students to encourage positive behavior.

### **Summary**

The purpose of the study was to examine Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program to manage student behavior successfully in their schools (grades 9-12).

The results of the study showed factors of successful SWPBIS implementation defined by Horner et al., McKeivitt and Braaksma that teachers believed were present in their schools. Statistical analysis of the data gathered from the teachers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools revealed the majority of teachers (73.6%) positively rated the successful implementation of the SWPBIS program in their schools.

The results of the survey showed five important factors teachers believed contribute to successful implementation of SWPBIS: teachers' support of the SWPBIS, teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students, support and feedback from administration, clear communication between teachers and administration, and consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation.

Also, the findings of the study revealed the top five barriers high school teachers believed prevented successful SWPBIS implementation: lack of consistency among all teachers in the

SWPBIS implementation, lack of communication between teachers and administration, lack of teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students, lack of support and feedback from administration, and lack of teachers' support of the SWPBIS.

The findings of the study contribute to existing research on SWPBIS implementation in high schools and provide recommendations to high school administrators, SWPBIS leadership teams and staff on improving and sustaining the program in high schools.

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## **Appendix A: Request to Participate in Survey**

### Email to Superintendent:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing this email to request your permission to conduct a study in your district. I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration and Leadership program at St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN. I am conducting a research on Teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program in the Minneapolis – St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12).

The purpose of the study is to examine the Minneapolis -St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program in managing students' behavior in their schools (grades 9-12).

I would like to include (the name of the school) in my study as they have been implementing SWPBIS for over (number of years). I will use a Survey Monkey, which will take 5-7 minutes to complete. The survey is anonymous. Please let me know if you support the participation of (the name of the school) in my research, and I will contact the principal with this request.

The results of the study will be beneficial to SWPBIS implementation teams and administrators in planning SWPBIS implementation and organizing professional developments for staff. The data will be useful for understanding teachers' beliefs, views, needs and concerns on SWPBIS. I plan to share the results of the study upon the completion of my dissertation. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Olga Savva  
651-983-0816  
[oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu)

Email to Principal:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing this email to request your permission to conduct a study in your school. I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration and Leadership program at St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN. I am conducting a research on Teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program in the Minneapolis – St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12).

The purpose of the study is to examine the Minneapolis -St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program in managing students' behavior in their schools (grades 9-12).

I would like to include (the name of the school) in my study as you have been implementing SWPBIS for over (number of years). I will use a Survey Monkey, which will take 5-7 minutes to complete. The survey is anonymous. Please let me know if you support the participation of (the name of the school) in my research.

The results of the study will be beneficial to SWPBIS implementation teams and administrators in planning SWPBIS implementation and organizing professional developments for staff. The data will be useful for understanding teachers' beliefs, views, needs and concerns on SWPBIS. I plan to share the results of the study upon the completion of my dissertation. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Olga Savva  
651-983-0816  
[oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu)

## Appendix B: Study Survey Correspondence

### Email with the Survey Monkey link:

Dear (Administrator),

Thank you so much for supporting my study in your school. Please encourage your staff to complete the survey. If I may suggest, the survey could be completed during one of your staff meetings.

I would also appreciate if you let me know the number of staff you sent the email to as it will help me calculate a response rate for my study.

Surveys are due by Friday, March 1, 2019.

Please send the following message with the link to a survey monkey to your teachers.

Dear Teachers,

Your school was selected to participate in a study to gather teachers' perceptions on the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program in your school.

The survey is anonymous and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Your feedback is very important to me. Please complete the survey below by Friday, March 1, 2019.

Thank you so much for your time and participation!

Survey link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G8M3XS3>

Olga Savva, Doctoral Candidate

[oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu)

651-983-0816

First reminder to complete the survey:

Dear (Administrator),  
Could you please send a reminder to your staff to complete the survey?  
Please send the following message with the link to a survey monkey.

