THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS ON MISSOURI STATE ASSESSMENT SCORES

By

SHERYL FERGUSON

Submitted to

The Educational Leadership Faculty

Northwest Missouri State University Missouri

Department of Educational Leadership

College of Education and Human Services

Maryville, MO 64468

Submitted in Fulfillment for the Requirements for
61-683 Research Paper
Summer 2011

January 16, 2012
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact that School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBS) has on standardized state assessment scores in Communication Arts and Math. The research includes an overview of the key components to the successful implementation of SW-PBS and a review of current literature regarding the impact of SW-PBS on the whole school environment. The current study was conducted using data archived by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Schools receiving recognition for excellent implementation of SW-PBS by DESE and the Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support organization were compared with schools not recognized as SW-PBS schools. The study compared the two groups in regards to percentage of students proficient in Communication Arts and Math according to No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress. Data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and A Statistical Program (ASP) software and a significant difference was found between study groups. Findings indicate that the successful implementation of SW-PBS has a positive effect on standardized state assessment scores in Communication Arts and Math.
Introduction

Background, Issues and Concerns

The emphasis on high stakes assessments required of schools by No Child Left Behind necessitates that educators examine the impact of all policies and procedures on student learning. Approximately ten years ago the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) initiative gained momentum as a means of creating safer and more disciplined school environments. Since then thousands of schools have implemented SW-PBS systems. Schools have reported an increase in positive school climate and decreases in behavioral issues and disruptions to student learning. Among the issues still under examination is the means of monitoring and assessing the fidelity of implementation of SW-PBS as an intervention. It is also unclear what impact the implementation of SW-PBS has on high stakes assessment scores.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the University of Missouri, and school districts across the state of Missouri have joined together to form an organization, Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support, for the purpose of establishing processes, resources, and measures of fidelity for schools in Missouri as they implement SW-PBS systems. Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support assists schools in assessing the fidelity of their SW-PBS implementation and names gold, silver, and bronze Exemplar Schools each year in recognition of those schools that have met the organization’s standards. According to the Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support website, “The bar is purposefully set high for a school to achieve any one of these criteria. Typically, it is a two to four year process for a school to achieve bronze, a three to six year process to achieve
silver, and a five to eight year process to achieve gold. …It involves true systems change, sustaining that change each year, and implementing processes to support students and staff across multiple indicators at all three tiers of prevention and intervention” (www.pbismissouri.org/exemplar).

**Practice under Investigation**

The practice under investigation is the implementation of a system of school-wide positive behavior support with fidelity.

**School Policy to be Informed by Study**

All schools must decide how they are going to motivate students and manage student behavior. Schools that decide to implement systems of positive behavior support then must determine to what degree and with how much fidelity they are going to implement such a system. This study will examine the Missouri Assessment Program scores of the schools that implement school-wide positive behavior support programs with the highest fidelity.

**Conceptual Underpinning**

According to Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support, a collaborative organization of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the University of Missouri, and school districts across the state of Missouri, school-wide positive behavior support is “a process for creating safer and more effective schools by structuring the learning environment to support the academic and social
success of all students. The process supports the adoption and long-term implementation of efficient and effective discipline throughout the school environment. SW-PBS methods are research-based, proven to significantly reduce the occurrence of problem behaviors in schools, and supported by a three-tiered model” (www.pbismissouri.org). This collaborative group defines the seven essential components of SW-PBS as: administrator support, participation, and leadership, common purpose and approach to discipline, clear set of positive expectations and behaviors, procedures for teaching expected behavior, continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behaviors, continuum of procedures for discouraging inappropriate behaviors, and procedures for on-going monitoring. Some of the effects of the implementation of SW-PBS in schools in Missouri and elsewhere have been more positive school environments, reduced violence in school, reduced office discipline referrals, fewer suspensions, and fewer disruptions to the learning environment.

Statement of the Problem

Educators need more information about the impact that school-wide positive behavior supports systems have on standardized state academic achievement test scores.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to consider the relationship between the implementation of a system of school-wide positive behavior support and scores on state academic achievement assessments. The findings of this study can inform school
administrators and teachers making decisions about systems for managing student behavior.

**Research Question:**

Do elementary schools that have implemented school-wide positive behavior support programs with the highest fidelity, as defined by Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Exemplar Schools, have significantly different scores on the Missouri Assessment Program assessments than schools that have not implemented school-wide positive behavior support systems or ideas to this degree?

**Null Hypothesis**

There is no difference in Missouri Assessment Program assessment scores in schools that have implanted school-wide positive behavior support programs with the highest fidelity than those that have not school-wide positive behavior support systems or ideas to this degree.

**Anticipated Benefits of the Study**

The findings of this study will inform district and school administrators and teachers as they make decisions about systems of discipline and behavior management. The findings will assist educators as they consider the relationships between systems of behavior management and scores on high stakes state assessments.
Definition of Terms

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress
CA: Communication Arts
DESE: Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education
MAP: Missouri Assessment Program
NCLB: No Child Left Behind
SW-PBS: school-wide positive behavior support

Summary

As the requirements of No Child Left Behind are becoming increasingly difficult for many schools to meet, educators must consider the impact of all aspects of the school environment and functioning on student learning and, ultimately, on high stakes assessment scores. Many elementary schools in Missouri have implemented systems of school-wide positive behavior support, and as administrators and teachers consider a move to such programs more information is needed regarding the potential impact this system of behavior management may have upon Missouri Assessment Program scores. This research investigates the impact of school-wide positive behavior support systems on Missouri Assessment Program Communication Arts and Math scores in Missouri elementary schools. The research compares the scores of Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Exemplar schools, those schools that have successfully implemented SW-PBS with high degrees of fidelity, with non-Exemplar schools.
School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBS) is the behavior and social skills instruction and discipline system used in 5000 schools nationwide (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, & Leaf, 2008). SW-PBS is currently used in approximately 600 schools in Missouri (www.pbismissouri.org). SW-PBS is a system of implementing instruction, structures, and supports into the school environment in order to define, teach, and increase the likelihood of occurrence of appropriate behaviors while decreasing the likelihood of unwanted behaviors. Bradshaw et al. (2008) defined SW-PBS as “the application of a continuum of positive behavior supports, initially developed for children with special education needs to the entire school environment….The SW-PBS model utilizes universal positive preventive support strategies that provide systematic training of expected social behaviors and reinforcement of those behaviors to all students in the school” (p. 2). The impact of teaching expectations and behavioral skills through direct instruction is both far reaching and long-lasting. All students, but especially those students who are at risk for demonstrating problem behaviors, are provided instruction on social and behavioral skills and are rewarded for the demonstration of appropriate school behaviors.

One of the unique elements of SW-PBS is the positive proactive approach to discipline, the teaching and reinforcing of appropriate behaviors in all schools settings before problem behaviors have the opportunity to manifest. The use of pre-teaching and frequent positive reinforcement is contrary to the traditional reactive, punitive approach to student discipline that has been most commonly practiced in schools for many years. Flannery, Guest, and Horner (2010) assert, “In most schools, negative
consequences are used to prevent problem behavior from escalating or interrupting instruction, but real behavior change is achieved through instruction and support rather than punishment” (p. 38). Therefore, while a well established SW-PBS system does include a continuum of consequences to address problem behaviors, the focus of SW-PBS is to teach, acknowledge, and reinforce appropriate behaviors. In this way SW-PBS allows schools to establish a comprehensive discipline system for all students that is in compliance with IDEA 2004, which requires schools to consider the use of positive behavior supports for any student with a disability whose behaviors impede his or her learning or the learning of others (Warren, Bohanon-Edmonson, Turnbull, Sailor, Wickham, Griggs, & Beech, 2006).

Another unique element of SW-PBS is its focus on collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data to make decisions regarding discipline and behavior and social skills instruction and programming. SW-PBS is structured in a three tiered system of increasing levels of support much like the Response to Intervention (RTI) systems used to identify and support students who are struggling academically (Flannery, 2010). Data regarding unwanted behaviors is collected both in regards to areas of the school environment (hallways, playgrounds, bathrooms, cafeteria) and in regards to the frequency of particular individual students demonstrating unwanted behaviors. After analyzing data additional instruction, supports, procedures, or routines are added to areas of the school environment where behavior difficulties are common and individual students are provided with increasing levels of support depending frequency and type of behavior difficulty demonstrated. As in RTI systems, frequent progress monitoring based upon discipline data informs staff of the effectiveness of supports and
interventions so that necessary changes can be made. School-Wide Information System (SWIS) is a computerized data collection system that may be used by schools implementing SW-PBS to analyze discipline data such as office referrals and time, frequency, and locations of behavioral problems (Curtis, Horne, Robertson, & Karvonen, 2010).

