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# Effect of Using Behavioral Support Program for High School Students

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Effect of Using Behavioral Support Program for High School Students

By

Ryan Honan

Prepared in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Masters of Arts Degree in

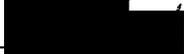
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**Abstract**

This study investigated disciplinary records of thirteen students who participated in a behavioral support program entitled P.R.I.D.E. offered at Tinley Park High School. An analysis of the records suggests that the program did have an impact on deterring certain disciplinary events. Educational implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

*Keywords:* Behavioral Support Program, Tier 2, and Secondary Education

EFFECT OF USING A BEHAVIORIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS IN  
GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

As educators it is important to provide students with an appropriate and safe learning environment. Meeting the needs of all students in a classroom is challenging for many reasons. With every reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it is reaffirmed that students should be placed in as least restrictive environment as reasonably appropriate (Burke & Sandan, 2015). As family members become more active participants in a child's education, there is a general preference for students in special education to be placed in general education (Burke & Sandan, 2015). Placements for students in general education classrooms whom are at risk may need additional support to succeed (Burke & Sandan, 2015). Many public schools are experiencing improved student, staff, and school outcomes with the adoption of a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support framework (PBIS) (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). These programs, which are federally mandated, organize evidence-based practices into an integrated continuum of support (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

Many school districts offer this support by implementing a behavioral support program. The purpose of the P.R.I.D.E. Program offered at Tinley Park High School is to improve academics and to modify unproductive behavior patterns. P.R.I.D.E. is a resource program that students will benefit from by having both social work and academic support. The overall goal of P.R.I.D.E. is to provide individualized tools and support for students so they may establish a sense of motivation, self advocacy, self control and de-escalation strategies that can be used on a daily basis in school and everyday life.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Programs such as P.R.I.D.E. are sometimes difficult to implement due to costs. Public

school funding comes from federal, state and local taxes, however about half of those funds come from property taxes, this creates large funding differences between wealthy and poverty stricken communities (Biddle & Berliner, 2002). According to Biddle and Berliner annual funding per student can range from less than \$4,000 to more than \$15,000 depending on the community (2002).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of the behavioral support program P.R.I.D.E. offered at Tinley Park High School. Effectiveness was measured by a data analysis of school disciplinary records of students that are in the program. The events considered were: Detention, Silent Lunch, Referral, Suspension, Parental Contact and Teacher Intervention Journal.

### **Questions of the Study**

The questions of the study are as follows:

1. What was the progress by the students who were in the program in regards to recorded detentions?
2. What was the progress by the students who were in the program in regards to recorded disciplinary events?
3. What was the progress by the students who were in special education?

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

The records of thirteen subjects in the program were examined. Participants in the program who graduated or transferred out before the 2016-2017 school year were not considered in this study due to lack of access to records. Furthermore, it is outside of the scope of this project to factor in any societal factors the students could have faced. This research does not

factor in the long-term effects of the student's behavior. The study is examining disciplinary records of the student the semester prior to entrance into the program versus the first semester of the program. Consequently, the study only evaluated student progress during the first semester of the program participation.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research is important because it examined the efficacy of the P.R.I.D.E. Program that is aimed to offer student support services. The mission of the program directly supports federal legislation from IDEA. This action based study considered if there was an impact for the students who participated in the program.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Least Restricted Environment.** “In general.--To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” (U.S. Department of Education)

**IDEA.** This pertains to when a student is suspected of having a disability. IDEA provides that school districts evaluate the child using a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, development and academic information to determine whether the student can be classified with a disability. A student can be classified with any of eleven recognized disabilities under IDEA (Lusk, 2015).

**PBIS.** This stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. This is a proactive system that is designed to offer support for all students (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Research has illustrated that three tiered system has been impactful in regards to teaching students positive behaviors (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

**PRIDE Program.** P.R.I.D.E. stand for Progression of Responsibility Independence Determination and Excellence. This program is a behavioral support for students both in and out of special education. Students are identified as PRIDE students and go to the PRIDE room during study halls where one social worker, one special education teacher and two paraprofessionals offer support for the student. In addition, there are passes that students have to cool down at the PRIDE room is available during classes. This is not a self-contained program,

but is designed to support students in a least restricted environment throughout the school day.

### **Chapter Summary**

It is evident that supporting students in a least restrictive environment is critical. Its direct consequence is helping the student who is at risk succeed in a classroom environment. Indirectly, the support helps reduce the pressures of the teachers in the classrooms and foster a positive learning environment for the other students.

## **Chapter II**

This chapter focuses on the dimensions surrounding behavioral support groups. Areas of focus include legislation pertaining to; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE), Least Restricted Environment, Section 504, Illinois Senate Bill 100, and Response to Intervention. Other areas such as training for teachers, and behavioral support programs were considered. The purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of why behavioral support groups are needed, and what types of programs have accessible results.

### **Special Education Law**

Over the course of several decades, legislation has emerged that has transformed how schools advocate for individuals with special needs. In general, there has been a gradual shift in the education world to better accept and serve students with special needs. A series of laws paved the way to provide the same opportunities for all students.

#### **Section 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1973. Section 504 is considered a civil rights law (Shaw & Madaus, 2008). Section 504 prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by entities that are receiving federal funding (Shaw & Madaus, 2008). Section 504 was ultimately the start of legislation that led to stronger advocacy in education for students with special needs (Shaw & Madaus, 2008).

#### **Education for All Handicapped Children Act**

Proceeding section 504 in 1973, was the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The main function of this law was to ensure that educational agencies receiving federal funding were accountable for providing an education for all students with disabilities (Wright,

2010). This law better protected the rights of students with disabilities that were awarded by section 504 (Wright, 2010).

