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STAFF AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE: THE NEED FOR
SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS

A Chapter Style Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Education Specialist

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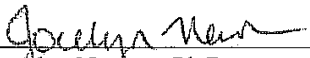
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By Chelsea McColley

We recommend acceptance of this thesis in partial fulfillment of the candidate's
requirements for the degree of Education Specialist in School Psychology

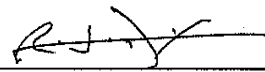
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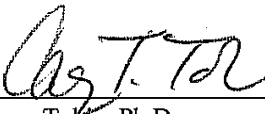
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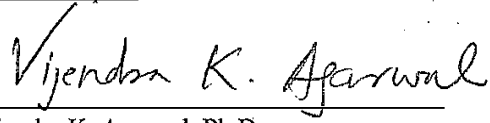


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ABSTRACT

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Positive school climates have been found to promote pro-social behaviors and increase students' academic achievement. School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports provides a framework and set of ideals for educators to create a positive school culture. The current study examined differences in staff and student perceptions, as well as perceptions in primary versus secondary buildings, related to several factors of school climate (rules and expectations, safety, student relationships, teacher-student relationships). Data was collected through staff and student ratings on the Delaware School Climate Surveys and the results were compared using a MANOVA. A significant interaction was found on the Rules and Expectations and the School Safety Scales. Ideas for teaching students appropriate behavior, using data to make decisions about building practices, and matching the level of support with the needs of the students were discussed.

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CHAPTER I: CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Literature Summary

Over fifty years ago, social psychologist Albert Bandura hypothesized that “people are not born with preformed repertoires of aggressive behavior; they must learn them in one way or another” (Bandura, 1973). Still today, Bandura is supported by a wealth of research that suggests less than 1.5% of children and adolescents have behavioral disorders that are organic in nature (Hartwig, 2009). This raises the question as to why the top concerns of educators and the general public over the last twenty years have been about problematic student behavior such as fighting, violence, truancy, vandalism, and lack of discipline (Elam, Rose & Gallup, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002). In fact, problem behaviors such as these are continually on the rise and reaching what some researchers have called epidemic proportions (Lewis, Sugai & Colvin, 1998). If the vast majority of these anti-social type behaviors are not caused by an innate, biological drive, then why have educators observed such a dramatic increase in recent years? Problem behaviors such as aggression and noncompliance appear to be learned behaviors created by the social determinants of school cultures (Bandura, 1973; Sugai & Horner, 2006).

A proactive, whole-school approach is much more effective than discipline that focuses on individual students on a case by case basis (Netzel & Eber, 2003). Although teachers and educators often resort to imposing consequences to “teach” students a lesson, students are not actually being taught the expected or positive replacement

behaviors that will help prevent future problem behaviors. No-tolerance policies and other consequence-based approaches have been ineffective in creating positive school atmospheres that prevent antisocial behaviors. These approaches actually establish environments in which antisocial behaviors are unintentionally reinforced (Sugai & Horner, 2008). With the rising rates of aggression in schools, educators face the daunting task of creating safe, pro-social learning environments for all students.

Response to Intervention

Recent efforts from legislators that emphasize accountability and research-based practices are influencing schools to reorganize their infrastructures and resources to focus on sustaining positive student outcomes. Educators have begun to alter their approach to providing support for students struggling academically through a systems change process that reflects the ideals of a preventative public health model. This framework is known as Response to Intervention (RTI; Batsche et al., 2005). The discrepancy or “wait-to-fail” model that has been used for decades only offers support to students when they have fallen drastically behind their peers and have met the “cut-off” criteria for special education. RTI allows educators to identify struggling students early-on and matches the level of support or intervention to the needs of the student, regardless of special education labels.

Traditionally, educators have dealt with problematic behaviors from a reactive, punishment focused approach. Along with changing the approach to academics, educators have also been prompted to implement a similar behavioral framework. The framework focuses on a positive, preventative approach that explicitly teaches students and staff behavioral expectations. This approach to behavior and discipline is known as

School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SwPBIS; Sugai et al., 2005). It is often viewed as the behavioral component to RTI.

SwPBIS utilizes the same tiered prevention framework as RTI and has a similar approach to using problem-solving strategies to impact all students. It also emphasizes evidence-based practices and data-based decision making which are at the core of RTI. Another common tie between the frameworks is collecting and analyzing universal screening data as well as using data to monitor the progress of struggling students. Neither SwPBIS nor RTI can be purchased; they are not “boxed” curriculums. Even neighboring districts might implement SwPBIS or RTI very differently from one another. Although SwPBIS is often viewed as an extension of RTI, it also has its own set of distinct elements and processes.

The majority of schools moving in the direction of RTI have started the process in the academic area. However, some educators argue that starting the process on the behavioral side is a better practice (Hartwig, 2009). This is due to the fact that academic performance is often linked to behavior skills (Sugai & Horner, 2008). Specifically, students may “act-out” or display problem behaviors because they have become frustrated with challenges in academics due to low skills. Over 80 % of students with severe behavior problems are identified as having difficulty with academics by their teachers (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2009). However, students may also have low academic skills due to the fact that their behavioral problems decrease time spent learning academic skills. It is important for educators to focus on behavior in order to foster a positive school climate because it largely impacts academic success.

The greatest impact of problem behaviors is the infringement upon teaching opportunities and academic engaged time (Sugai & Horner, 2002). A school environment in which disruptive behaviors are rampant is not conducive to learning. Academic engaged time, which is essential to student achievement, diminishes greatly when problem behaviors reoccur in the learning environment (Muscott, Mann & LeBrun, 2008). A school climate can quickly become negative when staff feels as though their only option is to punish students for problem behaviors. The use of aversive strategies can lead to an increase in the number of coercive interactions between teachers and students (Sugai & Horner, 2008). Academics are less likely to be a priority when frequent problem behaviors set the tone for the school climate.

Core Elements

SwPBIS incorporates a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies that impact social and learning achievements while preventing problem behaviors. There are four key elements used in SwPBIS that are the focus areas of improvement for schools: outcomes, practices, data, and systems (Sugai et al., 2005). *Outcomes* are the measures of the targets or goals set by the students, staff, and community members. Broad outcomes that are impacted by SwPBIS include academic achievement, social competence, and employment or career options (Sugai et al., 2005). The outcomes that are valued by the school and community must be measured in order to be successful in creating a positive school climate. The use of research-validated *practices* is another key component. Practices must be evidence-based and implemented with high levels of integrity. *Data* is necessary to make decisions about identifying students, analyzing the effects of interventions and meeting the needs of students within the tiered framework.

Data is used to analyze multiple outcomes, levels, contexts, and individuals. Data should also be used to determine the effectiveness of practices and drive the selection of new practices. SwPBIS examines the *systems*, or structures, processes and supports that are necessary to ensure the outcomes, practices and data are all considered. By periodically analyzing these elements, schools can assess their growth in the SwPBIS process. These elements support staff behavior, student behavior, decision making, and also increase social competence and academic achievement (Sugai et al., 2005).

Similar to RTI, SwPBIS utilizes a multi-systems perspective that allows educators to break down analyses and tasks into manageable pieces as well as view interactions between the systems. School-wide, classroom, non-classroom and individual systems are the main areas in which the elements of SwPBIS (outcomes, practices, data, systems) interact within the school setting (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Expectations and routines within each system should be taught directly at crucial times of the school year, while being modeled and practiced regularly. In order to nurture a positive climate within each of the systems, staff should maintain a ratio of six to eight positive reinforcements for every negative interaction (Latham, 1992). In the non-classroom settings it is essential that active adult supervision is overt and efficient. Solely having staff present is not enough; they must be scanning and moving about the area as well as engaging positively with students (Colvin & Lazar, 1997). Reminding students of the expectations and rules for the unstructured settings prior to the students entering the area is a great preventative measure. Positively reinforcing the expected behaviors is essential if staff want students to continue to display the appropriate behaviors in the future. Problem behaviors are

often reinforced by peers so it is necessary for staff to compete with the reinforcement of pro-social behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

A Tiered Framework

A foundational belief within RTI and SwPBIS is that the frameworks include *all* students, and *all* students have the ability to be successful (Batsche et al., 2005).

Students may need differing levels of support and intervention; hence a tiered model provides the framework for a continuum of behavioral supports. At any level within the framework, it is essential for practices that are empirically validated for their effectiveness to be given top priority. The framework spans across all the systems within the school and can provide feedback about the effectiveness of implementation in each setting (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai & Vincent, 2004).

Primary Prevention is the base tier, or universal level in the framework. Primary Prevention is a system-wide effort to establish positive behaviors as the norm for all students. This universal level in SwPBIS consists of rules, routines, physical environments, and the overall attitude or climate of a school that work to prevent the initial acts of problem behaviors. The goal of this universal level is to create a school climate that prevents problem behaviors from occurring in the first place (Sugai et al., 2005).

This first level of SwPBIS should be effective with 80% of the students. This is generally measured by students who have one or fewer office discipline referrals per month (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2009). One component that can help support schools in effectively preventing problem behaviors in 80% of the students is to create a behavior matrix. Involving both

students and staff in each step of creating a school-wide behavior matrix is essential to ensure consensus and high-fidelity of the expectations (Handler et al., 2007). First, schools need to decide on two or three values or basic rules that are adopted by all staff and students. For example, “be safe” or “be respectful” might be chosen. Students and staff then identify all areas and possible situations within the school such as restrooms, assemblies, crisis situations, hallways, computer labs, classrooms, etc. As a whole, the school generates the behavioral expectations for each area of the school and defines what the behaviors look like based on the values that were chosen. For example, being respectful in the hallway might mean being quiet, keeping arms and legs to ones’ self, and holding doors for others. Although it is essential to include students in the process of identifying and defining behavioral expectations, staff members play the most important role in ensuring all components of SwPBIS are implemented and followed through with a high degree of fidelity (Handler et al., 2007).

Once the matrix is developed, skill lessons can be created and taught in classrooms. The lessons should include opportunities for the students to see the behaviors modeled both correctly and incorrectly (Lewis et al., 1998). A creative way to do this is to have older students create video-taped skits that can be played in classrooms of younger students. When students and staff have been taught the behavioral expectations, they should be rewarded for following them. Reinforcing the expected behaviors helps create a climate where positive behaviors are the norm. Rewards can vary from a positive verbal comment to a school-wide incentive program.

The Secondary Prevention tier of SwPBIS aims to reach the students who are not responding to the positive interventions that are directed at all students. The students

identified as being in the second tier are likely to have a high number of at-risk factors so the goal is to increase their protective factors. Often times the students that are identified in the secondary tier are at-risk for more serious problem behaviors in the future if there is no intervention. Literature supports that targeted interventions can have positive effects on up to 67% of referred students (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2009). The Secondary Prevention level includes targeting small groups of students with a higher level of intensity. Interventions at this level may include approaches such as social skill groups and check-ins/check-outs.

Students with patterns of more significant problem behaviors are identified at the Tertiary Prevention level. Students at this tier may or may not have a diagnostic label. The tertiary tier is not effective unless the primary and secondary tiers are in place and being fully implemented. The tertiary level is very individualized and interventions should be created from a functionally-based, comprehensive analysis of the behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2009). The goal is not only to decrease the intensity, severity, and frequency of problem behaviors but also to increase the student's adaptive skills and teach the student specific strategies to utilize positive replacement behaviors. As students enter the third tier, part of the process includes a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). From the FBA, the team develops an individual behavior plan that meets the functions of the student's behaviors. The identified antecedents should be addressed and prevented to the greatest extent possible (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Over forty years of research supports that well-established, approved rules and behavioral expectations can prevent disruptive classroom behaviors and increase

academic engaged time (Becker et al., 1967; Muscott et al., 2008). Constructive discipline practices, such as SwPBIS, have also been evidenced to improve social behavior and school climates (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Despite this wealth of research, schools still tend to over-rely on reactive management and punishing consequences. These strategies create a climate that can set the stage for and even provoke problem behaviors (Sugai et al., 2005). It is easy for educators and parents to fall victim to this approach as it often immediately reduces the problem behavior. However, the effect is short-lived and problem behaviors tend to reoccur, often at an increased rate and intensity level. The use of aversive consequences may prevent students who are already successful in school from displaying problem behaviors but the impact on students with severe behavioral issues is minimal (Lewis et al., 1998). Schools whose discipline strategies follow a reactive and punishing style often see a degradation of their school climate and related elements such as increases in antisocial behavior, lack of positive student-teacher relationships and decreases in academic achievement (Sugai et al., 2005).