The three tiered approach to SW-PBS is depicted in the graphic below from the Kansas Multi-Tier Systems of Support Behavior Resources website (http://www.swpbs.org/module/behavior_overview.html).

The first tier of the SW-PBS model is often referred to as the universal supports or primary interventions (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010). This tier is characterized by the proactive approach to school-wide prevention of behavioral problems through instruction and positive reinforcement. The Missouri School-wide Positive Behavior Supports website describes the purpose of the universal tier: “The primary goals of SW-PBS are to prevent the development of inappropriate behavior, reduce ongoing patterns
of problem behavior, and to increase the likelihood of improved academic performance of all students through teaching and learning time gained when the numbers of inappropriate behaviors are reduced.” (www.pbismissouri.org) Tier 1 applies to all individuals in the school environment and includes the defining, teaching, and reinforcing of expected behaviors.

In the SW-PBS model, schools choose 3-5 positively worded behavioral norms that can be applied at Tier 1 through all school settings. Common norms include: be respectful, be prepared to learn, be safe, be kind, make wise choices, and do your personal best. The implication of these norms, what the norms look like in terms of specific behaviors, in each school environment are taught to students through direct instruction and modeling. The norms are frequently posted throughout the building and expectations related to the norms are review with students frequently. Warren, Edmonson, Turnbull, Sailor, Wickham, Griggs, and Beech (2006) write, “the teaching of behavioral expectations includes at a minimum: (a) didactic instruction on the expectations and how they apply in various settings around the school, (b) a demonstration of appropriate behavior and social skills, and (c) opportunities for students to practice these skills through role-plays and in-vivo situations in different settings within the school and with a variety of people” (pp. 189-190).

In addition to defining and teaching the expected behaviors to all students, as a part of Tier 1, schools are encouraged to establish a system for frequent reinforcement of expected behaviors. This system is often established in the form of either a class-wide or individual based token economy where entire classes or individual students receive a ticket or token when observed demonstrating appropriate behaviors that they
can later exchange for a privilege or reward. Staff members are encouraged to use common language of the school norms as they reinforce students who are demonstrating the expected behaviors, for example: “I can tell you are prepared to learn because you came in quietly and you have your materials on your desk.” Tier 1 also includes a logical continuum of consequences for unwanted behaviors (Horner, 2010).

The second tier of the SW-PBS pyramid is the secondary intervention and is designed to meet the behavioral support needs of the approximately 15-20% of students who do not respond to the universal interventions. Schools identify students in need of extra support after Tier 1 has been implemented with fidelity and data has been collected. The students served in this tier often have a history of behavioral and academic challenges. These students are matched with interventions intended to teach deficit behavioral and social skills and provide additional incentive or reinforcement for the demonstration of appropriate behaviors. Horner (2010) suggests the following as efficient behavior change interventions or supports for Tier 2: check-in/check-out triage with a staff member, social skills clubs, mentoring, interest based groups, check and connect, First Step to Success program, and social skills groups such as Skill Streaming. He also states, “It is important that students receiving secondary supports continue to participate in the primary intervention; they simply are receiving additional supports to help them succeed in school” (p. 4). As with Tier 1, it is important that the interventions in Tier 2 be applied consistently and with fidelity and that frequent progress monitoring take placed so that data based decisions regarding interventions can be made.
The final tier, Tier 3, in the SW-PBS pyramid is for those students with severe behavioral support needs who, based on data, have not responded to the primary or secondary levels of intervention. This smaller group of students will be made up of approximately 1-10% of the total school population (www.pbismissouri.org). Often these students have been previously identified through IDEA 2004 as students with emotional or behavioral disturbances. At this tier schools are encouraged to perform a functional behavior analysis and develop a behavior improvement plan so that the student receives intensive individualized support that addresses his or her unique behavioral needs. A collaborative school team that includes diversely trained personnel such as administrators, counselors, special education staff, and social workers are often called upon to develop individual student plans. Horner (2010) explains the nature of the intervention at this level: “The support plan typically consists of multiple components, including strategies to influence the larger social context around a student, prevent the occurrence of problem behavior, teach new skills, ensure that appropriate behavior is reinforced, and minimize the likelihood that problem behavior is reinforced” (p. 5). As in Tiers 1 and 2, frequent progress monitoring must take place at this level so that data based decisions regarding the effectiveness of interventions can be made.

Though many schools that are not intentionally SW-PBS school include some of the ideas or characteristics of SW-PBS systems, the greatest effects from the SW-PBS philosophy are seen when the full system is committed to and implemented with fidelity. Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, and Leaf (2008) considered the importance of implementing SW-PBS and noted that the benefits of SW-PBS are most likely to be experienced when the program is implemented with at least 80% fidelity. The School-
Positive Behavior Supports and State Assessments  14

wide Evaluation Tool (SET) can be used by schools as an indicator of the degree to which the school's SW-PBS program is being implemented with fidelity. The SET is a survey completed annually by a trained outside observer and assesses the school in the following seven areas: expectations defined, behavioral expectations taught, system for rewarding behavioral expectations, system for responding to behavioral violations, monitoring and evaluation, management (administrator support), and district level support (policies, training, and data collection opportunities) (Bradshaw, 2008). Bradshaw et. al, found proper staff training was critical in the successful implementation of SW-PBS. They found that the implementation of SW-PBS with fidelity increased with significant differences when school staffs were provided with adequate training on the SW-PBS procedures. They also found that trained schools maintained their fidelity in implementation for at least two years after training (2008).

While there is little information available on the direct impact that the implementation of SW-PBS has on standardized state assessment scores, studies have shown a number of positive outcomes in the school environment that would facilitate a positive impact on student achievement. Among these positive outcomes are: decreased office referrals, decreased suspensions, a decrease in lost instruction time due to behavioral disruptions, and an overall increase in reports of a positive school climate (Sherrod, Getch, & Daigle, 2009). One of the factors contributing to the success of SW-PBS is that where traditional methods of school discipline such as suspensions and detentions may have a minimal deterrent effect on problem behaviors, they do not teach deficient social and behavior skills as SW-PBS does. This teaching of deficient skills leads to a long term decrease in problem behaviors and therefore discipline
referrals and suspensions for individual students. Students are able to learn missing skills and are then able to perform the desired behaviors in the future rather than continuing to perform the problem behaviors. Curtis (2010) writes, “The degree to which SW-PBS programs are effective varies among schools, but most research to date indicates decreases in behavioral problems and suspensions ranging between 20% and 60%” (p. 159).

Sherrod et.al (2009) examined the outcomes of SW-PBS in a suburban elementary school demonstrating the comprehensive positive impact that implementation can have on the whole school environment. In this study, SW-PBS was implemented for one year and more intensive interventions were also provided to a targeted group of students who had 3 or more discipline referrals in the fall semester. The outcomes were as follows: a 26% decrease in the number of office discipline referrals (219 in school year 2006/2007 to 162 in school year 2007/2008), a 43% decrease in referrals for not following directions, a 40% decrease in referrals for physical aggression, a 53% decrease in bus referrals, and a 63% decrease in inappropriate behavior referrals. Likewise the decrease in the office behavior referrals for the group of students targeted for intensive intervention was statistically significant as was the increase in positive perception that teachers had of these targeted students. Sherrod writes, “The data from this study support the premise that as students’ knowledge, attitudes, and skills increase, their behavior improves. As the behavior of the students improves, the teacher’s perception ratings improve” (p. 425).

Curtis et. al (2010) also found significant reductions in percentages of behavioral referrals, suspensions, and instructional days lost. This study examined the impact of
the implementation of SW-PBS in a public elementary school over the course of four years. During this time behavior referrals decreased by 47.8%, out of school suspensions decreased by 67%, and instructional days lost decreased by 56.5% in the case study school. This study also found that SW-PBS was particularly beneficial for students with behavioral and emotional disturbances.

Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006) examined the impact of the implementation of SW-PBS on an urban middle school and included a consideration of the impact to academic achievement. This study found significant decreases in office discipline referrals and suspensions which led to an increase in instructional time for students. Further when considering standardized test scores, the study found statistically significant increases in both math and reading. Math scores on standardized tests saw the most consistent gains, increasing significantly from baseline to year three. Reading scores increased significantly from year one to year three. Lassen asserts that the decrease in behavioral disruptions, office referrals, and suspensions increases instructional time available for students, which leads to the increases in standardized test scores. Further Lassen notes the impact on an administrator’s productive time when office discipline referrals (ODRs) decrease: “Additionally since administrators must personally deal with each ODR within a school, ODRs can also be viewed as depleting administrator. From this perspective, decreases in ODRs can translate into considerable time added to administrators’ schedules that can then be used in other, more preventative and positive activities (training teachers, acknowledging student achievements). Thus, reducing ODRs in a school is likely to produce a number of positive effects and result in overall improved functioning and performance” (p. 709).
Research Methods

Research Design

The study employed data archived by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and by Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support. MAP assessment scores were obtained from the DESE website for Missouri elementary schools. The Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support website provided information as to the classification of schools as SW-PBS Exemplar schools. The alpha level for the study was set at 0.25. The independent variable was the school’s status as a SW-PBS Exemplar school. The dependent variables were MAP assessment scores in Communication Arts and Math. A t-test analysis was run to examine the difference in percentage of students proficient in Communication Arts and Math on the Missouri Assessment Program in SW-PBS Exemplar schools vs. non-Exemplar schools.

Study Group Description

The study group for this research consisted of Missouri elementary schools identified by Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support as gold, silver, or bronze exemplar schools and an equal number of randomly selected non-exemplar Missouri elementary schools.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data was collected from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. The 2011 percentage of students proficient in Communication Arts
and Math on the Missouri Assessment Program assessment was pulled for each school in the study group. The study considered the percentage of students attaining a score of proficient or advanced in the areas of Communication Arts and Math. School classification data was pulled from the Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support website. Data was recorded on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

*Statistical Analysis Methods*

A Statistical Package (ASP) software was used to complete the statistical calculations in this study. A t-test was calculated. Additionally, Microsoft Excel was used to compile data used in the research.
Findings

Forty-five Missouri schools recognized for highly successful implementation of SW-PBS and forty-five Missouri schools that had not received this distinction were randomly selected to observe the correlation between successful implementation of SW-PBS and NCLB Communication Arts and Math AYP. Data was collected for each school and t-tests were performed to determine the correlation between recognition for successful implementation of SW-PBS and NCLB Communication Arts and Math AYP proficiency. The findings are presented in the tables and narratives below.

T-Test Analysis for SW-PBS Status and NCLB AYP in Communication Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
<th>t-Test</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW-PBS Schools (n=45)</td>
<td>51.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-SW-PBS (n=45)</td>
<td>46.50</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant when p-value<=0.25

When considering the relationship between SW-PBS status and NCLB Communication Arts AYP proficiency the data collected from the 45 randomly selected SW-PBS exemplar schools and 45 randomly selected non-exemplar schools indicated that there is a significant difference between the schools that have been recognized for excellence in implementation of SW-PBS and schools that have not received this distinction. The mean of SW-PBS exemplar schools was 51.58 percent of students meeting AYP in Communication Arts while the mean of the schools that were not recognized for implementation of SW-PBS was 46.50 percent of students meeting AYP.
in Communication Arts. The Mean D between the two is 5.08. The t-Test result was 1.77 and the df was 88. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference in percentage of students meeting AYP in Communication Arts based on SW-PBS implementation as defined by recognition as an exemplar school. Since the p-value of 0.08 is less than the alpha level of 0.25, the null hypothesis must be rejected. Therefore, based on the data from the 45 randomly selected SW-PBS exemplar schools and 45 randomly selected non-exemplar schools there is a significant difference in percentage of students meeting AYP in Communication Arts based the successful implementation of SW-PBS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean D</th>
<th>t-Test</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW-PBS Schools (n=45)</td>
<td>55.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-SW-PBS (n=45)</td>
<td>49.19</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant when p-value<=0.25