### **Individuals with Disabilities Act**

In 1990, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (McGovern, 2015). There has been changes to IDEA but the substantial features pertaining to providing a least restricted environment and free and appropriate education have remained (McGovern, 2015). Prior to schools offering a free and appropriate education and placing students in a least restrictive environment schools, schools need to determine if a student has a disability and is eligible for special education. After a student is identified with a disability an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is developed for the student (McGovern, 2015). IDEA mandates that students identified with the following fourteen disabilities will receive special services to best suit his or her needs: Autism, Deafness, Deaf-Blindness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impaired, Speech-Language Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment (Lee, 2014).

**Individual Education Plan.** IDEA requires that schools develop and implement an (IEP) for students with disabilities between the ages of three and twenty-one (McGovern, 2015). A team of professionals form in order to develop this plan to best serve the student. This team of teachers, administrators and parents develop an IEP that states the student's current performance levels, identifies measurable annual goals, and describes the special education and related services that will be provided to allow the student to best achieve the goals (McGovern, 2015).

**Least Restricted Environment.** According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004, Least Restricted Environment is defined as:

In general.--To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

(U.S. Department of Education, 2004)

Least Restricted Environment is directly linked to inclusion, which gives students in special education access to general education classrooms. These classes are sometimes co-taught with a special education teacher providing support (Burke & Sandman, 2015). In co-taught classrooms there is one general education teacher paired with a special education teacher. On other occasions, there may be a paraprofessional, or one-on-one aid offering support in the least restricted classrooms. However, schools have had one general education teacher in a classroom with multiple students in special education (Burke & Sandman, 2015).

The social and academic benefits that a least restricted environment have had on students with special needs (Burke & Sandman, 2015). Consequently, parents generally in favor of more inclusive placements for students (Burke & Sandman, 2015). Many parents of students in special education maintain that IDEA should adopt stronger policies enforcing least restrictive practices in schools (Burke & Sandman, 2015).

**Free and Appropriate Education.** IDEA mandates a free and appropriate education for all students between the ages of 3 to 21 years old at public schools (Lusk, 2015). This mandate

emphasizes the importance of special education by offering related services to meet the needs of all students (Lusk, 2015). IDEA clearly provides that a state must enact policies that assure a free public education (McGovern, 2015). FAPE indicates that special education is a public expense and is offered without charge (McGovern, 2015).

**School Discipline.** IDEA indicates that prior to disciplinary action that would result in a change of a student's placement the district must conduct a manifestation determination and functional behavioral assessment to determine if the misconduct is related to the child's disability (Etscheidt, 2006). Districts must show that maintaining the student in the current placement may result in injury and that the proposed alternate permits the child to progress toward goals specified on the IEP (Etscheidt, 2006). Students who are not in special education do not have that protection by federal law (Etscheidt, 2006).

The consequences of student suspensions in regards to future success is very immense (Lusk, 2015). With the upward trend of suspension it is important to consider that student dropouts make up about 82% of the adult prison population and 85% of juvenile justice cases (Lusk, 2015). Students who are suspended are more likely to drop out because of disinterest in school and failing grades (Lusk, 2015). There are surely other factors to achieve success in life for someone, however research has long shown a strong correlation with the level of education and quality of life (Lusk, 2015). In a simpler context, when a student is suspended out of school they are not reaping the rewards of school (Lusk, 2015). The academic and social benefits that are mandated to be free are taken away (Lusk, 2015). Gonzalez argued that schools suspend students far too easily. In essence, schools have become high security environments where students are often removed for what would be considered minor infractions (2012). This may be attributed to the widespread use of what is known as the zero tolerance policy that has allowed

for more discretionary suspensions of students in the face of the increase in school violence (Heilborn, Cornell, & Lovegrove, 2015). If the behavior is to be considered as “minor infractions” there are certainly other options to best meet the needs of all students (Gonzalez, 2012).

### **Recent State Legislation**

Aside from laws that specifically relate to students with special needs, there has been recent legislation aimed to change disciplinary practices in Illinois. Senate Bill 100 was passed by the Illinois Senate in January 2015 (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). The bill legislates disciplinary guidelines for public and charter schools in Illinois.

#### **Senate Bill 100**

In Illinois legislation was recently passed to help remedy the school to prison pipeline (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). The goal of Senate Bill 100 was to push schools to consider problem solving and support the behavioral needs of the students instead of suspensions and or expulsions (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). There are several key components to the bill that was designed to shape change. First, the bill aimed to steer schools away from zero tolerance policies. Schools can no longer implement policies that suspend or expel a student for a particular behavior unless warranted by state and federal code (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). Second, out-of-school suspensions of longer than three days, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals to alternative settings can only be used when all other appropriate disciplinary interventions have been exhausted (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). Instead of using such disciplinary measures schools are encouraged to focus on meeting the needs of the student by promoting proven disciplinary alternatives to exclusionary discipline (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016).

Next, school districts are encouraged to provide ongoing professional development for staff. This professional development should focus on raising awareness for the consequences of exclusion, effective classroom management strategies, culturally responsive discipline and promote disciplinary methods that are appropriate for promoting a healthy and positive school climate (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). Also, the reform urges school districts to adopt policy to engage students to return from suspension. Suspended students must have the ability to make up any work that was missed during the time out (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016).

Finally, Senate Bill 100 aims to provide a stronger relationship with students. Schools are obligated to create a parent-teacher advisory committee with the school board to establish disciplinary guidelines for students (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). Senate Bill 100 urges schools to communicate more openly with the guardians of suspended students. The bill also takes some financial pressures off families by eliminating disciplinary fines or fees (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016).