Human behavior research has demonstrated that children and adolescents are not born with an innate drive to display patterns of problem behaviors (Walker et al., 1996). Therefore, schools not only need to be proactive in teaching students behavioral expectations but they must also provide opportunities for modeling and practicing acceptable behaviors. As with teaching any new behavior, positive reinforcement increases the likelihood the behaviors will be displayed and sustained over time. It is essential that students know the behavioral expectations in each area of the school, are taught the behaviors, and are reinforced for demonstrating positive behaviors. The overarching goal of SwPBIS is to create a setting in which appropriate behaviors are the

norm (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2009). A school climate that fosters an environment for the development of problem-solving skills, collaborative relationships, and pro-social behaviors is necessary in order to address the challenges faced by today's educators.

Statement of Problem

The School District of Monroe serves more than 2900 students across seven schools in a small community located in south central Wisconsin. Since 2002, the district had made the implementation process of the Response-to-Intervention framework their top initiative. With a history of over 20% of students being identified for special education programs and an even greater percentage of students with needs not being met, the RTI movement created an opportunity for the district to change the way it approached educating all children. The district began by implementing a system-wide change within the academic realm, and the next step appeared to be incorporating behavior into the framework.

The School District of Monroe services a large number of students who are considered to have a high number of at-risk factors. Two of the elementary school buildings have Free and Reduced lunch rates of nearly 50%. Currently, 13.96% of the students are identified as having a need for special education. In addition, the district leadership team was not satisfied with the results of student achievement data. The incongruence between the philosophy of the district and the student outcomes data had been the driving force for the implementation of RTI.

The district had been working extensively on the systems change process of implementing RTI within academics. A District RTI Committee directed much of the

implementation and suggested methods for the district to meet the goals laid out by the District Administrators. Elementary schools in the district are nearing full implementation of RTI; however the secondary schools have faced more challenges in the process. In the 2008-2009 school year, a District PBIS committee was formed in order to research and collaborate on the process of implementing SwPBIS for every school in the district. The committee is comprised of Pupil Services Staff members.

The District PBIS team gathered information from every building in order to determine what structures existed for discipline and behavior management. The team found that consistency across and even within buildings varied widely. One goal the district PBIS team wanted to accomplish was to identify successful behavioral approaches within the district. If some buildings were more successful than others the team would identify what factors lead to the success and work to move these ideas to other buildings.

Due to the variability of behavior management practices in the district, there was also disagreement among the staff as to the extent of problem behaviors. Some staff felt that the climate within each building was satisfactory and there was no need to change or create a consistent approach. Other staff members greatly disagreed and felt that addressing problem behaviors and school climate should be a top district initiative.

Many of the decisions regarding the implementation of RTI had been “top-down” decisions. Therefore, the PBIS committee and district administrators felt it was important for staff to take ownership in the next steps of the process. In order for staff to commit to the SwPBIS initiative, it is crucial that they are able to see data from perspectives of those affected by the climate of the schools-teachers, support staff, and students.

SwPBIS relies heavily on staff modeling and reinforcing positive behaviors, therefore obtaining buy-in from at least 80% of the staff is necessary for proper implementation (Handler et al., 2007).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine the state of the school climates across each of the buildings in the School District of Monroe. Input from staff and students will provide data to identify the issues surrounding behavior in the schools. The data collected through climate surveys will serve as a tool to increase staff understanding of the current state of the schools and provide the District PBIS committee with a direction to formulate an implementation plan. The data will not only be used to identify buildings that may have existing structures in place that are successful, but also to assess the need for a comprehensive, unified approach to increasing positive behaviors. The data collected from the proposed study will also provide each building with information about how their existing systems are working and help to identify areas of need that could be addressed through the implementation of SwPBIS.

CHAPTER II: METHODS

Participants

The proposed study was conducted at five buildings within the School District of Monroe located in south central Wisconsin. The School District of Monroe consists of three elementary schools, a middle school, a high school, a virtual school and a charter school for alternative learners. Due to the nature of the charter and virtual schools, they were not included in the proposed study. All demographic information in this section was based on district Child Count data from January of 2009. The five buildings in the district that were included in this study had a combined student population of approximately 2540 students. The three elementary schools had a combined student population of approximately 1200. The middle school had approximately 540 students and the high school had a student population of approximately 800 students. Demographically, 26.4% of the district's student population was on the free and reduced price lunch program while 13.96% of the student population received special education services. The student population in the district was comprised mainly of Caucasian students, however 4.5% were students of Hispanic background, 1.8% were students of African American background and 1% were students of Asian background. The School District of Monroe employed 219 licensed staff members and 142 support staff members at the time of the study. Due to the fact that children would need relatively independent reading skills for this study, only students in the 3rd grade and older were included as

participants. Therefore, the target sample was 1900 students and 350 staff members for a total of 2250 participants.

Data Collection and Evaluation

Measures

Participant perceptions on the current state of the school climate of each building were collected using the Delaware School Climate Surveys with Students and Teachers/Staff versions developed by Dr. George Bear (2008). The student version consists of 36 items and the teacher/staff version consists of 49 items that assess how the school environment is perceived. The student survey is intended for students in grades 3-12 whereas the staff version is appropriate for all grade levels.

There are two to three parts in each survey that yield several subscales (see Table 1 for a summary). The subscales are intended to measure how the teachers, staff and students feel about the clarity and fairness of the rules and expectations as well as the safety within the school. The subscales also provide information about how caring and supportive the teachers are perceived to be and the relationships between and among the staff and students (Bear, 2008). Part I of each survey is comprised of 4 or 5 subscales including Teacher-Student Relations or Teacher Relations with Students, Student Relations, Rules and Expectations, and School Safety. The student survey also has a School Problems subscale. Part II includes subscales on positive and punitive techniques for the two surveys. The teacher/staff version includes Part III, a Satisfaction with School Climate subscale.

Table 1

Subscales of Delaware School Climate Surveys

Student Survey	Teacher/Staff Survey
Part I	
Teacher-Student Relations	Teacher Relations with Students and Home
Student Relations	Student Relations
Rules and Expectations	Rules and Expectations
School Safety	School Safety
School Problems	
Total School Climate	Total School Climate
Part II	
Positive Techniques	Positive Techniques
Punitive Techniques	Punitive Techniques
Part III	
	Satisfaction with School Climate

Adapted from Bear, 2008.

Responses to the items related to perceptions of the school climate were assessed on a 4-point likert-type scale ranging from (1) Disagree A LOT to (4) Agree A LOT. Items related to the frequency of behaviors within the past week had responses ranging from (1) Never to (4) 6 or more times. The likert-type scale responses for items relating to school climate satisfaction ranged from (1) Very Dissatisfied to (4) Very Satisfied.

Although reliability and validity data has not been published on the use of the Delaware School Climate Surveys, Dr. Bear has collected and analyzed reliability and

validity data for the surveys. Dr. Bear reported the surveys have good reliability and validity (personal communication, March 25, 2009). On Part I of the Student Survey the overall reliability coefficient is .91. The subscales of Part II have reliability coefficients of .80. For the Teacher/Staff Survey Part I has a reliability coefficient of .94 and the subscales of Part II range from .71 to .75. Qualitative questions regarding student behaviors and student relationships with staff were also added to the surveys.

Procedures

The primary researcher received Initial approval for this study from the UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board (IRB), and from the administration of the School District of Monroe. Upon approval, the Delaware School Climate Surveys were administered to all teachers, staff, and students in grades 3-12 in the School District of Monroe via an electronic survey available through Zoomerang, an online survey program. The computers in each lab were set up with a bookmarked linked page to the survey, and all participants were asked to complete the survey within a given timeframe. To collect teacher and support staff data, the primary researcher emailed teachers and staff a description and a hyperlink to the survey. Informed consent was implied for teachers and staff who completed the survey. To collect student data, letters were sent home with students explaining that the survey was voluntary, requesting that if parents did not want their child to participate, they should sign and return the bottom portion of the letter. Teachers were asked to explain the survey description to their class, and homeroom teachers were responsible for taking their class to the computer lab to complete the survey. A reminder email was sent to teachers and staff within a week of the survey deadline with the same description and hyperlink to the survey.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The proposed study has one main research question. Following is the question and its corresponding null and alternative hypotheses:

1. Do school members differ across their perceptions and reports of aspects of school climate (Teacher-Student Relations, Student Relations, Rules and Expectations, and School Safety) as a function of: type of school member (staff vs. students) or school building (primary vs. secondary)?
 - a. *Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between sub-groups of school members with regard to their behaviors and perceptions of school climate*
 - b. *Alternative Hypotheses include:*
 - i. *There will be a significant difference between reported behavior and perceptions of staff versus students.*
 - ii. *There will be significant differences between reported behaviors and perceptions of school climate of primary versus secondary schools.*

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

The current study was designed to provide the School District of Monroe with information to determine the need for implementing SW-PBIS. In order to gain a comprehensive perspective on building climates, both staff and student input on school rules, safety, behaviors and relationships was collected. Staff members, including teachers and support staff, as well as students in grades three through twelve completed the appropriate versions of the Delaware School Climate Surveys (Bear, 2008) and responded to two additional qualitative questions. This chapter will begin with a description of the demographic information of the research study population, followed by the results of the preliminary reliability and main data analyses.

Demographics

All demographic information was collected through staff and student self-report. A total of 1,884 participants were included in this study. Of this total, 249 participants were staff members (13.2% of total participants). The participating staff included 132 individuals who worked in a primary level building (53%), 96 individuals who worked in a secondary level building (38.6%) and 21 staff who were in multiple buildings (8.4%). Data on staff gender was not collected due to the fact that the majority of respondents were female and doing so might have violated anonymity for the few male participants. Regarding the position of the staff participants, 110 participants were Regular Education teachers (44.2%), 34 were Special Education Teachers (13.7%), 26 were Pupil Servicestaff (10.4%), 69 were Support Staff (27.7%) and 8 were Administrators (3.2%).

The sample of respondents was 68% of the total staff employed by the district and is considered demographically representative of the overall population. Surveys that were not completed in entirety, or that appeared to be completed incorrectly were removed from the sample. In addition, staff members who reported working in multiple buildings were also removed from the sample as their responses could not be associated with a specific building level (i.e., primary or secondary).

Of the 1,635 student participants (86.8% of the total participants), 784 were Male (48%), and 851 were Female (52%). Regarding building level, 473 students (29%) attended a primary level building and 1,162 students (71%) attended a secondary level building. The number of students per grade level ranged from 136 to 196 students. The majority of students within this sample were Caucasian, which is consistent with the racial/ethnic composition of all students within School District of Monroe. Specifically, twenty-four students identified their race as Black (1.5%), 1,505 as White (92%), 59 as Hispanic (3.6%), 12 as Asian (0.7%), and 35 as Other (2.1%). The student sample is reflective of the overall student population with 64% of the student body (K-12) responding. Students in kindergarten through second grade were not included in the sample due to the nature of the survey.

Preliminary Reliability Analyses

Information on student and staff perspectives on building climate were assessed using the Delaware School Climate Survey scale (Bear, 2008). Cronbach's alpha was computed for the overall School Climate Surveys as well as the subscales in order to assess the reliability of the scales prior to addressing the primary research questions. The analyses are based on the data obtained from the current sample.

The student survey has 36 items which are separated into two parts. The subscales comprising the first part include: Teacher-Student Relations, Student Relations, Rules and Expectations, School Safety, and School Problems. The second part has subscales examining Positive Techniques and Punitive Techniques. Internal consistency values for the total Student Scale and the subscales are provided in Table 3. The overall value for all of the items on the Student Scale is .89. The subscale values ranged from .70 to .87; indicating the scales have reasonable internal consistency reliability. All Student Scales were .80 or higher with the exception of the Student School Problems Scale which had a value of .70.

Table 2

Internal consistency values for Student Scales of the Delaware School Climate Surveys

<u>Student Scale</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha Values</u>
Total Scale	.89
Teacher-Student Relations	.87
Student Relations	.80
Rules and Expectations	.82
School Safety	.87
School Problems	.70

The staff survey includes three parts and 49 items. Part one has the same subscales as the student survey with the exception of the School Problems subscale. Part two is the same as the student survey subscales and part three is the Satisfaction with School Climate subscale. The internal consistency reliability range for the Teacher subscales was .79 to .89, providing good evidence for the internal consistency reliability of the Teacher Scales. The values for the internal consistency of each scale are provided in Table 4. The value for all the items on the Teacher Scale was .93.

Values for both the Student and Teacher Scales are adequate, indicating the scales are reliable for the purposes of examining group differences to address the primary research questions. All scales exceed the recommendation of .70 for internal consistency reliability provided by Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner, and Barrett (2004).