Dear Teachers,  
Your school was selected to participate in a study to gather teachers' perceptions on the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program in your school.  
The survey is anonymous and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.  
Your feedback is very important to me. Please complete the survey below if you have not yet done so. The deadline is Friday, March 1, 2019.  
Thank you so much for your time and participation!  
Survey link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G8M3XS3>

Olga Savva, Doctoral Candidate  
[oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu)  
651-983-0816

Final reminder to complete the survey:

Dear (Administrator),  
There is about one week left before the deadline to complete the survey. Could you please send a final reminder to your staff to complete the survey?

Please send the following message with the link to a survey monkey to your teachers.

Dear Teachers,  
Your school was selected to participate in a study to gather teachers' perceptions on the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program in your school.  
The survey is anonymous and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.  
Your feedback is very important to me. Please complete the survey below if you have not yet done so. The deadline is Friday, March 1, 2019.  
Thank you so much for your time and participation!  
Survey link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G8M3XS3>

Olga Savva, Doctoral Candidate  
[oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu)  
651-983-0816

## Appendix C: Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval



### Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

**Name:** Olga Savva  
**Email:** oasavva@stcloudstate.edu

### IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: **Exempt Review**

**Project Title:** Teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grade 9-12).

**Advisor:** John Eller

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).
- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.
- Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.
- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.
- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email [ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu) and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

**IRB Chair:**

Dr. Benjamin Witts  
Associate Professor- Applied Behavior Analysis  
Department of Community Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy

**IRB Institutional Official:**

Dr. Latha Ramakrishnan  
Interim Associate Provost for Research  
Dean of Graduate Studies

#### OFFICE USE ONLY

**SCSU IRB#** 1869 - 2397

**1st Year Approval Date:** 1/23/2019

**1st Year Expiration Date:**

**Type:** Exempt Review

**2nd Year Approval Date:**

**2nd Year Expiration Date:**

**Today's Date:** 1/23/2019

**3rd Year Approval Date:**

**3rd Year Expiration Date:**

## Appendix D: Implied Consent

Dear Teachers,

Your school was selected to participate in a study to gather teachers' perceptions on the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) in Minnesota.

The purpose of the study is to examine the Minneapolis -St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program in managing students' behavior in their schools (grades 9-12).

The results of the study will be beneficial to SWPBIS implementation teams and administrators in planning SWPBIS implementation and organizing professional developments for staff. The data will be useful for understanding teachers' beliefs, views, needs and concerns on SWPBIS.

If you are interested in learning about the results of the study, feel free to email me at [oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu) or check the SCSU dissertation repository [https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/edad\\_etds/](https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/edad_etds/). The results will be available upon the completion of my dissertation.

If you have questions about the study, please contact the researcher at (651) 983-0816 or [oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu), or the advisor, Dr. John Eller at (320) 308-2955 or [jfeller@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:jfeller@stcloudstate.edu).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey and you are free to withdraw at any time. The survey is anonymous and voluntary. The survey will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. There are no risks associated with participation in this study. Your participation in the survey indicates that you are at least 18 years of age.

Please complete the survey below.

Survey link \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time and feedback!

Sincerely,

Olga Savva, Doctoral Candidate  
[oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu)

(651)983-0816



### Appendix E: Study Instrument

Our school has been using the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program for:

0 years   1-3 years   4-6 years   7-10 years   more than 10 years   I don't know

1. I have an in-depth knowledge of the appropriate behavior expectations in our school.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

2. I teach behavioral expectations to my students on a regular basis.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

3. I support SWPBIS in my school.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

4. I reward students for following behavioral expectations.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

5. There is a system in place to document discipline data in our school.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

6. I believe teachers in our school are regularly taking actions to correct student problem behaviors.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

7. Our SWPBIS leadership team regularly shares discipline data and provides feedback to teachers on their classroom discipline management.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

8. Our district/school administration provides feedback and communicates regularly about the progress of the SWPBIS implementation to teachers.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

**9.** I have had training on SWPBIS.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**10.** Our district/school administration provides ongoing training on SWPBIS to all staff in our school.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**11.** I have become more confident in dealing with student discipline since the implementation of SWPBIS in our school.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**12.** Families support SWPBIS in our school.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**13.** I believe our school has successfully implemented SWPBIS.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree

**14.** Please check the top 5 factors you believe contribute to a successful SWPBIS implementation in your school.

- a.** support and feedback from administration
- b.** support from parents
- c.** teachers' support of the SWPBIS
- d.** teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students
- e.** available resources for teachers to implement SWPBIS successfully
- f.** consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation
- g.** clear communication between teachers and administration
- h.** ongoing training on SWPBIS
- i.** regularly shared data on the progress of the SWPBIS implementation

**15.** Please check the top 5 barriers you believe prevent a successful SWPBIS implementation in your school.

- a. Lack of support and feedback from administration
- b. Lack of support from parents
- c. Lack of teachers' support of the SWPBIS
- d. Lack of teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students
- e. Lack of resources to implement SWPBIS successfully
- f. Lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation
- g. Lack of communication between teachers and administration
- h. Lack of ongoing training on SWPBIS
- i. Lack of data on the progress of the SWPBIS implementation

## Appendix F: Survey Monkey

### Consent Page

Dear Teachers,

Your school was selected to participate in a study to gather teachers' perceptions on the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area high schools (grades 9-12) in Minnesota.

The purpose of the study is to examine the Minneapolis -St. Paul metropolitan area high school teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the SWPBIS program in managing students' behavior in their schools (grades 9-12).

The results of the study will be beneficial to SWPBIS implementation teams and administrators in planning SWPBIS implementation and organizing professional developments for staff. The data will be useful for understanding teachers' beliefs, views, needs and concerns on SWPBIS.

If you are interested in learning about the results of the study, feel free to email me at [oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu) or check the SCSU dissertation repository [https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/edad\\_etds/](https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/edad_etds/). The results will be available upon the completion of my dissertation.

If you have questions about the study, please contact the researcher at (651) 983-0816 or [oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu), or the advisor, Dr. John Eller at (320) 308-2955 or [jfeller@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:jfeller@stcloudstate.edu).

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey and you are free to withdraw at any time. The survey is anonymous and voluntary. The survey will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. There are no risks associated with participation in this study. Your participation in the survey indicates that you are at least 18 years of age.

Please complete the survey below.

Thank you for your time and feedback!

Sincerely,

Olga Savva, Doctoral Candidate  
[oasavva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:oasavva@stcloudstate.edu)  
(651)983-0816

\* 1. Do you accept consent?

Yes

No

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\* 2. Our school has been using the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program for:

0 Years

7-10 Years

1-3 Years

More Than 10 Years

4-6 Years


I Don't Know

---


\* 3. How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have an in-depth knowledge of the appropriate behavior expectations in our school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach behavioral expectations to my students on a regular basis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I support SWPBIS in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I reward students for following behavioral expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a system in place to document discipline data in our school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe teachers in our school are regularly taking actions to correct student problem behavior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our SWPBIS leadership team regularly shares discipline data and provides feedback to teachers on their classroom discipline management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our district/school administration provides feedback and communicates regularly about the progress of the SWPBIS implementation to teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have had training on SWPBIS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our district/school administration provides ongoing training on SWPBIS to all staff in our school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have become more confident in dealing with student discipline since the implementation of SWPBIS in our school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Families support SWPBIS in our school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe our school has successfully implemented SWPBIS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 4. Please check the top 5 factors you believe contribute to a successful SWPBIS implementation in your school. (This question requires 5 selections)

- Support and feedback from administration
  - Support from parents
  - Teachers' support of the SWPBIS
  - Teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students
  - Available resources for teachers to implement SWPBIS successfully
  - Consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation
  - Clear communication between teachers and administration
  - Ongoing training on SWPBIS
  - Regularly shared data on the progress of the SWPBIS implementation
- 

\* 5. Please check the top 5 barriers you believe prevent a successful SWPBIS implementation in your school. (This question requires 5 selections)

- Lack of support and feedback from administration
  - Lack of support from parents
  - Lack of teachers' support of the SWPBIS
  - Lack of teachers' commitment to teach behavioral expectations to students
  - Lack of resources to implement SWPBIS successfully
  - Lack of consistency among all teachers in the SWPBIS implementation
  - Lack of communication between teachers and administration
  - Lack of ongoing training on SWPBIS
  - Lack of data on the progress of the SWPBIS implementation
- 

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey!