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Craig Ross

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A Case Study of the Implementation of

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)

by

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Leadership and Counseling

Eastern Michigan University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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instructors and advisors I have had since. The doctoral program at Eastern Michigan University pledged to sharpen my thinking, and I believe that it has. For that I will be forever grateful.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this single case study was to examine the significant personal, social, and environmental elements influencing effective second-year implementation of a specific school reform initiative, Positive Behavior Supports, in one alternative high school in southwestern Michigan. Data were collected in the form of artifacts, observations, surveys and interviews. All surveys and interviews were conducted by third-party assistants in the fall of 2009. The survey and interview data were provided to the researcher only after all identifying information had been removed so that the anonymity of participants was protected.

Multiple theoretical frameworks were employed in the analysis of the data, including the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM; George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006); Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural frame, human resource frame, political frame, and symbolic frame; Schein's (2004) theories on organizational culture; and Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) Theory of Organizational Socialization.

The study found that following the second year of Positive Behavior Supports implementation, the staff of the alternative high school remained confident in the effectiveness of the reform initiative; however, most staff were unable to evolve the program into more sophisticated forms. The reasons for this inability to advance the initiative included the need for additional training (for both new as well as veteran staff members), the lack of necessary financial resources to adequately support the program, the lack of time for planning and reflection coupled with the competing demands of other activities and expectations (most notably, the Michigan Merit Curriculum), and apprehension regarding effective collaboration with peers. Furthermore, the study found

that an emphasis on additional training for veteran staff would be beneficial not only to help them with replacing previously-learned, deeply engrained behaviors, but also to allow for more effective socialization of new members into the school culture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

Eric Hoffer

School improvement initiatives have gained sweeping momentum in recent years, and few K-12 schools could not readily produce an extensive inventory of the programs and agendas they have adopted to verify their enthusiastic involvement in the change mandate. Yet are schools really changing? Despite all the fanfare, high school academic programming looks suspiciously like a slightly repackaged 1950s, sputnik-era curriculum, and counterproductive student social behaviors continue to be addressed with a “spare-the-rod-and-spoil-the-child” approach which has been given a face-lift and sold under the labels of “progressive discipline,” and “zero tolerance.” Educators know that society has changed and that they need to change as well, but turning the ship of public education toward a different point on the horizon has proven exceedingly difficult. This study looked at the specific challenges of instituting change after the initial flourish of enthusiasm had waned and the real work of reforming a school had begun.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to understand the implementation of a school improvement initiative in one particular high school in southwest Michigan; it was not intended to be an evaluation of the particular program that has been implemented. The introduction of any new program or strategy naturally creates some anxiety and

subsequently faces obstacles to successful adoption. Many school improvement initiatives, however, align with generally accepted beliefs as to how schools should conduct their business; they are merely refinements of existing approaches and are consistent with underlying beliefs and traditions. Other school improvement initiatives, though, require more from school staff: a rethinking of the fundamental understanding of the problem and a willingness to adopt a strategy that is a radical departure from traditional policies and programs. This study examined how staff dealt with the implementation of one such initiative: the implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBS).

Background of the Study

Much of the original development of PBS as a structured framework to address issues of student misbehavior can be attributed to work conducted at the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at the University of Oregon with the support of a grant from the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). According to Safran and Oswald (2003):

PBS is not a new approach, but is based upon the principles of ABA [Applied Behavior Analysis]. The goal of PBS is to “apply behavioral principles in the community in order to reduce problem behaviors and build appropriate behaviors that result in durable change and a rich lifestyle (Carr et al., 1999, p. 3).” (p. 362)

The initial applications of PBS focused on individuals with severe cognitive impairments and disabilities, and the resulting data indicated that PBS was very successful in reducing such problem behaviors as property destruction, aggression, and self-injury. As the result

of these early successes, “researchers began to examine applying these principles with larger groups of people in inclusive settings” (Safran & Oswald, 2003, p. 362).

The application of PBS strategies to all students in a particular school can be divided into four delineated areas of support: school-wide or universal support strategies that are directed at all students in all school settings, specific supports for non-classroom settings (such as hallways or cafeterias), classroom supports or supports for specific groups of students (students in the gym, etc.), and individual supports for particularly problematic students (Safran & Oswald, 2003, p. 363). Data collected regarding the extension of PBS strategies to all students in multiple school settings indicate substantial environmental improvement and the effectiveness of the PBS framework. In a study of the implementation of PBS in a rural middle school, Oswald, Safran, and Johanson (2005) noted:

These findings also support the emerging PBS literature that positive change can be obtained in such non-classroom settings as hallways, transition times, cafeterias, recess, playgrounds, and arrival at school . . . Traditionally, applied behavior analysis strategies have focused on individual or small group intervention . . . However, what is particularly noteworthy about these findings is the large number of students whose daily lives were influenced. . . This study and related research confirm that readily available and cost-effective techniques can be used to make common areas into safer and more orderly environments. (p. 275)

Thus what initially was a set of applied behavior analysis strategies successfully used to assist individuals with severe disabilities in a classroom setting evolved into a framework

that seems to offer substantial potential for improving all students' behavior across a variety of school settings.

Eber & Palmer (2003) describe PBS as “a systems approach focused on building the capacity of schools to teach and support positive behavior of all students by developing research-based, school-wide and classroom discipline systems” (p. 193). The ultimate goal of this system is to develop interventions and supports that help students learn to function more efficiently in the school environment and ultimately become more academically successful.

The philosophical foundations of the PBS design reside in the belief that schools tend to employ a limited range of strategies for dealing with student misbehavior and that these strategies are reactive and consequential: reprimands, exclusions, and suspensions. When viewed from the perspective of the classroom teacher, these strategies seem, at least initially, to be effective: a student disrupts class, the student is sent out of class, the class environment improves. Thus it is understandable why the teacher would be inclined to repeat this strategy the next time a student disrupts class. Unfortunately, the solution is temporary and can lead to further problem behaviors. The Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (2004) cites the work of Sulzer-Azaroff and Mayer (1994) as indicating that “a punishing climate can be a setting event for problem behaviors,” and that “a school climate relying on punishing consequences can provoke problem behaviors” (p. 9).

Instead of exclusive reliance on aversive and exclusionary reactive strategies for dealing with student behavior problems, PBS requires that desired positive social behaviors be explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced through a system of rewards. The

goal of PBS is to establish an environment where expectations are clearly understood and appropriate behavior is the norm (School-Wide PBS, p. 2). Any number of strategies and programs can be used to establish this environment, but it is important to note that PBS is founded on four basic concepts:

1. Operationally defined and valued outcomes,
2. Behavioral and biomedical science,
3. Research-validated practices, and
4. Systems change to both enhance the broad quality with which all students are living/learning and reduce problem behaviors. (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2004, p. 10)

Operationally defined and valued outcomes implies that specific academic and behavioral outcomes are clearly established for all students and are aligned with state and local guidelines as well as the school's SIP (School Improvement Plan). Behavioral and biomedical science supports the contention that behavior (social or academic) is learned and therefore can be taught. It also supports the idea that there is an interaction between environmental elements and the biophysical qualities of the individual that affects behavior and that analyzing and manipulating environmental elements can significantly impact behaviors (Center on PBIS, 2004, p. 10). Data are collected to help insure the use of research-validated practices, and systems changes are enacted to insure the regular collection of data and the implementation of effective practices (Center on PBIS, 2004, p. 11).

The initial implementation of PBS in a school building is a highly structured and systematic activity that requires initial buy-in from at least 80% of the school's teaching,

administrative, and support staff. The implementation is managed by both an internal (works in the building) and an external (works outside the building) coach who together work closely with the school PBS team to develop strategies and monitor progress. The entire staff is engaged in this process and, at least monthly, participates in analysis of the most current school data (academic and behavioral) and subsequent discussion of the effectiveness of various program elements. The process is very dynamic and features frequent program changes and modifications (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2004).

The high school that is the focus of this study began the process of PBS implementation in the spring of 2007 and began full implementation of the program beginning in the 2007-2008 school year. The Positive Behavior Supports initiative in this high school was financially supported through a portion of a six-year, six-million-dollar grant awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to the local Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service Agency in 2005. The purpose of the grant was to provide assistance in implementing the goals of SAMHSA's Child Mental Health Initiative: expand community capacity, provide an array of services, ensure individualized service plans and culturally and linguistically competent practices, and promote family/youth empowerment (Grant Application, p. 6). This grant funded a wide variety of initiatives throughout the region, but in conjunction with additional funding through the local Regional Educational Service Agency, it provided support for the establishment of PBS programs in several area schools including the alternative high school that is the focus of this study.

Research Questions

The research question guiding this study was: What were the significant personal, social, and environmental elements influencing effective second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) in this high school? Additional guiding questions included:

1. How did staff respond to this school improvement initiative initially and over time?
2. To what extent did the organizational structures of this school inhibit or promote the successful implementation of this school improvement initiative?
3. To what extent did personal apprehension and discomfort inhibit or promote the successful implementation of this school improvement initiative?
4. To what extent did staff feel the improvement initiative conflicted with their personal needs?
5. To what extent did staff feel that the implementation of this school reform initiative altered the political roles and positional power they hold in the organization and in the classroom?
6. To what extent did staff feel that the implementation of this school reform initiative conflicted with traditional and community-accepted perceptions of appropriate school staff behavior?
7. To what extent did staff feel that the school improvement initiative required behaviors that conflicted with the expectations of their peers?
8. To what extent have the requirements of the school reform initiative been integrated into the socialization of staff at this high school?

Definition of Relevant Terms

BoQ (Benchmarks of Quality) – “one of several surveys used to do a self-evaluation of the three-tiered model of positive behavior supports. The BoQ is designed to provide teams with an opportunity to discuss and evaluate critical aspects of running an effective school-wide positive behavior support system” (BoQ, 2008-2009).

LSCI (Life Space Crisis Intervention) – a certification training focusing on conflict resolution.

NDK (No Disposable Kids) – a program designed to help adults remain emotionally disengaged when assisting students who are in conflict.

PBS (Positive Behavior Support) – “a comprehensive set of strategies that are meant to redesign environments in such a way that problem behaviors are prevented or inconsequential, and to teach students new skills, making problem behavior unnecessary” (Positive Behavior Support Glossary).

ODR (Office Discipline Referral) – a physical form (hand-written or electronic) that documents and communicates inappropriate student behavior to parents and school officials. High rates of ODRs in schools typically indicate problem behavior environments (Irwin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004).

Setting Event – “any occurrence that affects a student’s responses to reinforcers and punishers in the environment. Setting events can be due to environmental, social, or physiological factors” (Positive Behavior Support Glossary).

SWIS (School-Wide Information System) – A web-based system for tracking ODRs (Office Discipline Referrals) within a school (SWIS).

Research Design

This investigation was a single case study of one program and examined the dynamics of staff acceptance and implementation of one school reform initiative: Positive Behavior Support (PBS). Yin (2003) defines a case study as

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In other words, you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study. (p. 13)

This researcher selected the case study approach because he recognized the influence that contextual elements appeared to have on the success or failure of other school reform initiatives with which he had been involved.

Tellis (1997) references Yin (1994) when he notes that “single cases are used to confirm or challenge a theory,” and that single cases are “ideal for revelatory cases where an observer may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible” (p. 6). Several theoretical frameworks that illuminate the phenomenon of innovation implementation within an organization were used to understand the implementation of PBS at this high school including the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006), Bolman and Deal’s structural frame, human resource frame, political frame and symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) as well as Schein’s theories on organizational culture (Schein, 2004) and Van Maanen and Schein’s Theory of Organizational Socialization (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979).

Methodology

This researcher had access to a variety of data that shed light on the research question, thus lending support to making the single case study the appropriate approach for this inquiry. This study employed qualitative data collection methods in order to understand and explain staff response to the implementation of PBS. Also considered were quantitative data depicting the degree to which PBS strategies had contributed to the improvement of student behaviors, for this information was absolutely necessary in understanding the context in which staff responded to the innovation. It is important to note, however, that this study was not an attempt to evaluate the success or failure of the school improvement initiative itself, and the use of information that might be perceived as evaluative of the innovation was included only when it contributes to a better understanding of the social context in which the implementation took place.

Data were collected from a variety of sources including interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and critical incident reports, as well as other documents and artifacts such as meeting minutes, school improvement plans, and personal observation. All interviews were conducted by third-party assistants from the local Regional Education Service Agency so as to eliminate bias and contamination of the data. All surveys and questionnaires were administered by third-party assistants as well.

Delimitations

This study was limited to one at-risk high school in southwest Michigan that had implemented PBS over a two-year period at the time the data were collected and analyzed. The following delimitations were in effect:

1. The study was limited to an alternative high school of approximately 250 at-risk students who tend to exhibit substantially more counterproductive behaviors than students in a traditional high school environment.
2. The study was limited to assessing the implementation of one particular school improvement initiative: Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBS).
3. The study was limited to the approximately 20 professional staff members (teachers and support staff) who work with at-risk students at this high school.

Limitations

Every high school is unique: at any given time, the particular combination of staff, students, and social-political context insures a certain distinctiveness that could make blanket comparisons among high schools misleading and inaccurate. The high school staff that is the focus of this study shared a distinct educational culture that is the result of its particular history, its students, and its environment. The researcher makes no claim that the results of this study would be identical if the research had been conducted in another high school. The researcher also makes no claim that the results of this study would be identical if some other school improvement initiative were being implemented. However, high schools and high school staff are sufficiently similar to make the findings of this study significant for any educators attempting to implement a school reform initiative.

Significance of the Study

There are two primary reasons why this research is relevant and important: the pressing need to successfully implement school improvement initiatives that address counterproductive student behavior (behavior that often means the difference between

academic success and academic failure), and the equally pressing need to more effectively understand and support any school improvement initiative, so that schools can more responsibly manage financial resources and more efficiently provide the support students need to achieve their educational goals.

There is a growing recognition that K-12 schools need to do a better job of addressing the needs of all students in order to keep them in school and on a path that leads to a productive and satisfying career. Recent events in Michigan, such as the “Dropout Summit” held in Lansing in October of 2008 as well as the “Education Reconnection” conference sponsored by the researcher’s local Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) in February of 2009, support the contention of growing awareness and concern. This researcher attended both events, and the information presented by various social agencies as well as by disengaged students clearly suggests a deficiency in the K-12 school system in terms of effectively managing counterproductive student behaviors that ultimately results in a substantial number of young people leaving school prior to graduation. What this researcher finds particularly intriguing about this phenomenon is that there traditionally has been and continues to be such a sharp dichotomy between how educators address academic problems and how they address student behavior problems.

A common assumption regarding the reasons for students’ failure in the academic environment centers around attributing the failure to some sort of cognitive limitation which makes learning difficult: “Students with learning disabilities (LD) are at particular risk for dropping out of school. By definition, students with LD demonstrate low academic achievement – a feature that generally worsens as they get older and course content becomes more complex” (Bear, Korterling, and Braziel, 2006, p. 293). Much

energy and attention has been directed to understanding and attempting to rectify some of these learning disabilities, and tiers of conceptual explanations and related interventions have been developed to address these sorts of student challenges: reading recovery programs, summer school remediation programs, emphasis on instructional differentiation, and, as a last resort, some sort of impairment label and subsequent special education support. Regardless of the strategy, implementation is usually accompanied by data collection, reassessment, and for schools using the RtI (Response to Intervention) model, continuing adjustment of the teaching and learning strategies in place for an individual student (Hilton, 2007).

While a system is in place in most school districts for addressing literacy and numeric inadequacies, a parallel support system for addressing social/behavioral deficiencies is not as common, even though the connection between problem behaviors and academic failure is well documented. Newcomb et. al (2002) notes that “problem behaviors associated with school, such as absenteeism, truancy, and discipline problems, have. . . been shown to be associated with dropping out of school” (p. 173). Students who habitually exhibit inappropriate behaviors in the high school setting are generally dealt with using a system of “progressive discipline.” Progressive discipline entails ever-increasing levels of punishment, culminating in removal from the environment: “suspension (i.e., a disciplinary sanction that requires the student to be excluded from the school building for a specified period of time) is one of the most common disciplinary consequences used in schools for student problem behaviors” (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004, p. 509). Despite the prevalent use of suspension-based systems for controlling student behavior, there is little evidence for their effectiveness: “Ironically,

the research on suspension indicates that, despite its frequent use, it is not effective in reducing the behavior problems it is intended to address” (Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2004, p. 509).

A reliance on punishment is not an effective strategy for helping young people learn to behave in positive ways consistent with prevailing social norms. As Skiba (2000) points out, such an approach to addressing student behaviors results only in student resentment and “counter-coercion”:

Many of these unintended effects on students may simply reflect the consistent findings of operant psychology that the application of punishment is unpredictable, and unlikely to lead to the learning of new behavior (Council for Exceptional Children, 1991; Skinner, 1953). (p. 14)

To understand the validity of this observation requires little more than noting the attendees in an after-school detention room in October and then comparing this list to the roster of attendees in the same room in April. What is so striking about high schools’ stubborn employment of behavior-control strategies that are clearly ineffective is that they appear to counter some of the fundamental underpinnings of teaching and learning. As Herner (1998) phrases it: “If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach; how to swim, we teach; how to multiply, we teach; how to drive, we teach; how to behave, we . . . teach? . . . punish?” (p. 2).

In recent years, the United States has experienced considerable social and cultural change; public educational institutions purportedly have accepted and embraced many of these changes and have attempted to adjust and update the academic curriculum accordingly. Diversity has become an important consideration in designing academic

curriculum and choosing textbooks, however the diverse experiences of students served by K-12 education makes them very different from those who attended these same institutions several decades ago, and it is not at all apparent that schools have appropriately adjusted to diverse patterns of student behavior and social skill. Monroe (2006) makes it clear that K-12 schools have often failed to adjust to the changing cultural landscape:

Because middle-class and European-American professionals hold most K-12 teaching posts (Gomez 1996; National Center for Education Statistics 1997), classroom behavioral policies and expectations tend to reflect culturally specific perspectives (Brown 2005; Monroe 20b). For example, explicit classroom rules often penalize self-directed movement and limit opportunities for student talk (Everhart 1983). Implicit rules also frequently under gird conventions concerning respect, cooperation, vocal usage, interpersonal space, and deference to teacher authority. Unfortunately, in many ways, limited diversity in the teaching corps has precluded educators from appreciating the socially derived nature of “effective” learning environments and, more specifically, issues related to student discipline (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, and Curan 2004). (p. 163)

The number of students whose needs are not being met has reached a tipping point: schools must find ways to better support all students in their struggle to learn and grow, and this includes helping them learn important behavior and social skills as well as academic skills.

In recognition of this problem, growing numbers of schools across the country are looking into different systems for managing student behaviors. In Michigan, three

counties have received grant funding to pilot one such system (Positive Behavior Support); the researcher's high school as well as several other area schools are among the local county's participants. From the very beginning of the program's implementation, this researcher was aware of a certain "uneasiness" some staff expressed about the program, and he recognized the importance of identifying the reasons for this undercurrent of anxiety. PBS requires that teachers and support staff look at student behavior in the same way that they look at academics: social behavior and academic behavior both need to be taught, reinforced, rewarded, remediated, and revisited – an approach that in many ways runs contrary to traditional classroom expectations and strategies. This "contrary approach" seemed to make sense, for as Einstein observed, "You can't solve a problem at the same level of thinking that created the problem." Yet moving staff to this new "level of thinking" has proven challenging. In attempting to understand why this was the case, this researcher attempted to draw from previous course work and his understanding of organizational theory. It made sense to attribute innovation adoption reluctance to something inherent in the organization, and perhaps looking at the problem through the lens of the structural frame, the human resource frame, the political frame, or the symbolic frame might provide insight. Or, perhaps the adoption of PBS is not unique in any way and reluctance by staff to implement it is merely the result of a common and "natural" pattern of innovation adoption which can be understood and mitigated by using the tools of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). However, it also seems plausible that there is something in the socialization of educational staff that contributes to their apprehensions about this initiative in particular

which suggests the value of considering the problem from the perspective of Van Maanen and Schein's Theory of Organizational Socialization (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979).

The second reason this research is relevant and important is that it can, by improving understanding, help school personnel more effectively implement any school improvement initiative. Improvement initiatives in schools are now as common as desks and whiteboards. Often, school improvement initiatives begin with excitement and the considerable allocation of financial and human resources, but end with staff frustration and cynicism – and no meaningful change. How does a school leader foster change that is valuable, effective, and sustainable? Or, as Fullan (2001) puts it: “How do you lead in a culture such as ours, which seems to specialize in pell-mell innovation?” (p. ix). One solution is that school leaders must understand and focus as much attention on the process of implementing an innovation as they do on understanding the innovation itself. To that end, school leaders need tools that can help them manage and understand change. As Jacobus (1997) concludes:

. . . the use of current research and the incorporation of outside consultants needs to be considered by principals when initiating a change effort. Without the research base and the help from experts in the field, principals run the risk of implementing changes that will fail due to an inadequate understanding of the innovation, or an inadequate understanding of the process. (p. 18)

Public school districts currently operate in a political and social environment that requires ongoing reform. Indeed, considerable financial and human resources are directed to school improvement initiatives – initiatives that often encounter implementation barriers that are not fully understood. If school districts can learn to better understand

organizational elements that inhibit or facilitate change, they can be much more effective not only in implementing valuable programming for students, but also in more responsibly managing the financial and human resources that are impacted by the change. This researcher's district, for example, has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last decade on school improvement initiatives that have been allowed to merely fade away as the result of either lack of technical core support, or lack of administrative support, or both. Unfortunately, no attempt has been made to understand this phenomenon – it has simply become an accepted aspect of the school culture. It seems likely that other school districts have similar experiences.

The result of failed school reform programs is that staff morale suffers, and employees are socialized to view any new school reform initiative with skepticism. However, by improving understanding of the factors that influence staff acceptance of school improvement programs, it might be possible to reverse this trend. A better understanding of organizational socialization can also lead to more effective strategies for professional development. School culture is generally not considered when some of these decisions are made by central office, and consequently, the potential benefit of professional development training is not always realized.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is the first of five and provides an overview of this single case study. The purpose of the study was to understand the implementation process of one particular school improvement initiative (Positive Behavior Support) in one high school. A brief description of this school improvement initiative was presented in order to aid in understanding the issues that faced the staff as they attempted to implement the program.

The study was not an evaluation of this school improvement initiative. The significance of the study was identified as being two-fold: to help educational professionals effectively implement reform initiatives that address counterproductive student behavior and to help educational professionals understand the obstacles that threaten the implementation of any school reform initiative, behavioral or academic. Additionally, this chapter included the definition of relevant terms and a rationale for the use of the single case study research design.

Chapter Two presents the literature relevant to this case study and describes the conceptual frameworks through which the phenomenon was analyzed. Chapter Three addresses the research methods employed in data collection and analysis as well as the logic for using these methods. Chapter Four describes findings of the research which are examined through the lenses of multiple conceptual frameworks. Finally, Chapter Five discusses conclusions derived from this research and presents suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Whenever a theory appears to you as the only possible one,
take this as a sign that you have neither understood the
theory nor the problem which it was intended to solve.

Karl Popper

The purpose of this single case study was to understand the significant personal, social, and environmental elements influencing effective second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), in one high school in southwest Michigan; the purpose was not to evaluate the effectiveness of PBS in that setting. Chapter One described the change initiative in order to clarify the context and highlight the challenges that faced the high school staff. This chapter examines some of the literature that informs an understanding of the change implementation process. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the rationale for employing multiple conceptual frameworks to better understand the phenomenon and then discusses the specific frameworks that were used in the study: the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006), the structural frame, the human resource frame, the political frame, the symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003), as well as the frameworks of organizational culture (Edgar Schein, 2004) and organizational socialization (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979).

Conceptual Frameworks

The issues this research uncovered were complex, and addressing them in a meaningful way required an exploration of concepts and theories that attempt to explain not only how organizations respond to innovation and change, but also how individuals within the organizations react to change. If eliminating resistance to change initiatives

were as simple as identifying one simple reason for the resistance – whether the reason be organizational or social or psychological – a solution would have been developed, an instructional manual would be readily available, and all positive, data-supported school improvement initiatives would have successfully been integrated into the day-to-day operation of schools. However, this singular solution does not exist. As Fullan (2001) points out, there are plenty of resources and strategies intended to guide leaders through the change process; however, “some of the advice seems contradictory . . . [and] much of it is general and unclear [and] there is no ‘answer’ to be found in them” (p. 33). Not surprisingly, then, many school improvement initiatives die a relatively quick death, suggesting the likelihood of multiple reasons for the general failure of schools to readily embrace change. Indeed, Zigarmi and Hoekstra (2008) cite research that points to the failure of 70% of all reform initiatives. For this reason, then, it seemed logical to approach the task armed with a variety of concepts and theories that might individually shed some light on the problem of school improvement implementation but that collectively would illuminate the phenomenon much more brightly.

It was the suspicion of this researcher that obstacles to the successful implementation of the student behavior management system (PBS) resided in all areas of the school system: the organizational structure, the personal apprehensions of staff, and the subtle but powerful socialization process that molds educational professionals and guides their reactions and behaviors. The successful educational leader needs to adopt a broad perspective in order to proactively recognize and effectively address these obstacles, and it is the consideration of multiple concepts and theories that allows for this broadened perspective. The conceptual framework that best suits the educational leader hoping to

improve his or her school is one that recognizes the synergistic relationship among the various impediments to the successful implementation of a school improvement initiative, and it is only through the consideration of multiple conceptual lenses that these impediments can successfully be understood and mitigated. The conceptual framework for this research integrated a variety of concepts and theories that individually provided plausible explanations for the phenomenon, but that were not mutually exclusive. It was the belief of this researcher that multiple concepts and theories provided a clearer and more precise understanding of the problems associated with the successful implementation of a school improvement initiative such as PBS than would have any single concept or theory.