Table 3

Internal consistency values for Staff Scales of the Delaware School Climate Surveys

<u>Staff Scale</u>	<u>Cronbach's Alpha Values</u>
Total Scale	.93
Teacher Relations with Students and Home	.90
Teacher-Student Relations	.79
Rules and Expectations	.89
School Safety	.80

Main Analyses

The main purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of the school climates across each of the buildings in the School District of Monroe as reported by staff and students. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess whether staff and students in primary and secondary buildings have different perceptions of school climate. After deleting participants due to missing/incorrect completion of the survey and removing cases with multiple building assignments, 1847 respondents were included in the MANOVA. The independent variables for this analysis are type of respondent (student or staff) and building affiliation (primary or secondary), and the dependent variables are scores on the four common scales (Teacher-Student Relations, Rules and Expectations, School Safety, and Student Relations) of the Delaware School Climate Surveys.

One assumption of the MANOVA test is there is homogeneity of variance/covariance across groupings based on independent variables; although

MANOVA is robust to violation of this assumption if group sizes are fairly similar (largest group is no more than 1.5 times smallest group). When the homogeneity of variance/covariance assumption is violated, it is suggested the researcher interpret Pillai's Trace statistic (as it is a more robust statistic) rather than Wilks' Lambda (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2007). In the current study, Box's M test was significant ($p < .01$), indicating that the assumption that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across all groups was violated. Additionally, group sizes were significantly different (secondary student $N=1150$ and secondary staff $N=95$). As such, results will be interpreted using Pillai's Trace.

The results of this analysis revealed a significant interaction between respondent type and school type, Pillai's Trace = .033, $F(4, 1840) = 15.76$, $p = .000$. The eta-squared value for the interaction effect was .18, indicating 18% of the variance in respondents' scores on the four common subscales on this measure was due to an interaction between the two independent variables. Due to this significant interaction effect, the main effects for this analysis will not be interpreted. The means and standard deviations of student and staff responses as a function of primary and secondary building type are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations on the Delaware School Climate Surveys

Building	Respondent	
	Staff	Student
Teacher Student Relations		
Primary M (SD)	3.27 (.42)	3.18 (.58)
Secondary M (SD)	2.99 (.34)	2.80 (.50)
Student Relations		
Primary M (SD)	2.90 (.44)	2.64 (.62)
Secondary M (SD)	2.69 (.38)	2.48 (.56)
Rules and Expectations		
Primary M (SD)	3.20 (.40)	3.00 (.54)
Secondary M (SD)	2.82 (.38)	2.81 (.40)
School Safety		
Primary M (SD)	3.25 (.52)	3.25 (.65)
Secondary M (SD)	2.92 (.50)	2.48 (.70)

To determine which scales of the Delaware School Climate Survey were specifically impacted by the interaction effect, follow-up univariate ANOVAs were examined. These analyses revealed interaction effects on two of the four scales. Teacher Student Relations and Student Relations Scales were not significant $F(1, 1843)=2.05$, $p=.152$, and $F(1, 1843)=.275$, $p=.600$, respectively. However, the Rules and

Expectations Scale was significant, $F(1, 1843)=7.78, p=.005$, as well as was the School Safety Scale, $F(1, 1843)=20.67, p=.000$. The eta-squared value for these two scales were .06 and .10 respectively; meaning 6% of the variance in respondents scores on the Rules and Expectations scales and 10% of the variance in respondents scores on the School Safety scale was due to an interaction between the two independent variables, respondent type (student or staff) and building affiliation (primary or secondary).

Examination of the means presented in Table 5 indicated that on the Rules and Expectations Scale, primary staff responded the most positively ($M = 3.2$), followed by primary students ($M = 3.0$), secondary staff ($M = 2.82$), and secondary students ($M = 2.81$). For the School Safety Scale, primary staff and students had the highest mean ($M = 3.25$) followed by secondary staff ($M = 2.92$), and secondary students ($M = 2.48$).

Qualitative Questions

Following completion of the Delaware School Climate Survey, respondents were asked to respond to qualitative questions in order to gain information to potentially support interpretation of quantitative analyses. Students were asked to respond to two open-response questions and staff were asked to respond to one open-response question. The responses were analyzed for general themes and ideas and the frequencies of similar responses were tallied by theme. Students and staff were presented with a similar question to gather information on the varying perceptions of student behaviors in the buildings. Students responded to, “What things do other students do in the school that concern or bother you the most?” and staff members responded to the parallel question, “What student behaviors are you most concerned with in your building?” Students were also asked one additional question to provide further information on staff and student

relationships. (“How many adults do you feel you have a positive relationship or connection with in the school?”).

Qualitative Analysis of Student Perceptions

The 1, 137 student responses to the behaviors they found most concerning in the school buildings formed six different themes. Responses with multiple concerns were recorded in each of the related themes. These themes as well as the themes that emerged from staff responses can be found in Table 6. Concerns with safety were the most frequent of the responses (24.2%) from the students. Responses, (e.g., “Threatening the safety of all the students at our school with bomb threats and vandalism,”) were included in this category. Social issues such as friendships and group or “clique” problems were identified in 21.6% of the student responses. Student responses in this category were similar to, “most of the students have their cliques who don’t get along with anyone in the school.” Bullying behaviors, (e.g., “They call me fat and tell me I need to go work at McDonald’s. Then they steal things out of my locker.”), were the next most frequent response with 20% of the responses fitting into this theme. Sixteen and one-half percent of student responses formed the theme of risk-taking behaviors such as drug-use, cheating, stealing, and sexual relations. Issues of disrespect, either between students or students and staff, were reported in 12.6% of the responses. Class disruptions had the lowest frequency of responses of the six themes (5.2%).

Students responded to an additional question that asked them how many adults they had a positive relationship or connection to within the school building. The responses were divided into seven categories. Table 6 has the results of the student responses. Many students quantified their responses by reporting they felt a connection

to “a few” adults in the school (4.4%) or to “most” (21.2%) rather than reporting their response in a numeric form.

