

RUNNING HEAD: PBS Classroom Management

Positive Behavior Support: A Positive Approach to Classroom Management and Student  
Achievement

BY

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### Abstract

Some students spend a lot of time outside of their regular classroom due to behavior issues. Unfortunately, dealing with the behavioral aspect of the students' education can immensely affect their achievement. With the use of Positive Behavioral Support, a school can keep students in the classroom, so there is less instructional time lost. PBS is a school-wide approach to positive discipline. This paper outlines the correlation of the implementation of PBS and its effect on targeted AIMS web scores. The students' discipline is tracked through SWIS, and student academic scores are based on AIMS web scores. In order to see a positive correlation, all staff in the building have to be "on board." Fidelity is the key to implementing this program. All staff needs to be trained on the new programs and be knowledgeable on how to implement them correctly. With students spending more time in the classroom and less time in the office due to discipline problems, a school can see an increase in their academic scores, based on AIMS web data. The following study was prepared to determine if there is a difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessments using traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. The study also is prepared to determine a difference in the number of office referrals using traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. It was found there is a significant difference in student achievement and the number of office referrals when using PBS classroom management.

## Introduction

### *Background, Issues and Concerns.*

Classroom management is a vital requirement in any successful school district and classroom. An issue that many administrators and teachers are finding is that students are spending more time than ever out of the classroom due to discipline issues. A concern that many of them have is that students are missing crucial instructional time resulting in lower academic scores. According to a particular school district research showed (Boon, 2010):

- 477 major office referrals at 30 minutes=
- 238.5 hours of lost instructional time=
- 35.75 days

Using a more rigorous discipline system can make a dent in the above statistics and keep students in the classroom learning. PBS can do just that. PBS stands for Positive Behavior Support. PBS is a newer classroom management style that focuses on using rewards and incentives for positive behavior. According to OSCP Center of PBIS, Positive Behavior Support is a board range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior. However, PBS can take some time to fully implement within a school. Students must get acclimated to the changes in the discipline system and this could take some time for it to be effective.

### *Practice under Investigation.*

The practice under investigation will be looking at targeted benchmark assessment scores and office referrals. There will be an investigation to see if there is a

significant difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. There will also be an investigation to see if there is a significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. These investigations will be looking at the different classroom management styles and determining the differences in test scores and office referrals.

*School Policy to be Informed by Study.*

Every school district and classroom needs a clear plan for discipline and classroom management. If there is a significant difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management administrators and teachers need to be able to plan adequate interventions to best serve all students.

*Conceptual Underpinning.*

Every school district and classroom needs a strong and successful plan for discipline. Classroom management can make instructional time more effective. The less time students spend out of the classroom due to behavior problems, the more instructional time students are missing. According to OSCP Center of PBIS, Positive Behavior Support is a board range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior. Discipline can be individualized based on students specific behavior needs. PBS will change student behavior by focusing on students' positive behavior and rewarding them for doing the right thing.

*Statement of the Problem.*

If there is a difference between instructional time lost due to behavior issues and the effect it has on test scores, administrators and teachers need a clear plan for academic and behavior intervention.

*Purpose of the Study.*

The purpose of this study is to explore the difference between instructional time lost due to behavior issues and the effect it has on test scores.

*Research Questions.*

RQ #1: Is there a significant difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management?

RQ #2: Is there a significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management?

*Null Hypothesis.*

Ho #1: There is no significant difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management.

Ho #2: There is no significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management.

*Anticipated Benefits of the Study.*

The result of this study will inform administration and teachers on the effect that PBS has on student achievement and test scores. This study will also illustrate the effect PBS has on major office referrals.

*Definition of Terms.*

PBS- Positive Behavior Support- A set of research-based strategies used to increase quality of life and decrease problem behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person's environment.

ODR- Office Discipline Referral

RTI- Response to Intervention- A process that schools can use to help children who are struggling academically or behaviorally.

Tier I- Universal Prevention- First level of PBS and RTI

Tier II- Secondary Intervention- Second level of PBS and RTI

CICO- Check in Check out- An intervention strategy used in Tier II.

SWIS- School-Wide Information System- Data program used to track discipline referrals.

SWIS produces charts known as the BIG 5 Data.