One approach that made sense was to consider the natural resistance to change that occurs in all organizations and explore the implementation of this particular student management system through this lens. The conceptual framework used in this study that addresses the natural process of resisting change was the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), developed at the University of Texas (Sweeny, 2003). This study also considered the introduction of a change agent from the perspective of the structural frame, a frame that looks at the impact of basic organizational structure on the ability of the organization to adapt and embrace change. The lens employed was the analysis of organizational structure found in the work of Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal (2003). Bolman and Deal (2003) also offer three other conceptual frameworks that proved to be valuable: the human resource frame, the political frame, and the symbolic frame. Yet another way this study considered the problem was to look at it through the lens of organizational culture. The theories of Edgar Schein (2004) were helpful in considering

the issues related to the implementation of PBIS from the organizational culture perspective. Finally, a Theory of Organizational Socialization as advanced by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) was used to gain insight into an organization's acceptance of or resistance to change.

Concerns-Based Adoption Model

Comprehensive change initiatives require careful monitoring by school leaders in order to insure successful implementation. A useful resource available to educators to help them monitor change implementation is the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) which Ellsworth (2000) describes as providing the tools to “‘keep a finger on the pulse’ of change and to collect the information needed” (p. 3).

Thus, one way of thinking about why certain change initiatives such as Positive Behavior Supports succeed or fail was to focus on the care and strategies devoted to the implementation process itself. The CBAM emphasizes the importance of monitoring and attending to the apprehensions and behaviors of individuals and groups of individuals within the organization when they are confronted with an unfamiliar program or strategy. Horsley and Loucks-Horsley (1998) point out the difference between what they call the “content of change,” the actual program or practice, and the “parallel process of change, the natural and developmental process that each of us goes through whenever we engage in something new or different” (p. 1). The CBAM focuses on how individuals react to innovation, and it identifies very distinct stages they experience as they move from awareness to implementation (Sweeny, 2003, p. 1-2). This framework looks at the process of change in three ways: stages of concern, levels of use, and innovation components (Horsley and Loucks-Horsley, 1998, p. 1).

The CBAM tools necessary to monitor and evaluate a school improvement initiative such as PBS are commercially available and consist of three manuals, each between 73 and 198 pages in length (*Measuring Implementation in Schools: The Stages of Concern Questionnaire*, *Measuring Implementation in Schools: Levels of Use*, and *Measuring Implementation in Schools: Innovation Configurations*), as well as a DVD, which provides an overview of the tools, and a CD, which can be used to assist in scoring the questionnaire. Each of the three manuals is designed to be used either independently or in conjunction with the others, as the particular situation warrants (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006). The manuals are organized similarly, consisting of a brief introduction which describes the particular tool as well as its relationship to the other CBAM tools, examples of how each tool is used and scored, a literature review, and some relevant considerations and findings. A general description of the CBAM materials clarifies the application and purpose of these tools:

The new generation of CBAM materials is aimed primarily at researchers charged with measuring the implementation of a new practice or innovation in a school setting. By “researchers” we mean university researchers, program evaluators, and change facilitators who are gathering data to access, describe, evaluate, or monitor the implementation of change. Evaluators, administrators, and other staff members can use the CBAM tools formatively to track how they are implementing particular reform initiatives. Implementation researchers may also use the CBAM tools to build knowledge about how teachers make sense of reform policies and resulting innovations. (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006. p. viii)

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was developed at the University of Texas in the 1970s by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education and has been widely used by researchers since that time – many using it as it was originally conceived, but some suggesting modifications to improve validity (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006. p. xi). The CBAM is based on some pioneering work by Francis Fuller (1969), who was very interested in the “innovation focus” which was an offshoot of the “diffusion and adoption era of the 1960s and 1970s” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006. p. 1). The crux of the “innovation focus” is that school improvement programs are developed by external individuals or organizations who presumably research best practices and package them into some new program or innovation that needs only to be adopted by school staff. The problem that developed, however, was that the intended results rarely materialized (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 1). This phenomenon was the focus of the CBAM developers in the early 1970s: they began to explore how individuals responded when asked to change their established strategies and routines and integrate some new innovation into their teaching methodologies. Central to this investigation was the belief by the CBAM researchers that an understanding of change must begin with an understanding of the individual’s response to change, or as George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer (2006) describe it, the “personal side of the change process” (p. 2). As the researchers began to delve more closely into this phenomenon, they made a significant and central observation: “No matter what the school reform, someone still has to change” (p. 2).