Race has been regarded as a significant subplot in the bi-partisan reform of Senate Bill 100. According to the United States Department of Civil Rights, during the 2012-2013 school year the Chicago Public School System issued 32 suspensions for every 100 black student, while only 5 out of every 100 white students received suspensions (Voyce, ¶6) Research has indicated that overly harsh student consequences do not promote school safety or a better academic environment (Voyce, ¶9). Overall, Illinois students lose over one million instructional days due to suspension, expulsion, and arrest (Voyce, ¶6) Proponents of Senate Bill 100 argue that the legislation will help set a national trend towards promoting equity in education (Voyce, ¶2).

### **Bridging the Gap**

Ineffective collaboration between teachers and families could have grave impacts on communities. In this case study by Matt Wallace (2013) a group of African American parents formed together in an effort to increase the involvement of African American parents and the success of African American students at a local public high school. Research suggests that the more engaged parents are in their children's education, the more likely their children are to succeed in school, which can come in varying degrees of involvement (2013). Wallace argues that existing literature often suggests there are a lack of ethnic minority parent involvement in schools and a lack of African American parents specifically; efforts to increase ethnic minority parent participation have been unsuccessful (2013). Lack of involvement from African American parents have varying reasons, some reasons listed in the article are restriction of work schedule, culture barriers, limited transportation or their own feelings of incompetence when it comes to their own educational background (2013). The case study looks at what happens when African American parents do get involved with their kids' education. A group of six parents dedicated to the involvement of their kids got involved by helping with homework and other school projects, being involved with school meetings and academic progress. When these parents expressed concerns about the faculty's inability to meet the needs of ethnic minority children they were met with the faculty's low expectations of Black children and their unwillingness to test Black children for their learning disabilities or accelerated education programs (2013). Their parental involvement was criticized and their concerns fell on deaf ears (2013).

This study a group of African American parents and community members joined together to form Concerned African American Parents (CAAP). CAAP members engaged with both

parents and teachers to help with the African American student population to become more successful in school both in and out of the classroom (2013). Even with all of the observed influence on increasing student success at the high school the group was met with exclusion, was discounted and undermined by the staff at the school. CAAP held an Enrichment Center to help students and asked for staff volunteers but staff did not feel obligated to volunteer their time due to varying reasons, including if kids needed help they could come to their classroom or not enough time in the day (2013). Teachers took issue with parents coming in to class to work with students, and or students leaving class to work with parents for CAAP mentoring sessions (2013). Teachers found CAAP activities to be disruptive and ruined lesson plans and would not allow students to participate, which resulted in missed opportunity for those teachers' students (2013).

Wallace concluded that in this particular case study teachers were not participating in CAAP's effort and CAAP was met with resistance causing students to miss out on valuable learning experiences (2013). The research conducted suggests that even when parents are unified and strive to get involved with the school in ways that are aligned with research on supporting development, such as mentoring, they are met with large hurdles if they don't have support of school officials (2013).

### **Co-Taught Classroom**

The structure of a co-taught classroom is to pair one general education teacher with a special education teacher to better serve all students. Co-teaching is part of a response to intervention, often used in Tier 1 and Tier 2 (Friend & Cook, 2013). Co-teaching is designed as a service delivery option for providing special services for students with disabilities (Friend and

Cook, 2013). While many people in education may argue that co-teaching is very impactful, the overall results of co-teaching is fairly mixed.

Studies have revealed that many co-taught classrooms do not always have an equal partnership, specifically at the high school level (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, & McDuffie, 2005). From the observations of teachers, it was said to be rare for the Special Education teacher to deliver instruction, but was more likely to manage the activities (Mastropieri et al., 2005). In general the observation reported the Special Education teacher was satisfied not taking a lead role (Mastropieri et al., 2005). This may be contributed in some cases to a lack of comfort for teachers who may be in an environment where they are not experts in the content area. This lack of comfort puts a large responsibility on the administration team in regards to placement of teachers in co-taught classrooms (Mastropieri et al., 2005).

Furthermore, the pacing of the class was described as an issue. From the observations there was not enough individualized instruction for students with needs because the class was forced to keep a very fast pace (Mastropieri et al., 2005). This issue of pacing in a co-taught structured classroom is compounded by the normality of very large classrooms with students ranging greatly in ability. Not enough was observed to be done to meet the needs of all of the students' individual needs (Mastropieri et al., 2005).

Other research from co-teaching does promote effectiveness given the right circumstances. An article written by Murawski and Hughes examines the circumstances of the co-taught class. Ideally schools with co-taught classes should have, as the authors describe, a reasonable number of students with special needs per class. So if a class has 30 students, co-teaching will be less impactful if 25 of those students have special needs and 5 do not (2009).

Also, there is a premise that teachers that teach in co-taught classrooms can learn

different strategies from each other (2009). Teachers using one another as resources are convenient while fostering professional development. Specifically, general education teachers can learn how to differentiate instruction to all learners from a special education teacher (2009). This not only serves students in the co-taught classroom but also ultimately serves future students taught without a special education teacher (2009).

Schools do need to take the responsibility of allowing co-teachers time to mold together (2009). The authors used the phrase “arranged marriage” to describe how some teachers felt when assigned to co-teach (2009). Some possible solutions are: schools paying for teachers to go to workshops, offering the same planning periods for teachers, and designating time in the summer for collaboration. Success of co-taught classes can depend on effective collaboration with the two teachers that collaboration sometimes needs time. Effectiveness of co-teaching and support programs but school funding is sometimes not equitable to promote this effectiveness (2009).