Aims Web- Data program to track academic scores based on a set of researched based tests.

Big 5 Data- Data tracked by student, time, behavior, location, and motivation.

At-risk behavior- Student behaviors, which are displayed continuously such as aggression, disruption, truancy, disobedience, property damage, and lying.

*Summary.*

A study was conducted to see if there was a significant difference in student achievement of targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. If the t-test concludes that there was a significant difference, administrators and teachers should create an adequate plan for intervention to best serve all students. This plan for intervention should provide strategies to help improve student achievement based on behavior. A study was also conducted to see if there was a significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. If the t-test concludes that there was a significant difference, administrators and teachers should create an adequate plan for intervention to decrease the number of office referrals and maintain student attendance in the classroom.

## Review of Literature

Positive Behavior Support is a fairly new initiative in schools to implement a safe and positive environment for students. PBS is “The application of evidence- based strategies and systems to assist schools to increase academic performance, increase safety, decrease problem behavior, and establish a positive school culture” (Boon, 2010, p. 2). Schools intend to build environments in which positive behavior is more successful than problem behavior. Schools that implement PBS accentuate the use of preventative teaching and reinforcement–based strategies to achieve meaningful and durable behavior and lifestyle outcomes. Schools that execute traditional discipline focus on the student’s problem behavior and the goal is to stop the undesirable behavior through the use of punishment. A school that applies PBS replaces undesired behaviors with a new behavior, alters environments, and teaches appropriate skills and rewards appropriate behavior (Boon, 2010, p. 3).

“More than ever, the public perception is that student behavior is out of control” (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008, p. 4). Schools are trying to correct the issue by “getting tough” with students to try and regain control. Schools try to formulate strict rules and allocate severe consequences for those who choose not to abide by the rules. The latest scheme in some “problematic” schools is the implementation of “zero tolerance” policies. It has been proven that these ideals have little to no effect on student behavior. “School- wide PBS is a proactive, systems level approach, that enables schools to effectively and efficiently support student and staff behavior” (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008, p. 4). Schools that implement PBS identify clear and measurable outcomes



for students and staff. These schools use data to guide decisions and “...invest in systems that will ensure that practices are implemented with fidelity and sustained over time”

(Simonsen, Sugai, & Negrón, 2008, p. 4).

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach.”

“If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we Teach? Or Punish”

(Herener, 1998 as referenced in Boon, 2010)?

“Children who fall behind academically will be more likely to find academic work aversive and also find escape- maintained problem behaviors reinforcing”

(McIntosh, 2008; McIntosh, Sadler, and Brown, 2010 as referenced in Miller & Wolfe, 2011 p. 2). Students who do not do well academically tend to cause disruptions in the classroom. Miller and Wolfe (2011) believe that educators need to change how they respond to students. Rather than asking which students need help, schools should question what help each student needs. Instead of just having programs and people available, they should have intentional designs of services as resources (Miller & Wolfe, 2011).

Research shows that a substantial amount of instructional time is lost when students are removed from the classroom for challenging behaviors. The average time students are out of the classroom for an office referral is thirty minutes. It takes an administrator on average, fifteen minutes to process a referral. In a given school that had 852 referrals in one year, students lost eighteen days of instruction. Administrators lost nine days of work time (Miller & Wolfe, 2011).

Many behaviors are the results of different motivators. Boon (2010) suggests students respond differently depending on their motivation. Students are commonly motivated to avoid tasks, obtain peer attention, or obtain adult attention (Boon, 2010).

PBS is based on a three-tiered model. The primary level is for use school-wide. It is intended for all students and staff in all settings. Outcomes are identified for all students and staff, and practices are established to take full advantage of the success of all students. “When implemented effectively and accurately, schools can expect most students (89% at elementary level) to respond to the primary tier intervention” (2011, p. 5). Tier I is universal prevention. Schools use the Big 5 graphs that show rate per day per month, problem behavior, time of day, location and students involved (MO SW-PBS Data Decision- Making, 2011). After the data is collected, these graphs produce a primary statement. Teams look at the data and develop questions which results in a precision statement “...that helps identify action steps necessary to provide the most efficient and effective school wide interventions as possible” (2011, p. 5). These interventions help the school run more smoothly and promote a more positive learning environment. The last phase of Tier I is the preventative steps. This step emphasizes “...teaching of desired replacement behaviors chosen from the school wide matrix, active supervision, pre-correcting and recognition when students demonstrate desired behaviors” (2011, p. 5).