Using as a departure point the work of Francis Fuller, the CBAM originators determined that the nature of teachers’ concerns about a particular innovation could be

correlated with the point at which the individual teacher was in his or her career (Rutherford, 1982, p. 3). Several general stages and corresponding concerns were identified: Pre-teaching Phase (Non-concern), Early Teaching Phase (Concern with Self), and Late Teaching Phase (Concern with Pupils). These three categories were later further defined by Hall and Hord (1987) to include unrelated concerns, self concerns, task concerns, and impact concerns (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 3). The recognition of the importance of an individual's reaction to an innovation, and subsequently the recognition of a logical progression of this reaction, appeared to be the breakthrough which ultimately led to the CBAM tools. From the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) ultimately came the Levels of Use (LoU), which in turn led to the development of the third tool in this triad: the Innovation Configurations (IC) tool (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 4). It is perhaps useful to look at the set of CBAM instruments as a way of understanding the who, what, and how of a school improvement innovation as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

The Focus and Purpose of CBAM Tools

CBAM Tool	Focus	Purpose
Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ)	Who	Determines where someone is in terms of individual concern about the innovation.
Levels of Use (LoU)	How	Determines where someone is in terms of the use of the innovation.
Innovation Configuration (IC)	What	Identifies various forms of the innovation.

Thus, the Concerns-Based Adoption Model is a set of comprehensive tools that essentially “. . . is a framework that describes, explains and predicts probable behaviors throughout the change process, and it can help educational leaders, coaches, and staff developers facilitate the process” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 5).

The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) manual is characteristic of the organization of all three manuals and begins with a brief description and history of the tool (questionnaire in this case). According to George, Hall, and Stiegelbauer (2006), the SoCQ is a mechanism to provide the researcher with a way to understand the concerns teachers and other staff members have about the implementation of an innovation – the implementation as it impacts individuals charged with delivering the innovation as well as the impact on those intended to benefit from the innovation. The organization of the manual includes a discussion of concerns, a description of the questionnaire, information on reliability and validity, instructions for administering and scoring the questionnaire, and a lengthy discussion of results interpretation.

The various stages of concern are presented graphically in Figure 1: The Stages of Concern About an Innovation (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 8).

IMPACT	6	Refocusing	The individual focuses on exploring ways to reap more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of making major changes to it or replacing it with a more powerful alternative.
	5	Collaboration	The individual focuses on coordinating and cooperating with others regarding use of the innovation.
	4	Consequence	The individual focuses on the innovation's impact on students in his or her immediate sphere of influence. Considerations include the relevance of the innovation for students; the evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies; and the changes needed to improve student outcomes.
TASK	3	Management	The individual focuses on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, and scheduling dominate.
SELF	2	Personal	The individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his or her adequacy to meet those demands, and/or his or her role with the innovation. The individual is analyzing his or her relationship to the reward structure of the organization, determining his or her part in decision making, and considering potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Concerns also might involve the financial or status implications of the program for the individual and his or her colleagues.
	1	Informational	The individual indicates a general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more details about it. The individual does not seem to be worried about himself or herself in relation to the innovation. Any interest is in impersonal, substantive aspects of the innovation, such as its general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.
	0	Unconcerned	The individual indicates little concern about or involvement with the innovation.

Figure 1. Stages of Concern adapted from George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006

The Stages of Concern are focused around “the importance of attending to where people are and addressing the questions they are asking when they are asking them” (Loucks-Horsley, 1996, p. 1). The first three stages (lower) all are focused on the individual impact of the change and are characterized by such statements as “I am confused,” and “How will this effect me?” (Sweeny, 2003, p. 2). The middle stage (stage 3) is focused on management, or tasks, and the upper stages (stage 4-6) are focused on the impact of the change: how the program is working, how it might be made to work more effectively, and so on. (Horsley & Loucks-Horsley, 1998, p. 2).

George, Hall and Stiegelbauer (2006) make it clear that “concerns” are a key component in understanding how a particular innovation is gaining traction in an organization. They point out that staff are bombarded with stimuli and that they can not possibly attend to all the demands that are made upon their time. It becomes important, then, to notice what they are paying attention to and what they are ignoring:

Certain things in our world, however, get our attention, because of external forces (the influences of others), internal forces, or a combination of the two. The way we perceive these things depends on what they are and who we are. Our entire psychosocial being – our personal history, personality dynamics, motivations, needs, feelings, education, roles, and status – shapes how we perceive, feel about, and cope with our environments. Whenever something heightens our feelings and thoughts, we are registering concern about it. . . Although we can experience many types of concerns about an innovation concurrently, an individual will perceive certain aspects of the innovation as more important than others at a given time. (p. 7)

A school improvement innovation, then, becomes a lens through which staff concern can be studied – and in turn, important information about the acceptance and implementation of the school improvement initiative can be gleaned by this analysis.

CBAM's Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) is the principal tool used to determine where individuals are as they evolve in their interactions with an innovation. As the individual moves through the various stages, it can be assumed that the innovation is gaining acceptance and use. However, the authors make some important observations about the progress through the various stages. First and foremost, it is important to recognize that the lower, affective concerns must be addressed before the individual can move on to higher stages: users of the innovation must be personally comfortable with the initiative in order to move to the task and impact levels of implementation. Forcing implementation at a higher level than the individual can comfortably handle only serves to intensify lower-level concerns and subsequently threatens derailment of the innovation. Lower-level concerns must be addressed in order for a change initiative to become successful:

Whether and with what speed higher-level concerns develop will depend on individuals and their perceptions as well as on the innovation and the environmental context. Although personalized interventions can facilitate change, in the end individuals determine for themselves whether or not change will occur. (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 9)

The foundational reasoning behind the development of CBAM's focus on individual concern about an innovation makes sense and is really little more than an extension and application of Maslow's hierarchy of need to the context of a workplace change

initiative: lower levels of need must be addressed before higher levels can be attained.