### **Funding**

Public school funding comes from federal, state and local taxes, nearly half of those funds come from property taxes. Depending on the socioeconomic status of communities, school funding varies greatly across the country. Research has suggested that school funding and student achievement are linked together (Biddle & Berliner, 2002). Conclusions, have been drawn that smaller class sizes and higher teacher quality will lead to an improvement in student achievement (Biddle & Berliner, 2002).

### **High Quality Teaching**

In many cases at risk students are not in co-taught classrooms. Many times a general education teacher will have a class of 30 students, with several students needing special services

(Couvillon, Bullock, & Gable, 2009). Under these circumstances high quality teaching is critical to best meet the needs of all students (Couvillon, et al., 2009). Research indicates that more can be done to train special education teachers to support students with E/BD (Couvillon, et al., 2009). According a survey response from 134 teachers from across the country, there was a lack of training in designing functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans (Couvillon et al., 2009). Most of the respondents to the survey reported not receiving training or instruction on designing Functional Behavioral Assessment's or Behavioral Intervention Plan's until they were fifth year teachers (Couvillon et al., 2009). Despite the mandate for schools to implement FBAs and BIPs many schools are annually involved in due process hearings resulting from inadequate use of these two practices (Couvillon et al., 2009).

Understanding that high quality teaching is a corollary to student achievement is important. Prior attention has focused primarily on why students leave without a diploma and not on how to help them stay, little is known about how to support student persistence in school. Kimberly Knesting and Nancy Waldron performed a qualitative case study on 17 high school students who were identified as at risk. The study indicates that the students who persisted and stayed in school all had three factors in common. The authors describe these three factors as: “goal orientation— students’ belief they will benefit from graduating, (b) willingness to play the game—students’ willingness to follow school rules, and (c) meaningful connections—relationships with teachers who believed students could graduate and provided support (2006)

Students describe the component establishing meaningful connections with teachers as very important. According to these students, support for persevering tended to come from a teacher or an administrator, not from a specific program offered by the school or district (2006). In comparison, teachers attributed specific programs, not teachers, as vital for supporting

students who are at risk of dropping out of school. In essence, even when programs are put in place to support students, the educators that are represented in these programs are pivotal (2006).

From observations and interviews the authors presented a few characteristics of what made the teachers effective. Teaching students which behaviors hindered success, providing feedback on student behavior and teaching the students how to change behavior were important steps (2006). Most importantly, teachers offered support, acceptance, and encouragement to students (2006). The overall findings of this research suggest emphasizing the power of people not programs.

Authors Kristy Cooper and Andrew Miness (2014) present the role of high school teachers understanding in the development of caring student-teacher relationships from the students' perspective. The results conclude that caring as relation is a desirable form of teacher care (2014). Students perceive that teachers understand them both as people and learners. This result is not consistent in every case since students have the ability to regulate the extent to which they allow teachers to understand students. (2014). Student-teacher relationships are seen to have a large impact on students' social and emotional experiences. Consequently, there is often an emphasis on teaching teams, smaller teaching loads and advisories to help build strong relationships (2014). Research has continued to demonstrate that students feel more connected to teachers whom they perceive care about them academically and personally (2014).

Both teachers and students possess the ability to limit or release the extent of which each party can benefit from the student-teacher relationship. Teachers can't simply understand their students because they want to and students can regulate how much personal details they divulge to their teachers (2014). The authors' focus was on the co-creation of student-teacher

relationships from the students' vantage point by analyzing interviews with 33 students in grades 9-12 as they discuss 65 different student-teacher relationships (2014).

In most cases the findings showed that students credited interpersonally distant teachers as being a caring person if the teacher was likeable and the class was satisfactory (2014). When students were dissatisfied, they typically interpreted the lack of personal connection as a lack of care (2014). Students in the study mentioned lack of care was also being displayed when teachers were unavailable to help, deliberately being disrespectful or left students unattended (2014). When students perceived a lack of care, they spoke unfavorably about the teachers and reported negative academic experiences in their classes.

Cooper and Miness concluded that their findings support the personalization structures aimed at helping teachers develop care and understanding of students as important for enhancing students' emotional experiences and attachment in school (2014). Cooper and Miness suggest that understanding as virtue in particular could have considerable potential as a middle ground for teachers working with students who wish to retain some distance and independence from teachers (2014).

### **Behaviorism**

Behaviorists believe that behaviors are learned maladaptive responses, as a result these behaviors can be unlearned (Plotts & Webber, 2008). Behaviorists believe they can alter behavior by manipulating antecedents and consequences, in essence teaching people new behaviors based on different consequences (Plotts and Webber, 2008). After this exposure they can learn new behaviors. There are three major experiments based on behavioral principles:

### **Classical Conditioning**

Classical Conditioning was originally performed by Ivan Pavlov in 1902 when dogs were observed to see if they would salivate with a neutral stimulus. In classical conditioning, an unconditioned stimulus is combined with a neutral stimulus to elicit a conditioned response (Plotts & Webber, 2008). For example, dogs salivating when hearing only a bell and not the food dish.

### **Operant Conditioning**

Operant Conditioning places and emphasis on the consequences of behavior therefore reinforcement and punishment are central concepts of Operant Conditioning theory (Plotts & Webber, 2008). According to Skinner's basic principles the strength of a response increases with reinforcement or under punishment conditions (Plotts & Webber, 2008). This is seen through detentions, suspensions, silent lunch, loss of privilege, ineligibility, or positive reinforcements such as honor roll and praise from teachers.

### **Social Learning**

Behaviorists acquire new response by observing others. Essentially, Social Learning entails modeling behavior from others (Plotts & Webber, 2008). Individuals do not necessarily need to imitate or perform the behavior in itself. Social learning is also fostered as students learn behaviors from their peers (Plotts & Webber, 2008).