The second level of PBS is Tier II. At this level, schools continue to monitor the effectiveness of Tier I implementation but begin to focus more on certain challenging behaviors and decide where there needs to be more of a focus. Teams look at data and from that data, develop interventions to help deter the undesirable student behavior.

“Using existing data, teams create decision rules to identify students who do not respond to universal prevention” (2011, p. 6). Individual data is collected to determine the effectiveness of the chosen interventions. If the student still is not responding, further examination is required. Social skills are often taught at this level of PBS. Students with well developed social skills tend to

- Pay better attention
- Work more cooperatively with others
- Ask for assistance when needed
- Behave more responsibly and
- Respect other points of view

(Elliott and Gresham, 2008 as referenced in Childs, 2011)

Students need to learn social skills for a number of reasons. Childs (2011) states that students can be deficient in social skills due to the lack of knowledge, lack of practice, lack of cues, and lack of reinforcement and presence of competing problem behaviors (Childs, 2011). Tier II is for “...providing interventions that are easy to administer to small groups of students, and which require limited time and staff involvement” (Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, p. 2). In order for Tier II to be successful, participants must be willing to use it with fidelity. According to Sandomierski *et al* (n.d.) “...academic and behavior interventions must be carried out with fidelity in Tier II before the student can be judged to have an adequate or insufficient response to intervention.”

Students at the Tier III level are in need of intensive, individual interventions. Social skills taught at this level are selected to individually meet the needs of targeted students. Students at this level are monitored closely and work with trained staff to help them learn to adapt to positive reinforcements for a successful outcome (Childs, 2011).

Sandomierski *et al* (n.d.) suggests that schools may find it is necessary to provide academic and behavior interventions simultaneously, but a judgment of the student's response to the behavior intervention should be interpreted cautiously until the academic problems are remediated. "...many times the behavioral problems originate because of the student's inability to succeed academically at a level comparable to his/her peers" (Sandomierski *et al*.n.d.). "Students who possess higher levels of social skills tend to have higher levels of academic achievement than students who possess lower levels of social skills" (Malecki and Elliott, 2002; Wentzel, 1993 as cited in Childs, 2011 p. 3).

"...McIntosh suggested that a "*coercive cycle of educational failure* emerges in which students (a) experience academic demands as aversive, (b) engage in problem behavior that is maintained by escaping academic demands (e.g. being sent to the office), (c) lose access to instruction, (d) fall further behind, (e) find academic demands even more aversive and (f) become even more likely to engage in escape-maintained problem behavior" (McIntosh, 2005 as referenced in Algozzine, Wang, & Violette, 2010, p. 2).

Algozzine, Wang and Violette (2010) suggest that academic skills could affect behavior because students display undesirable behaviors when they become frustrated.

RTI is the academic side of PBS. Research shows that when implemented cooperatively, there was a reduction in discipline referrals and a rise in academic achievement (Algozzine, Wang, & Violette, 2010).

Numerous interventions can be used for students displaying "at-risk" behaviors. They include social skills training; check in- check out systems, peer mentors and clubs. A trendy Tier II intervention is check in- check out. Check in- check out "...is based on

a simple strategy for increasing ongoing structure and feedback for at-risk students” (Todd, Campbell, Meyer, & Horner, 2008, p. 2). Students using check in-check out utilize a chart that displays targeted behaviors. These charts can provide “Structure and prompts that students need throughout the day, adult written feedback throughout the day, visual reminders of personal goals for the day, data collection, and communications between adults at school and home” (Todd, Campbell, Meyer, & Horner, 2008, p. 2). Students check in with an assigned staff member in the morning. They receive feedback from teachers throughout the day and check out with the same assigned staff member at the end of the day. They have one on one time to discuss concerns and the student has the opportunity to earn points to receive some sort of positive reinforcement when their goal has been attained (Todd, Campbell, Meyer, & Horner, 2008).