Table 5

Frequency of student responses on the number of positive relationships with adults in the school building

<u>Number of adults</u>	<u>Percent of student responses</u>
0	9.4%
1	6.2%
2-5	36.4%
6-9	11%
10+	11.3%
“A Few”	4.4%
“Most”	21.2%

Qualitative Analysis of Staff Perceptions

Eight themes emerged from the 180 staff responses to the question of which student behaviors were most concerning. Themes for staff and student responses are listed in Table 6. The theme in which most responses fell into was that of disrespect. Approximately 35% of the staff responses were related to issues of student disrespect. Examples of staff responses include, “Disrespect to staff, parents, police offices and other public servants” and “Lack of respect- i.e., ‘I’ll do whatever I want attitude’”. Similar to student responses, bullying behaviors, (e.g., “bullying type behaviors like name calling,

pushing, shoving, put-downs”), were the second most frequent response staff members reported (14.4%). Staff responses indicated student responsibility and motivation were also one of their top concerns (11.7%). Eleven and one-tenth percent of staff responded safety issues as being most concerning. A concern with social and emotional difficulties of students was the response shared by of 8.3% of the staff. Student risk-taking behaviors such as drug-use and cheating was identified by 7.8% of staff members as being concerning. Six and seven-tenths percent of the staff responded that adult behavior issues such as supervision and inconsistent responses to student behaviors were actually more concerning than any of the student behaviors. Responses of student truancy being concerning were the least frequent as reported by staff (4.4%).

Table 6

Concerning student behavior themes as reported by staff and students

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Student</u>
Disrespect	Safety
Bullying	Social Issues
Responsibility and Motivation	Bullying
Safety	Risk-taking Behaviors
Social/Emotional Difficulties	Disrespect
Risk-taking Behaviors	Class Disruptions
Adult Behaviors	
Truancy	

Note. Themes ordered from most frequent percentage of responses to least frequent.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to collect information on various school climate factors to determine if the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports was necessary in the School District of Monroe. Perspectives of both students and staff members were examined as well as the perspectives of the members of the primary and secondary buildings. Differences in perspectives of the state of the school climate could potentially provide a common ground to gain staff consensus on the implementation of SwPBIS. Perspectives on the main components of school climate (school rules, safety, behaviors, and relationships) could also provide information indicating targeted areas in need of improvement.

Summary of Findings

The objectives of this study included analyzing the collective responses to determine if there were differences related to aspects of the school climates in the perceptions and reports of staff and students, as well as between those attending or working in a primary versus a secondary school building. Based on data collected for this study, there was a significant interaction between the type of respondent and the respondent's building affiliation. Specifically, the Rules and Expectation Scale and the School Safety Scale were impacted by the interaction effect. On the Rules and Expectations Scale, primary staff members rated the items more favorably as compared to the other groups in this sample (primary students, secondary staff and students). Examples of items on the scale include: "Students know what is expected of their

behaviors,” “Consequences of breaking the rules are fair,” and “School rules are fair.”

When examining group means, students in the primary buildings agreed with the positive statements towards the rules and expectations of their buildings slightly less in comparison to the primary staff. The ratings by secondary staff and students were also very similar in their degree of affirmation of the positive statements about rules and expectations but less supportive of the current state of the rules and expectations than anyone in the primary buildings. However, secondary staff did agree more with statements on this scale in comparison to the secondary students.

In response to the qualitative question, “what student behaviors do you find most concerning?”; the most frequently stated concern from staff was issues of disrespect. However, through analyzing the most frequent student responses to the question of which student behaviors they found most concerning, disrespect emerged as a theme with one of the lowest response frequencies. This difference could possibly suggest students and staff have different ideas or expectations for respectful behavior. The discrepancy may also stem from generational culture differences between the staff and students. The most frequent response from students was concerns of safety. Due to the fact the survey data was collected only weeks after several bomb threats had been issued at both the middle and high school levels it is not surprising that issues of safety were in the forefront of the minds of students. Staff were privy to more information at the time of the threats and this may have accounted for the lower frequency of their cited concerns of safety, as they may have felt more confident in how the threats were being handled. Bullying was a theme that was cited in the top half of the concerns from both students and staff; suggesting it

should be a priority to be addressed through future trainings and professional development.

Forty plus years of research suggests well-established, approved rules and behavioral expectations prevent disruptive behaviors and increase academic engaged time (Becker et al., 1967; Muscott et al., 2008). The fact the data suggests students and staff perceive the primary buildings to have more clearly defined rules and expectations are aligned with the visions and goals of the buildings. Initially, the academic side of RTI was really the focus of the elementary buildings. Therefore, the elementary buildings are nearing full implementation of RTI and have recently started to focus more on behavioral aspects of RTI or components of SwPBIS. The middle school and high school are in the beginning stages of moving forward with the academic focus of RTI and have had less time to devote to improving behavior and climate issues.

As the elementary buildings in Monroe near full implementation of RTI, some aspects related to behavior have been inadvertently improved through the process as well. Due to the reciprocal nature of academic achievement and student behavior, staff have discovered that improving factors such as classroom management and consistently defining building-wide expectations are necessary to reach the academic goals set by the district. At the secondary level, teachers operate within the building in a much more autonomous manner due to the set-up of schedules, departments, the larger size of the buildings, and the high number of students each teacher sees throughout the day. It might be a greater challenge at the upper levels to create consistent implementation of the rules and expectations, particularly when staff and students may not view them to be fair and reasonable to the same degree. As found by Sugai and Horner (2002), staff are

constantly competing to reinforce positive behaviors with peers who tend to reinforce unwanted behaviors. Without clearly defined expectations, it is especially challenging for staff at the secondary level to reinforce the desirable behaviors.

The School Safety scale includes items such as “Students feel safe in this school,” and “This school is safe.” Both primary staff and students rated the items on the School Safety scale with the same level of satisfaction which was higher than that of any raters from the secondary building level. The fact that safety was rated lower at the secondary buildings, where there has been little focus on improving behavioral structures; corroborates research from Sugai and colleagues (2005) suggest climates lacking appropriate behavioral supports and structures can actually provoke antisocial behaviors. A high number of antisocial behaviors could create an atmosphere that causes staff and students to feel insecure and unsafe. Overall, students stated most frequently that issues of safety were what they found to be most concerning in their responses to the qualitative question.

Again, secondary staff perceived the school to be a safer environment than did the middle and high school students. Studies conducted by Sugai et al. (2005) demonstrate the use of aversive techniques can cause a lack of positive student-teacher relationships and a decrease in academic achievement. If students perceive the environment to be punitive they may have a lack of positive relationships with their teachers, creating feelings of disconnect and helplessness when facing threatening situations. Research done by Colvin and Lazar (1997) suggests supervision in non-classroom areas such as hallways and cafeterias must be active, overt and efficient through constant movement and scanning. As discussed earlier, supervision alone is a great challenge to the

secondary level buildings which are spatially larger and have a higher student population. In the quantitative responses collected, 6.7% of staff reported concerns with supervision. If students feel there is a lack of staff presence, they may feel more vulnerable when difficult situations arise. However, 85% of students reported that they were positively connected to at least two adults which serves as a resiliency factor and may provide students the support they need to feel safe and comfortable in the school building.