### **Support Programs**

There is evidence to suggest that certain school programs are effective to fostering student progress. Programs that are developed to better meet the needs of students with special social and emotional needs. Social Emotional Programs (SEL) may reduce aggressive behavior. An objective of these SEL programs is to help students improve their social and emotional skills.

In order to improve such skills it is vital to provide a safe and caring learning environment (Portnow, Downer & Brown, 2015). Many SEL programs are offered for students who are not typically in the general education setting (Portnoy et al., 2015)

Many public schools are experiencing improved student, staff, and school outcomes with the adoption of a positive behavioral interventions and support framework (PBIS). These programs organize evidence-based practices into an integrated continuum of support (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). The PBIS programs are typically used in general education settings. PBIS practices are evidence based at meeting desired youth outcomes. The systems include: teaming structures, professional development supports, and staff recognition that promote sustained implementation (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). PBIS uses a three-tiered approach to support students. These tiers are divided into universal, targeted-group, and intensive individualized support. The programs fidelity is dependent on teacher training and regular collection and review of data (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

Teacher training is at the forefront because teachers and other school personnel often feel inadequately prepared to work with students with significant behavioral difficulties (Wehby & Kern, 2014). Educators have for years reported that managing behavior problems is a serious concern (Wehby & Kern, 2014). Experienced teachers and newly hired teachers both indicating that they had an insufficient level of training regarding behavior (Wehby & Kern, 2014).

### **Response to Intervention**

Response to intervention (RTI) was added to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004 (Turse & Albrecht, 2015). RTI was designed as an alternative evaluation procedure to identify students early, to provide access to needed interventions, and to help identify children with disabilities (Turse & Albrecht, 2015).

The available research presents a multi-tiered approach as beneficial for schools to implement largely because it is aimed to meet the needs of all students (Wehby & Kern, 2014). Similar to other multi-tiered systems, behavioral support consists of multiple layers of prevention and intervention that systematically increase in intensity (Wehby & Kern, 2014).

**Tier 1.** Tier 1 is designed to provide structure in a school-wide sense. These are clear expectations for classroom and non-classroom settings with a consistent response when students fail to meet these expectations (Wehby & Kern, 2014).

**Tier 2.** Tier 2 consists of small group support programs that rely on effective methods to help students develop self-control strategies or enhance social relationships. Social skills groups or mentoring programs, such as Check In/Check Out (CICO) is an example of Tier 2 programs that educators have successfully used with students who did not respond to Tier 1 interventions (Wehby & Kern, 2014).

Check In/Check Out is one of the most popular Tier 2 intervention used in schools today (Hawken, Bundock, Kladis, O'Keeffe, & Barrett, 2014). In this program students begin the day with a check in with the CICO coordinator and return for a checkout at the end of the day (Hawken et al., 2014). The coordinator was generally a school staff member. During the check in the coordinator provided the daily progress report, which listed the school wide behavioral expectations. The teacher provided feedback from the day for the student (Hawken et al., 2014). Ultimately, at the checkout the coordinator calculates the points earned throughout the day and gives the student a small reward (Hawken et al., 2014). The checkout will complete with the coordinator giving the student a copy of the report to be returned the next day with a parent signature (Hawken et al., 2014).

Research suggests that the effectiveness of CICO varies amongst students. A

comprehensive systematic review of CICO revealed that there is evidence that implementation of CICO may lead to reductions in problem behavior (Hawken et al., 2014). There are limitations to how many students can use CICO at schools. Recent research indicates that schools can serve 7-11% of their student population using this CICO model (Hawken et al., 2014). Another important factor of CICO is that it was most prevalent and effective in elementary and middle schools (Hawken et al., 2014). Generally, high school students were reluctant to carry their daily progress report throughout the school day. Consequently, electronic daily progress reports have been adapted to the high school setting (Hawken et al., 2014). Evidence on the efficacy surrounding such adaptations of CICO was not found.

Tier 2 interventions target students at risk for E/BD, they should also be adapted to fit within a continuum of services in schools (Yong & Cheney, 2013). Tier 2 interventions, defined within the context of a multi-tier model, are a set of intervention strategies to support a group of students who continue to demonstrate behavior problems despite Tier 1 universal support (Yong & Cheney, 2013). Hawken, Adolphson, MacLeod, and Schumann (2009) identified the following as effective Tier 2 interventions: Behavior Education Program, First Step to Success and the Check Connect and Expect. The Check Connect and Expect is a type of Tier 2 intervention that research has validated as impactful in elementary schools (Cheney, Lynass, Flower, Waugh, Iwaszuk, Mielenz, & Hawken, 2010). This intervention is different than other interventions because it requires a full time coach. The authors describe the CCE program as:

The CCE program comprises several critical structures and strategies that include (a) the coach implementing the program; (b) daily positive interactions among the coach, students, and teachers; (c) supervision and monitoring of students' social performance; (d) social skill instruction; (e) positive reinforcement for students

meeting daily and weekly goals; and (f) involvement of parents through daily home notes. (Cheney et al., 2010)

Coping Power (CP) is a program that identifies at risk students in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade (Tong & Cheney, 2013). The entire staff is not trained but select teachers are trained, along with counselors and administrators, to lead sessions (Yong & Cheney, 2013). This program requires weekly supervision and checklists of session objectives completed by group leaders & supervisors. Ratings on substance use, aggressive behaviors, self-regulation, social skills, school bonding, and academic competence direct the sessions. Coping Power consists of thirty-four sessions with an intervention length of approximately two years (Yong & Cheney, 2013). This program has a considerably higher intervention length compared to other interventions. The effectiveness of this program was not found.