“Aims web is a reading, language, and math assessment and web-based data management system” (AIMS Web). Educators can monitor students in the areas of Math, Reading, Early Literacy and Language Arts. All students are benchmarked three times a year. Students who are below targeted levels for their age and grade level are progress monitored on a monthly basis. Some teachers prefer to progress monitor more often. Aims Web assessments are one minute tests and they can be administered individually or in small groups. The data can then be entered into the system and a graph is produced. Teachers can produce a graph per individual student or for the whole class. The data is then used to construct interventions for the lacking skills (AIMS Web).

“SWIS is a web-based software system for collecting and summarizing office discipline referrals in schools” (SWIS). The SWIS program is designed to produce the Big 5 Data report for staff to review and make decisions to improve the discipline

practices in their schools. This program is designed to make conclusions about problem behaviors, locations of problems, types of problems, students involved and staff that made the referral. SWIS is a quick program with approximate data entry time at 30 seconds per referral. The program is economical with a cost of two hundred fifty dollars per academic year. “The system was developed by University of Oregon faculty in collaboration with elementary, middle, and high school personnel” (SWIS).

Administrators can generate graphs to display behavior data by grade, class, or individual student. The graphs are easy to read and can be tailored to each school’s individual needs (SWIS).

In order to achieve academic success, educators must use the behavioral data gathered to increase instructional time. The student’s behaviors are tracked by location, time, motivation, and type of behavior. Starskey *et al* (2011) states that educators need to identify outcomes, identify problem, analyze problem, develop a plan, implement the plan, and evaluate the plan. Identify the outcome by determining what an acceptable outcome would be in the given situation. Identify the problem by looking at the data and concluding where the “problem areas” are and when they are happening. Analyze the problem to determine what the possible motivation is and who is involved. Develop a plan of action. Decide how to take the information and make an intervention to help deter the behavior. Implement the plan in a small group setting (Starkey, Brawley, Hairston, Weber, & Bartell, 2011). Schools that respond to behavioral data to guide their curriculum, experience a decline in behavior issues and an incline in academic achievement.

## Research Methods

### *Research Design.*

A quantitative study was conducted to see if there was a significant difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. The independent variable being tested was classroom management styles, while the dependent variable tested was targeted benchmark assessment scores. A study was also conducted to see if there was a significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. The independent variable being tested was classroom management styles, while the dependent variable tested was the number of office referrals. If there is a significant difference found in these studies, administrators and teachers should implement a plan for intervention to best serve all students academically and behaviorally.

### *Study Group Description.*

Students from a school district in North Central Missouri were chosen to be evaluated based on test scores and office referrals compared to traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. Test scores and office referrals will be evaluated in years prior to the implementation of PBS and years after the implementation of PBS. This elementary school serves grades ranging from Kindergarten to fourth. About 422 students are enrolled. 52.5 percent of students are free and reduced lunch. This

school is a Title 1 school and it is located in a rural community with low socioeconomic status.

*Data Collection and Instrumentation.*

Archived data from the database of the school district and Aim's Web was collected to identify differences in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. This data was also collected to identify differences in the number of office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management.

*Statistical Analysis Methods.*

A t-test was conducted to find if there was a significant difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. The source was broken into two categories: traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. A t-test was also conducted to find if there was a significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. The source was broken into two categories: traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management.



Findings

A t-Test was used to evaluate student achievement on targeted benchmark assessments when using traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. Also the number of office referrals was evaluated based on traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. The following information and graphs will show collected data and findings based on the information found.

**A t-Test Analysis Result for Question 1:**

**Is there a significant difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessment scores between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management?**