When considering the relationship between SW-PBS status and NCLB Math AYP proficiency the data collected from the 45 randomly selected SW-PBS exemplar schools and 45 randomly selected non-exemplar schools indicated that there is a significant difference between the schools that have been recognized for excellence in implementation of SW-PBS and schools that have not received this distinction. The mean of SW-PBS exemplar schools was 55.83 percent of students meeting AYP in Math while the mean of the schools that were not recognized for implementation of SW-PBS was 49.19 percent. The t-Test result was 2.14 and the df was 88. Since the p-value of 0.03 is less than the alpha level of 0.25, the null hypothesis must be rejected. Therefore, based on the data from the randomly selected SW-PBS exemplar schools and non-exemplar schools there is a significant difference in percentage of students meeting AYP in Math based on the successful implementation of SW-PBS.
PBS was 49.19 percent of students meeting AYP in Math. The Mean D between the two is 6.64. The t-Test result was 2.14 and the df was 88. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference in percentage of students meeting AYP in Math based on SW-PBS implementation as defined by recognition as an exemplar school. Since the p-value of 0.03 is less than the alpha level of 0.25, the null hypothesis must be rejected. Therefore, based on the data from the 45 randomly selected SW-PBS exemplar schools and 45 randomly selected non-exemplar schools there is a significant difference in percentage of students meeting AYP in Math based the successful implementation of SW-PBS.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Elementary schools that were highly successful in implementing SW-PBS with fidelity achieved higher percentages of student proficient in Communication Arts and Math on the Missouri Assessment Program assessment in 2011 than schools that either did not implement SW-PBS at all or did not implement SW-PBS with a high degree of fidelity. The difference in student achievement may be attributed to increased instruction time for all students due to fewer disruptive negative behaviors and to an overall increase in positive school environment. When problem behaviors decrease, all individuals in the school environment are able to better focus on student learning. Administrators have more time to provide training, feedback, and support to teachers. Teachers are able to focus on instruction and monitoring students’ academic progress. Rather than spending significant time addressing problem behaviors, teachers can provide enrichment to students who are excelling and remediation to students who are struggling to meet learning goals. Likewise, students are able to maintain focus on learning objectives and academic achievement. Without the distraction and disruption of problem behaviors, all students are more at ease and better able to focus on learning academic skills and content. Finally, the increase in positive climate that tends to be reported with the implementation of SW-PBS may improve attendance rates, which is another increase in instruction time for students.

The difference between percentages of students proficient in Communication Arts and Math may also be attributed to the impact that SW-PBS has on those students who are at risk for academic failure. The students who are at greatest risk for poor performance on the state assessments are often the same students who demonstrate
Positive Behavior Supports and State Assessments 23

problem behaviors. As recent studies revealed, these are the students who often receive the greatest benefit from the implementation of SW-PBS. Students who frequently demonstrate problem behaviors tend to gain significant instruction time through learned behavior and social skills and a decrease in office discipline referrals and suspensions. The increase in positive perception that teachers often gain for these students after the implementation of SW-PBS may also increase the students’ positive experiences of school and therefore their confidence and willingness to pursue academic achievement.

The data yielded by the present study should prompt districts and school administrators and teachers to give further consideration to the implementation of programs of school-wide positive behavior support. Previous studies indicated that the implementation of SW-PBS is likely to yield such positive outcomes as decreases in office referrals, acts of aggression, and suspensions and increases in a positive school climate. The present study presents data indicating that the implementation of SW-PBS may also yield increases in percentages of students proficient in Communication Arts and Math on the Missouri Assessment Program assessments. Districts and schools that have not yet implemented SW-PBS should consider the implementation of such a program with adequate training for staff for attaining high degrees of fidelity implementation. Districts and schools that have implemented programs of SW-PBS should commit to implementation with high degrees of fidelity. Staff training on SW-PBS should be a priority as should be time for staff review and analysis of behavior data.
The data of the present study provides helpful information regarding the relationship between the successful implementation of SW-PBS and student performance on standardized state assessments required by No Child Left Behind. Further study could provide important information needed for a better understanding of this relationship. The present study considered the impact of SW-PBS on state assessment performance at the elementary school level. It would be beneficial for administrators making district-wide decisions to know if the same impact would be expected at the secondary level. Further study might examine the relationship between SW-PBS implementation at the secondary level on state assessment performance. Further study might also consider the relationship between the impact of SW-PBS and other factors that impact a school’s state assessment performance such as percentage of students who receive free or reduced lunch. Finally, further study might consider the different ways in which schools have chosen to implement SW-PBS and examine which components of SW-PBS have the greatest impact on student academic achievement.
References