**Tier 3.** When students have failed to respond to the moderately intensive interventions in the secondary level, they are moved to Tier 3 where they receive more intensive, individualized support (Cartledge, Kea, Watson & Oif, 2016). Progress monitoring and data would be consistently collected and analyzed to determine students' achievement (Cartledge et al., 2016). In Tier 3, the student is receiving the most concentrated evaluation his or her strengths and weaknesses, and the best individualized approach to satisfy his or her needs (Turse & Albrecht, 2015).

### **P.R.I.D.E.**

Tinley Park High School offers a behavioral support entitled P.R.I.D.E. P.R.I.D.E stands for Progression of Responsibility, Independence, Determination, and Excellence is would fall into a Tier 2/3 intervention. The overall goal of P.R.I.D.E is to provide individualized tools and support for students so they may establish a sense of motivation, self advocacy, self control and

de-escalation strategies that can be used on a daily basis in school and everyday life (P.R.I.D.E.).

This program has an entrance criteria that is considered before a student joins the program. The candidates that are most likely to be admitted into P.R.I.D.E.: (P.R.I.D.E.)

1. Students who are recommended by teachers and administration
2. Students exhibiting difficulty functioning within normal school settings due to adjustment concerns
3. Students whose disciplinary records lead to an extreme number of suspensions or other disciplinary infractions
4. Students returning from alternative placement
5. Students with attendance and truancy concerns
6. Students in need of additional supportive services to be successful

Students who were designated for P.R.I.D.E. have expectations that were defined by the P.R.I.D.E. team. The student and parent signed a contract laying out the expectations of the student: (P.R.I.D.E.)

1. The student will use P.R.I.D.E. resources to develop and practice behaviors appropriate to the school environment (according to the district handbook, classroom rituals & routines)
2. The student will develop and improve work/study habits and utilize Resource time appropriately to improve academics
3. The student will identify negative and positive alternatives in the decision making/problem solving process

4. The student will utilize the social work component to increase the acceptance of responsibility of physical, verbal & nonverbal responses, and written actions.
5. The student will develop a consistent attendance pattern and be a productive student when present
6. The student will progress towards developing positive inter-personal relationships and social skills in structured and unstructured school settings
7. The student will increase the student's level of tolerance for frustration and distractions in all academic settings and with various school personnel
8. The student will enter and exit all classrooms in an appropriate manner
9. The student will begin work upon entering the classroom on missing assignment or a current assignment
10. The student will be responsive and compliant to all staff requests

The team assigned with promoting these positive behaviors had a unique set of individual responsibilities to promote positive behaviors from the P.R.I.D.E. student. The team consisted of the P.R.I.D.E Teacher, P.R.I.D.E. Social Worker, P.R.I.D.E. Classroom Aides, General Education Teacher, Dean, Psychologist, and Behavioral Specialist. Together these team member carried out responsibilities aimed to meet the individual needs of the P.R.I.D.E. student (P.R.I.D.E.).

In conclusion, there are circumstances where behavior intervention programs can succeed. Evidence supports various Tier 2 programs can promote positive outcomes for at risk students. Given the benefits students experience in least restricted environment classrooms, it is important to continue to support students and teachers. In general, quality teaching training and

program design suited for meeting the individual needs of the students were common traits of successful programs.

### **Chapter Summary**

Research has demonstrated that behavioral support programs can be effective. Specifically Tier 2 or 3 programs such as P.R.I.D.E. can help student behavior for students who did not respond to Tier 1 interventions. P.R.I.D.E. is a detailed program that offers a wide range of supports for the students.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this action based study was to examine the efficacy of the P.R.I.D.E. program at the high school. A quantitative descriptive approach was used to review records. This study classifies as action research because it consists of gathering information from a small group of students within a particular school (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

### **Participants**

A small focused program, P.R.I.D.E., used referral by teachers to identify student who would benefit from additional support. The P.R.I.D.E. Program, a tier 2-3 level of support, was sampled due to record access. The total number of participants was thirteen (N=13). Of the thirteen participants, there were ten males and three females in this program. The age range of the subjects was fifteen to seventeen years old, and starting the 2015-2016 school year the students were entering Sophomore and Junior year.

### **Instrumentation**

Powerschool, a school resource that allows schools to track attendance, schedules and disciplinary records was used to review the records of students. The records reviewed for this study include: Detention, Referrals, Suspensions, Parental Contact, Silent Lunch and Teacher Intervention Journal. These events were inputted by teachers and administrators input into Powerschool.

### **Procedure**

In order to examine the efficacy of this school program, disciplinary records through a school data service provider called Powerschool. The records were put into an excel spreadsheet to track the disciplinary events in regards to frequency of the event. The names of the students

were not be represented on the spreadsheet. However, gender and whether or not a student was receiving special education was identified.

### **Data Collection**

The student data was collected through Powerschool. The timeframe examined from the data collection is the disciplinary events of the group of students during second semester of the 2014-2015 school year versus first semester of 2015-2016 school year.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of the records consisted of the students' disciplinary events before program placement versus during program placement completed the analysis. To determine student progress Powerschool was used to examine students in the Pride Program in regards to recorded disciplinary events with the behavior for semester before designation into the program versus the first semester of program implementation for the students. Data will be presented in a narrative table and graphic formats. A *t-Test* and a *Cohens d* was used to measure effects of the P.R.I.D.E. Program.

### **Chapter Summary**

The disciplinary records of thirteen students in this program were pulled and examined for this study. All of the information collected and used in this study was confidential. The records were gathered for each participant and will be analyzed and discussed in chapters four and five.