Action Plan

Now that the data has been collected and analyzed, determining the appropriate next steps in utilizing the data in a meaningful manner is necessary. This information can first be shared with the District PBIS Committee in order to obtain the input of the team on future directions and areas of focus. The information should also be disseminated to the buildings. This can likely be done through a brief presentation at a staff meeting by the Principal and School Psychologist. The information obtained can provide guidance to each building as to the specific areas that are in need of improvement.

The information will also potentially serve as a way to gain consensus for implementation of SwPBIS as the data can serve as discussion point and a way to raise awareness among staff. Staff may be surprised to discover that their concerns are echoed by colleagues. These similarities may stimulate desire to implement better practices to improve the climate for everyone. Just as data should drive academic instruction, the implementation plan for SwPBIS should be reflective of the information on the state of the current climate as to address the areas of greatest need. Specifically, providing professional development to staff at the secondary level should be a prime focus. Issues related to the climate were rated much lower at the secondary building level than the

primary buildings. It may be helpful to examine the positive aspects of the primary buildings that are affecting the climate and implement those practices that are appropriate in the secondary buildings. Considering students tended to rate the items less favorably on the Delaware School Climate Surveys, next steps taken by the district should include an initiative to increase staff and student relationships so students feel they can share with staff on a consistent basis rather than just through anonymous surveys. Sharing the information collected by the climate surveys with staff may also be beneficial to create a level of understanding between the staff and the students as to how the students perceive the buildings. It may be advantageous to create a system through which students can freely share reports and give feedback on issues surrounding the school climate so staff can be responsive and sensitive to student needs.

Providing professional development on SwPBIS and school climates is essential to the progress and enhancement of the building environments. District-wide professional development opportunities would be the most beneficial as that would ensure all staff members have had the same opportunity to understand and work with the same information. Further professional development for members of the District PBIS Committee will also be necessary as the members of the committee are viewed as the leaders on this topic. District PBIS Committee members could also potentially serve as coaches within the buildings. It may also be helpful to identify specific areas that were rated with less satisfaction by the majority of the staff and students and provide professional development that would address those specific needs. SwPBIS is an on-going process and in order to ensure fidelity to practices it is crucial that the professional development is not just in the form of conferences or “one-shot” sessions. Expanding on

coaching or mentoring in a format that allows continual feedback and support for the long-term would be most beneficial.

The District PBIS Committee could also examine the surveys and identify buildings that were rated more favorably on the various scales. The structures and programs that are the strengths of those buildings could then be utilized in a peer professional development format. Utilizing what is working in a particular building and adapting it to the other buildings could be a beneficial and time-saving approach.

Future steps could also include the use of the school climate survey information to develop the implementation plan and model for SwPBIS. The first focus should be on strengthening the core or Tier One (the universal level that impacts all students). Some programs may currently be in place that are effective; however, the information gathered from the surveys suggests more could be done at this level. The information will also be helpful in selecting evidence-based interventions for the Tier 2 level (small groups of students with similar needs, i.e. high anxiety) that will be specific to the needs of the students in each building.

Finally, a plan should be developed for continuing to monitor the progress of the climate of the schools. The implementation of SwPBIS is a process that will occur over time and therefore it is likely not necessary to administer the Delaware School Climate Surveys every year. Having staff and students complete the surveys every other year should provide sufficient feedback and allow time for changes to take effect. In the future it may also be helpful to gather parent input either through the use of surveys or a focus group.

Limitations of the Study

The timing of the current study occurred during a tumultuous time within the Monroe School District. The surveys had been scheduled to be administered during a specific time period for quite some time. Two weeks before the surveys were administered Monroe High School experienced two serious bomb threats within a week of each other in which the entire school had to be evacuated. Fortunately no evidence was found to support either threat; however staff and students appeared rattled by the events. Within several days of the threats occurring at the high school a copy cat threat occurred at the middle school resulting in that building being evacuated. Although all students and staff remained safe throughout the events, the effects resounded in the community in the following weeks.

After much deliberation it was decided that the best option would be to continue to administer the surveys as planned. It was felt enough time had passed, routines had been re-established and a sense of normalcy was returning. The concern with putting the surveys off until later in the year was that there would not be enough time to analyze the information and create a plan for utilizing the information. Despite the timing of the threats, the perspectives related to school safety from staff and students were not overly negative. Although there were a wide variety of reactions to the threats, there was a strong movement to pull together and focus on the positive aspects of school from the students and staff as well as community members.

Other limitations of the study included violating the assumption that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across all groups, as indicated by a significant Box's M test. Also, self-selection response bias is also a concern, as 32%

of staff and 36% of students did not respond or were not included in the main analyses of this study. Specifically, some staff responses (21) were removed due to the fact that those staff members worked in multiple buildings. Students in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade were also not included in the study as the survey was intended for 3rd through 12th grades. Other data was not included due to response bias or incompleteness by staff or students. Also, the final qualitative student question (“How many adults do you feel you have a positive relationship or connection with in the school”) could be reworded to be more descriptive so that student responses would be quantitative in nature to ensure consistency in the interpretation of the responses.

Conclusion

The current study attempted to collect data pertaining to the perceptions of staff and student about various elements of the school environments they work in everyday. Data is one of the main elements of SwPBIS as defined by Sugai et al. (2005). Analyzing data on multiple levels allows schools to determine the effectiveness of current practices and to initiate new practices. It is essential that today’s educators begin to examine and utilize data related to behavioral issues in order to focus their practices in the most effective manner. SwPBIS provides a way for educators to make data-based decisions that meet the behavioral needs of students.