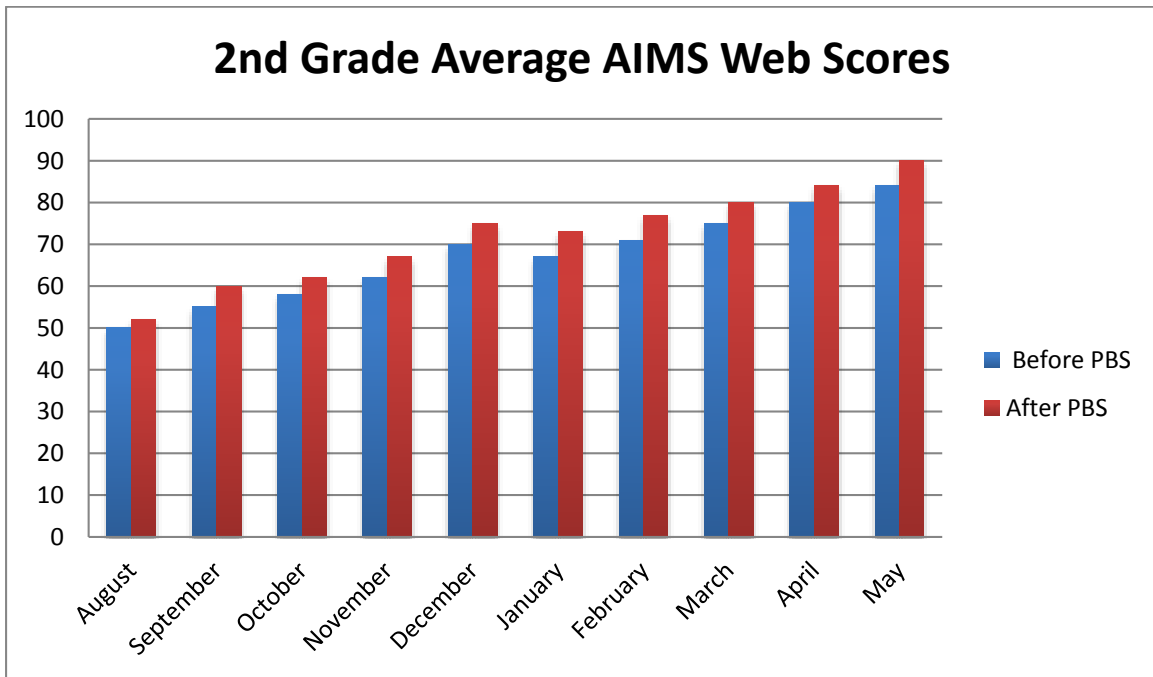
Table 1

Source	Mean	Mean D	t-test	df	p-value
Before PBS	67.2				
After PBS	68.6	-4.8	-1.23	9.0	6.03391E-7

Note: Significant when  $p \leq 0.25$

According to the data found before PBS was implemented in the school students mean score on the AIMS web assessment in second grade was 67.2. After PBS was

implemented the mean score was 68.6. The Mean D was -4.8. The t-test showed -1.23 and the degree of freedom was 9.0. The null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value of 6.03391E-7 is less than 0.25. There is a significant difference in student achievement on the targeted benchmark assessment before PBS and after PBS was implemented. The implementation of PBS shows an increase in students' scores on the benchmark assessment. The mean score increased from 67.2 to 68.6. The total growth between the mean scores is 1.4.



The graph above displays the average scores on AIMS Web testing for students in the second grade before and after PBS was implemented in a school. The data shows that after PBS was implemented in the school students performed better on the monthly AIMS Web benchmark assessment. The fall (August) benchmark scores show an average

growth of 2 points. The winter (January) benchmark shows an average growth of 6 points. The spring (May) benchmark shows an average growth of 6 points.