## Chapter IV

### Results

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the results of this study. This study was completed to examine the efficacy of the behavioral support program called P.R.I.D.E. Disciplinary event records of student participants in P.R.I.D.E. were analyzed to evaluate student progress. The records evaluated were: Detention, suspension, silent lunch, parental contact, referral, and a teacher intervention journal. The frequency of these records were then compared by individual student's prior designation into the program versus active program participation. This study found that detentions were the disciplinary event record that warranted the closest attention.

### Demographics

The following table provides information on the total number of students evaluated in the study and the percentages of the gender, grade level and identification for Special Education.

**Table 1**  
*Demographics*

Area	n	Percentage
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	10	77
Female	3	23
<u>Grade Level</u>		
Sophomore	7	54
Junior	6	46
<u>Special Education</u>		
IEP	9	70
No IEP	4	30

The records of the 14 students were examined for this study. The link of these students is that they all were introduced to the P.R.I.D.E. Program during the Fall Semester of the 2015-2016 school year. Consequently these students were entering there Sophomore or Junior year for the 2015-2016 school year.

### **Detentions**

The next sequence of tables demonstrates a breakdown of detentions before students were designated into the P.R.I.D.E. Program versus recorded detentions after admittance into the P.R.I.D.E. Program. This study considered the percentage as the numerical value of the frequency of the event versus the total number of events recorded over the selected timeframe. For example, when adding the total number of detentions recorded from Second Semester 2014-2015 and First Semester 2015-2016, the study considered the percentage for each respective semester. According to the table below, for the detentions recorded in this timeframe, sixty-four percent of the student detentions occurred before the student was an active P.R.I.D.E participant. There was an eighteen percent reduction detentions during the first semester of designation into P.R.I.D.E.

**Table 2**  
*Detentions change from pre to post*

Area	Pre n %	Post n %	Change n %
Total	54 (64)	30 (46)	-24 (-18)
Special Ed.	35 (67)	17 (33)	-18 (-33)

This table illustrates the figures of detentions for students in the P.R.I.D.E. Program receiving special education. The results show that students in the program receiving special

education had a higher percentage of detentions in the semester before designation into the P.R.I.D.E. Program.

### ***Cohen's d***

This data was analyzed further with a Cohen's *d* Test. This is a test that is used to evaluate effect size with between two groups (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012). An effect size is calculated yielding one number that summarizes the overall effect. The number generated is expressed in decimal form. The *Cohen's d* revealed an effect size of 0.24. A measure of 0.24 equates to a small effect size (Gay, et al., 2012). This study found that detentions were the record that the P.R.I.D.E. Program was able to remedy to the greatest extent.

### ***t-test***

**Table 3**

*t-test of detentions*

Condition	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
Pre	13	4.15	2.99	12	2.2
Post	13	2.30	2.65	12	

Note: Dependent *t-test*

A *t-test* was also performed for detentions. The results are offered in the table above. A *t-test* uses inferential statistics to determine whether the means of two groups are significantly different at a given probability level (Gay, et al., 2012). The results concluded that the results fell within the range of error.

### **Disciplinary Events**

The table below demonstrates a breakdown of other recorded disciplinary events before students were designated into the P.R.I.D.E. Program versus recorded events after admittance into the P.R.I.D.E. Program. While detentions were evaluated the most closely there was access

to other forms of disciplinary events. The other disciplinary events that were examined were: referral, parental contact, teacher intervention journal, suspension, and silent lunch. The percentage change from designation into the P.R.I.D.E. Program was noted to help judge the efficacy of the program in deterring undesirable behavior.

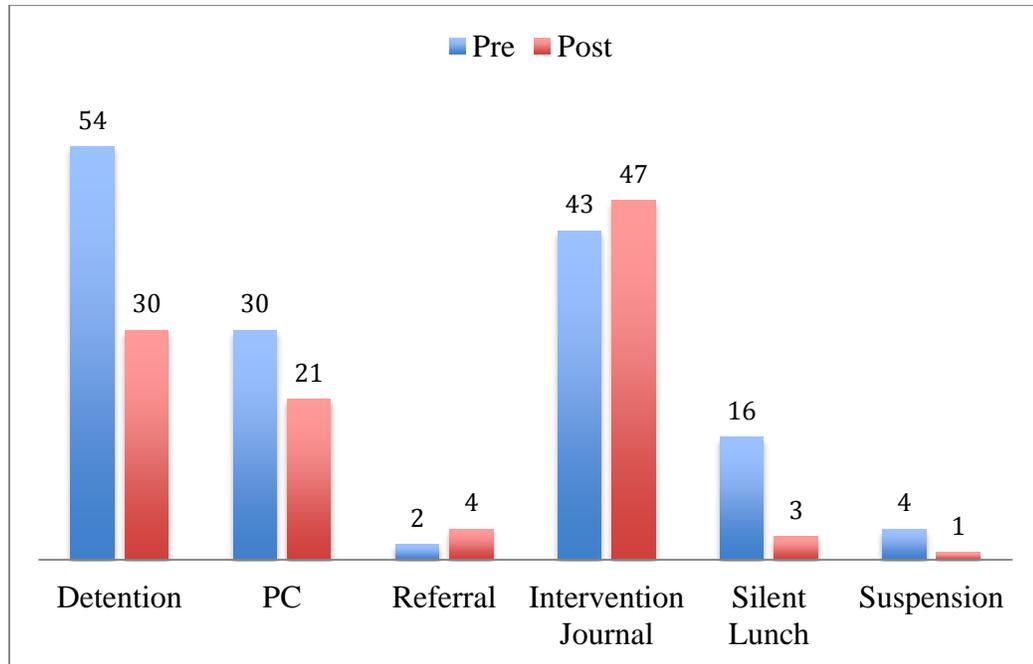
**Table 4**  
*Disciplinary Event change from pre to post*

Event	Pre n %	Post n %	Change n %
Referrals	2 (33)	4 (67)	+2 (+33)
Parental Contact	30 (59)	21 (41)	-9 (-18)
Suspension	4 (80)	1 (20)	-3 (-60)
Silent Lunch	16 (84)	3 (16)	-13 (-68)
(TIJ)	43 (48)	47 (52)	+4 (+4)

Note: If numbers do not equal 100 it is because numbers were rounded to the nearest whole number.