Long ago, some of the first researchers examining human behavior started to develop a body of evidence that suggested much of human behavior is learned rather than innate (Bandura, 1973). Today, this idea still holds true and has even more research to support it. However, the challenge educators face is that behavior can be taught or reinforced through many different avenues and often what is reinforced are negative or

antisocial behaviors that draw peer attention or mimic violence and aggression in the media. Although challenging, the fact that the majority of behaviors are learned opens the door for educators to teach appropriate, pro-social behaviors to students. SwPBIS offers a framework for educators to work from that allows them to teach behavioral expectations to students much the same as they teach academics to students. The essence of SwPBIS is creating a culture where positive, pro-social behaviors are the norm for both students and staff.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. I go to school at:
 - a. Abraham Lincoln Accelerated Learning Academy
 - b. Northside Elementary
 - c. Parkside Elementary
 - d. Monroe Middle School
 - e. Monroe High School

2. I am in grade:
 - a. 3 e. 7 i. 11
 - b. 4 f. 8 j. 12
 - c. 5 g. 9
 - d. 6 h. 10

3. I am a:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. I'd rather not say

4. My race/ethnicity is:
 - a. Black
 - b. White
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. Asian
 - e. Other
 - f. I'd rather not say

APPENDIX B

TEACHER/STAFF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. School building in which you work:
 - a. Abraham Lincoln Accelerated Learning Academy
 - b. Northside Elementary
 - c. Parkside Elementary
 - d. Monroe Middle School
 - e. Monroe High School
 - f. I work in multiple school buildings

2. Current Position
 - a. Regular Education Teacher
 - b. Special Education Teacher
 - c. Pupil Services Staff (school counselor, reading specialist, Title teacher, school psychologist, intervention specialist, school nurse)
 - d. Support Staff
 - e. Administrator

3. Grade level
 - a. K
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. 4
 - f. 5
 - g. 6
 - h. 7
 - i. 8
 - j. 9
 - k. 10
 - l. 11
 - m. 12
 - n. multiple

4. Years of Experience in Education
 - a. Less than 1 year
 - b. 1-5 years
 - c. 6-10 years
 - d. 11-15 years
 - e. More than 15 years

5. Number of years in your current position

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. 1-5 years
- c. 6-10 years
- d. 11-15 years
- e. More than 15 years

6. Highest Degree Earned

- a. Less than a 4 year degree
- b. BA/BS
- c. Masters/Specialist
- d. Doctorate

APPENDIX C

INFORMATION LETTER TO TEACHERS REGARDING SCHOOL CLIMATE

SURVEY

Dear Teacher/Staff:

My name is Chelsea McColley, a recent graduate school student from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and school psychologist for Abraham Lincoln and Monroe Middle School. In order for me to complete my graduate school requirements at UW-La Crosse I am required to complete an applied thesis project. I have selected School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports as the main topic for my project.

I am interested in your perceptions of the climate (safety, relationships, fairness of rules and expectations, reported behaviors, etc.) of the school. As a member of the school your input provides valuable information that helps identify areas in need of improvement and drives district initiatives.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete an on-line survey. The approximately 50 item survey should take roughly 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and informed consent is implied upon completion of the on-line survey.

The results of this study may be published in scientific literature or presented at professional meetings using grouped data only. All information will be kept confidential through the use of numbered codes and not linked to any personally identifiable information.

Participating in this study will assist in identifying areas of need in your school with regards to the environment of the school and will potentially assist in the planning of future district and building initiatives.

The distribution of this survey has been approved by the School District of Monroe, your building administrators, and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions regarding study procedures may be directed to Chelsea McColley (608-328-7387), principal investigator. Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to the UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (608-785-8124 or irb@uwlax.edu).

APPENDIX D
INFORMATION LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING SCHOOL CLIMATE
SURVEY

Dear Parent:

My name is Chelsea McColley, a recent graduate school student from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and school psychologist for Abraham Lincoln and Monroe Middle School. In order for me to complete my graduate school requirements at UW-La Crosse I am required to complete an applied thesis project. I have selected School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports as the main topic for my project.

I am interested in your child's perceptions of the climate (safety, relationships, fairness of rules and expectations, reported behaviors, etc.) of their school. As a member of the school their input provides valuable information that helps identify areas in need of improvement and drives district initiatives.

If you agree to allow your child to participate they will be asked to complete an on-line survey. The approximately 36 item survey should take roughly 15 minutes to complete. Your child's homeroom teacher will take their class to the computer lab to complete the survey. Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary and informed consent is implied upon completion of the on-line survey. **If you do not wish for your child to participate in the survey please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter.** If your child is not participating in completing the survey they will be asked to sit quietly during this brief time or complete appropriate work.

The results of this study may be published in scientific literature or presented at professional meetings using grouped data only. All information will be kept confidential through the use of numbered codes and not linked to any personally identifiable information.

Participating in this study will assist in identifying areas of need in your child's school with regards to the environment of the school and will potentially assist in the planning of future district and building initiatives.

The distribution of this survey has been approved by the School District of Monroe, your building administrators, and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions regarding study procedures may be directed to Chelsea McColley (608-328-7387), principal investigator. Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to the UW-La Crosse Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (608-785-8124 or irb@uwlax.edu).

APPENDIX E

SCRIPT FOR ADMINISTERING STUDENT SCHOOL CLIMATE

SURVEY

Dear Student,

The following will be read to the class by the teacher: You are being asked to respond to some questions about the safety, rules, behaviors and relationships within your school. Your parents have been notified that you will be participating in responding to these questions if **YOU CHOOSE** to do so. If not, then you may sit quietly or complete appropriate work.

Your responses to these questions will be kept in complete confidentiality. This means that no one will know how you responded to the questions and your teacher, I, nor anybody other adult in the school will ask you what you responded either. You should also respect your classmates and not ask them how they responded, and also keep your responses to yourself.

There are also no right or wrong responses. This is not a test. Whatever you feel is the best response is what you should mark. This is not going to be scored and no grade will be given. It is only necessary for you to respond to questions honestly about how you feel about the safety, rules, behaviors, and relationships in your school.

Before responding to the questions please look at the first page you have been given. I will now read this to you (the teacher will read the Student Assent statement). If you choose to respond to the questions, please click the start button to begin the survey. I will read the questions and responses to those who want to answer them. If you choose not to respond to the questions then you may sit quietly or work on a school-related task.

For those of you who have chosen to respond to the questions, I will read them out loud to you. If you need me to slow down, just ask.

The teacher will then read through the survey. When the survey has been finished the teacher will have students close the web page and return to class.

APPENDIX F

STUDENT ASSENT STATEMENT

I understand that I am not required to answer the questions that I have been given. If I choose not to answer the questions, I will sit quietly or work on a school-related task.

I understand that if I do choose to answer the questions my answers will remain confidential. I understand that I am being asked to answer these questions to find out what I think about the safety, rules, behaviors and relationships in my school.