**A t-Test Analysis Result for Question 2:**

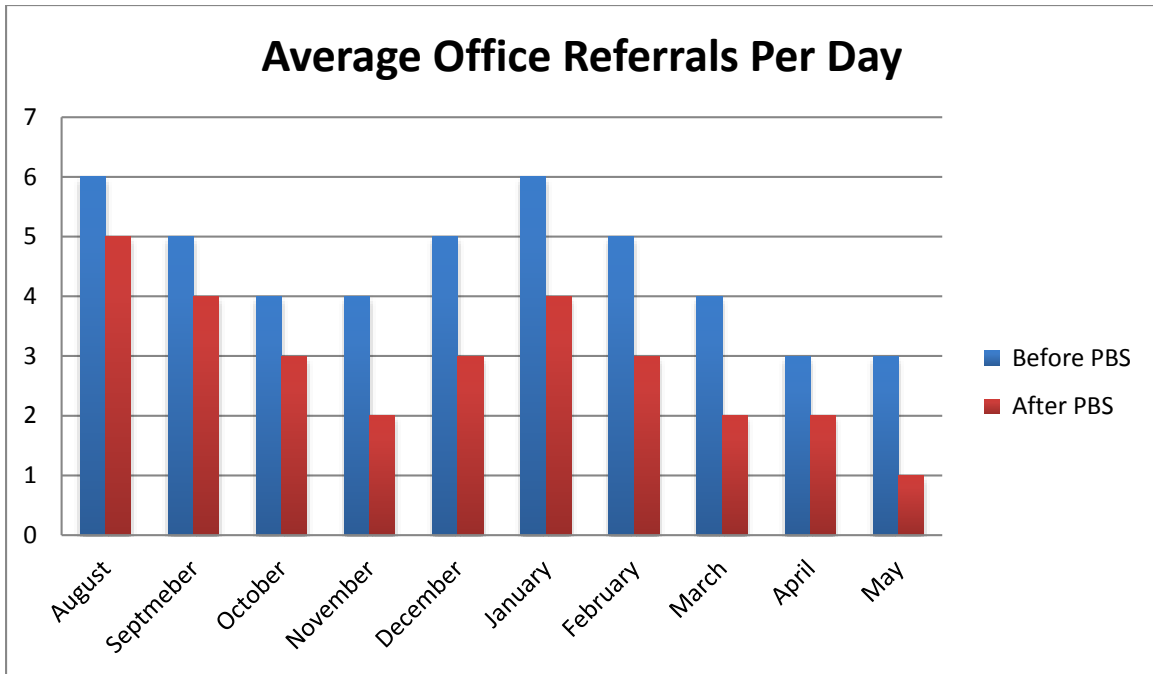
**Is there a significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management?**

Table 2

Source	Mean	Mean D	t-test	df	p-value
Before PBS	4.5				
After PBS	2.9	1.6	9.79	9	.0000042

Note: Significant when  $p \leq 0.25$

According to the data found before PBS was implemented in the school the mean office referrals each day was 4.5. After PBS was implemented the mean was 2.9. The Mean D was 1.6. The t-test showed 9.79 and the degree of freedom was 9. The null hypothesis must be rejected because the p-value .0000042 is less than 0.25. There is a significant difference between the numbers of office referrals per day before and after PBS was implemented within the school. The mean number of office referrals per day decreased from 4.5 to 2.9. The total difference is 1.6.



The graph above displays the average number of office referrals per day before and after PBS was implemented in a school. The data shows that the number of office referrals per day decreased each month after PBS was implemented in the school. The average number of referrals at the beginning of the year decreased by one referral a day. By the end of the year the number of referrals per day decreased by two referrals.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The data collected shows that there is a difference in student achievement on targeted benchmark assessments between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. Data was collected from a school before and after PBS was implemented in the given school. The scores show that students performed better of the targeted benchmark assessments after PBS was implemented in the school. The data showed that the average difference in student benchmark scores before was 1.4 points. The null hypothesis was rejected in this case and proves that PBS made a difference in student achievement on benchmark assessments. However, this data may have been collected too early to show as much growth in student achievement as other PBS schools. The data provided was collected during the year PBS was being implemented within the school. Students and faculty were still being acclimated to the new procedures and discipline system. The data would show more growth if the data was collected over a few years time. PBS has proven to be a highly effective classroom management system.

The data also shows that there is a significant difference in office referrals between traditional classroom management and PBS classroom management. Data was collected from a school before and after PBS was implemented in the given school. The data shows that the number of office referrals decreased each month after PBS was implemented in the school. The null hypothesis was rejected in this case and proves that PBS has made a difference on the amount of office referral each day. Students are spending more time in the classroom and less time missing important instruction. Discipline is being handled within the classroom to keep students engaged in instruction.

The data proves the conceptual underpinning to be accurate. Due to PBS students spend more time in the classroom and less time in the office. Students are able to sit in a safe spot and reflect on their behavior and still be in the classroom learning at the same time. This helps increase student achievement of targeted benchmark assessments. The data shows that the given school had a difference in student achievement after PBS was implemented. Scores increased and office referrals decreased.

Positive Behavior Support is a highly effective classroom management system. Data and research has proven that many schools across the country, as well as the given school, have found there to be an improvement in student achievement due to PBS positive reinforcement. PBS reinforces positive behavior and rewards students for just that. PBS will show more growth in this schools achievement scores over time. The data needs to be collected after a few years of implementation within a school to show an accurate measurement of how it is affecting student achievement on targeted benchmark assessments.

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