

MCWILLIAMS, ELLEN K., PH.D., DECEMBER 2010

EDUCATIONAL
ADMINISTRATION

A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF A SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR
SUPPORT (PBS) SYSTEM IN SCHOOLS WITH PRINCIPAL-LED PLANNING
TEAMS AND COACH-LED PLANNING TEAMS (175 pp.)

Director of Dissertation: Mark Kretovic, Ph.D.

Managing disruptive behaviors in schools is a high-ranking concern in communities across the country (Rose & Gallup, 2006). Unfortunately, the practice of instituting tougher and more severe consequences for increased discipline problems has not resulted in a decrease of disruptive behavior (Lewis & Garrison-Harrell, 1999; Safran & Oswald, 2003; Turnbull et al., 2002). Instead, schools and communities are now turning to alternative proactive strategies emphasizing positive behavior supports (PBS) and prevention. The leadership for changing a school-wide approach away from a punitive-style of discipline to a proactive, pro-social approach is not simply implementing a new idea; rather it is creating a cultural change.

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the patterns of implementation of PBS and patterns of student behavior when PBS was implemented by a principal-led planning team and a coach-led planning team. The following overarching questions guided this study: (1) What does the implementation of PBS look like in buildings with principal-led planning teams and coach-led planning teams, and (2) What are the patterns of student behavior when PBS is implemented with a coach-led team, a principal-led team, and in buildings where PBS is not implemented?

A descriptive case study approach was used to enable an in-depth description of archived documents detailing the implementation of PBS in four elementary schools in a large urban district in the Midwest.

The analysis of the data revealed findings in three areas: (a) Principal-led and coach-led PBS teams implemented the key components of PBS in a similar sequence, although some of the components were implemented with greater quality by the coach-led teams; (b) patterns of student behavior were similar between the coach-led PBS schools and the principal-led PBS schools, except in the area of tardies; and (c) differences in patterns of student behavior were revealed between PBS schools and non-PBS schools.