Parental Contact records were analyzed by an input into Powerschool by a teacher or administrator that contact was made with a student's guardian due to a behavioral issue. Teacher Intervention Journal records were analyzed by an input by a teacher or administrator into Powerschool of a behavioral issue with a student that were not paired with a detention, referral, silent lunch, suspension, or parental contact. These were incidents that occurred during the school day that were documented by the educator. The obstacle facing these particular records is that they are largely dependent on whether or not the teacher inputs these into Powerschool. Some teachers are much more likely than others to input a parental contact and teacher intervention journals into Powerschool. Consequently, when examining these records over two

different school years with different teachers it may be difficult to determine the efficacy of a program.



*Figure 1. Total records of disciplinary events*

The figure above breaks up the entire scope of this study of recorded disciplinary events for the semester prior admittance into the P.R.I.D.E. Program in comparison to the first semester of student designation in the P.R.I.D. E. Program. This figure serves as a tool to consider what events are valuable to examine. Since suspensions and referrals have such low totals it made it challenging to draw any conclusions on the efficacy of the P.R.I.D.E. Program in deterring these events. Detentions are the more valuable event to analyze because of the greater total number of events recorded to analyze.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reveals the results of the data pulled from Powerschool. The results show a downward trend in recorded disciplinary events during the first semester of student designation

into the P.R.I.D.E. Program. Detentions were the event most closely analyzed revealed a small effect size per a *Cohen's d*. Furthermore, students in the P.R.I.D.E. Program receiving special education were less likely to have a recorded disciplinary event for the first semester in the program.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of a behavioral support program entitled P.R.I.D.E. The study used the software Powerschool to pull and analyze recorded disciplinary records. The time frame of the recorded events was the second semester of the 2014-2015 school year versus first semester of 2015-2016 school year.

#### **Discussion**

Recent legislation from Senate Bill 100 has forced the action of many schools. Senate Bill 100 was aimed to reduce out of school consequences for students (Midwest PBIS Network, 2016). Therefore the records illustrating reduction of suspensions for P.R.I.D.E. participants from four to one really may not indicate any effectiveness in the P.R.I.D.E. Program, but rather a state-wide mandate to reduce suspensions. Consequences of former zero tolerance policies have examined and has indicated that suspensions often lead to school drop outs (Lusk, 2015). Students who dropout are at a significantly greater risk to fall into the school to prison pipeline (Lusk, 2015).

#### **Conclusions**

The results of this study did show an overall downward trend in disciplinary events for students who participated in the P.R.I.D.E. program. While records like suspensions, parental contacts and teacher intervention journal are difficult to examine, detentions were a record that this study examined closely. A *Cohen's d* revealed an effect size of 0.24, which represents there was a small effect size (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). In essence, this program did succeed in deterring students to engage in behaviors that would warrant a detention.

P.R.I.D.E. can be characterized as a Tier 2 or 3 intervention. Evidence does illustrate

effectiveness of Tier 2 Programs such as Check in Check Out (Wehby & Kern, 2014). While other research indicates that Check in Check Out had a limited effect on a student population (Hawken, Bundock, Kladis, O’Keefe, & Barret, 2014). P.R.I.D.E. is a program that offers more individual support compared to other programs. For instance, Check in Check Out does not have the resource room component that P.R.I.D.E offers in place of study hall. This dynamic gives the P.R.I.D.E. teacher time to offer individual support for the student. The P.R.I.D.E. team is relatively large in regards to team members which enables multiple outlets for a student. The team members include: the P.R.I.D.E Teacher, P.R.I.D.E. Social Worker, P.R.I.D.E. Classroom Aides, General Education Teacher, Dean, Psychologist, and Behavioral Specialist.

### **Educational Implications**

With the information provided in this study it is clear that schools need to continue to serve students the best way that they can. Making sure that teachers are properly trained is important. High quality teaching is a major deterrent to negative student behavior (Cooper & Minness, 2014). Programs such as P.R.I.D.E., if implemented properly, can not only serve the student who has had a history of negative behaviors but also improve the culture of an entire school. Programs similar to P.R.I.D.E. are able to succeed because there is an identification process where students are identified and worked with on an individual level. These programs do not universally solve behavioral issues in a school. However, for some students, a program such as P.R.I.D.E. marks as the start of a transition into a more reliable student and citizen.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The biggest limitation found was the length of time. This study considered the first semester of P.R.I.D.E. participation only. It would be interesting to be able to analyze the long-term effects of P.R.I.D.E. to determine if there was a long lasting effect on student behavior. If

the records were made available for former students, there can be an analysis of how P.R.I.D.E. participation was able to correlate with graduation. To gain more meaning, the research should include student records over the entire span of his or her high school experience.

### **Summary**

The main areas that were investigated in this study were special education legislation and the efficacy of behavioral support programs. Disciplinary records of students of were analyzed. These students were participants in the P.R.I.D.E. program. Detentions were the record that this study found that P.R.I.D.E. was able to be most impactful of deterring. Further research should continue to examine the efficacy of behavioral support programs such as P.R.I.D.E.

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