When viewed in this way, it is interesting to note how little attention is generally given to these lower-level areas of concern when districts introduce a new program or improvement initiative. Frequently, the change initiative is merely introduced, a quick in-service is conducted, and full implementation is expected almost immediately. Because basic concerns are never addressed, however, the initiative is doomed to become just another tombstone in the graveyard of good ideas for making schools better. As Zigarmi and Hoekstra (2008) point out:

most people do not initially embrace change. When a change initiative is launched, people often focus on what they will have to give up rather than on what they will gain in the change process. Although there are always a few early adopters and advocates for the change, most people will be neutral. This is primarily because . . . the status quo is comfortable and they hope that the change will simply go away. (p.1)

George, Hall, and Stegelbauer (2006) devote considerable discussion to the historical development of the Stages of Concern Questionnaire itself. Beginning in 1973, the SoCQ evolved over a three-year period, beginning with some 544 potential statements which were eventually distilled into 35 questionnaire items: “The resulting SoCQ was tested for estimates of reliability, internal consistency, and validity with several samples and 11 innovations” (p. 11). Beginning in 1974 and running through 1976, a variety of tests were conducted to determine the questionnaire’s validity. The authors detail this work, discussing the overwhelming results indicating validity, as well as follow-up procedures that explained any anomalies in the validity studies. Likewise, a

detailed account of reliability studies are provided in the manual, indicating that the questionnaire is characterized by high degrees of internal reliability. As the result of validity and reliability testing, one problem did indeed emerge: questions pertaining to Stage 0 proved problematic. Further investigation revealed that respondents were frequently confused by these questions because “lack of knowledge and lack of interest were both represented within the items on this scale” (p. 22). The current version of the questionnaire has addressed and presumably remedied this problem.

The questionnaire consists of “35 statements, or items, to which the participant responds. Respondents mark each item on a 0-7 Likert scale according to how true the item seems to them at the present time” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 25). The statements are clear and straightforward; an example is: “I am concerned about how the innovation affects students.” The authors are adamant that the wording of the questions remains verbatim and that the order of the items remain unchanged. The only real modification that they suggest can be considered is to change the word “innovation” with the actual name of the program, if that would be clearer for the respondents. However, if this is clarified on the introduction page (see Appendix A), then even this modification is unnecessary. The authors also stipulate that the questionnaire must be completed independently; consulting with others contaminates the results.

Instructions for administering the survey are simple and include the possibility of either paper/pencil administration or technology-based administration (web-based or through e-mail). One important requirement as it relates to the use of the SoCQ to assess PBS implementation at this high school is that:

. . . respondents should not be asked to return the questionnaire to an immediate superior – for example, a teacher should not have to return it to his or her principal. Such a process might make respondents feel their confidentiality could be compromised. It is acceptable, however, for a superior to distribute the forms if they can be returned anonymously. (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 26).

The cover letter (Invitation to Participate) and the Informed Consent document preceding the survey addresses this concern (see Appendix B).

A considerable portion of *The Stages of Concern Questionnaire* manual is devoted to scoring and interpreting the results of the survey. Scoring is a relatively simple matter involving computing raw scores which are then translated to percentile scores, and the results are then plotted on the Stages of Concern Profile chart. The questionnaire can be scored using a computer program or by hand if there are not an overwhelming number of respondents (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006). This researcher used a software program (based on Microsoft Excel) to score the questionnaire.

Results can be analyzed in a number of ways; the most common (and seemingly useful) are the peak score interpretation (individual and group), first and second highest stage score interpretation, and profile interpretation (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006). The peak score interpretations are the result of simply calculating the percentile score for each participant and determining which stage of concern has the highest score. For example, a respondent with a peak score of 86 in the Stage 4 category would suggest that “the individual is most concerned about the consequences of the innovation, the effects it will have on his or her students” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 33). The qualities underlying peak scores for each SoC category are clearly delineated in the

manual. Group peak score data are compiled the same way; however the authors advise against averaging percentile scores to obtain group data; rather, they suggest averaging raw scores and then converting to percentile scores so as to avoid any extreme values that might distort the results. Looking at both the first and second highest score data allows the researcher to further divide participants into subgroups (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006). For example, individuals might fall into stage 6, but for different reasons: perhaps they are interested in improving how the innovation affects students (second highest score stage 4), or perhaps they are more concerned about how modifying the innovation might benefit themselves (second highest score stage 2; George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

The most common type of analysis, though, is the profile analysis (individual and group), for it provides a useful assessment as to how successfully the innovation is being implemented:

Hypothetically, as individuals move from nonuse and scant awareness of an innovation to beginning use and eventually, more highly sophisticated use, their concerns move through the defined stages. They begin with their concerns being most intense at Stages 0, 1, and 3, then shift to Stage 3, and ultimately register their highest levels of concern at Stages 4, 5, and 6. If the innovation is appropriate and well designed and if there is adequate support for its implementation, an individual's concerns profile plotted over time should look like a wave moving from left to right. (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 37)

Thus profile interpretation can provide clear data regarding the success or failure of an innovation in a particular setting. Consider the two extremes in Figure 2.

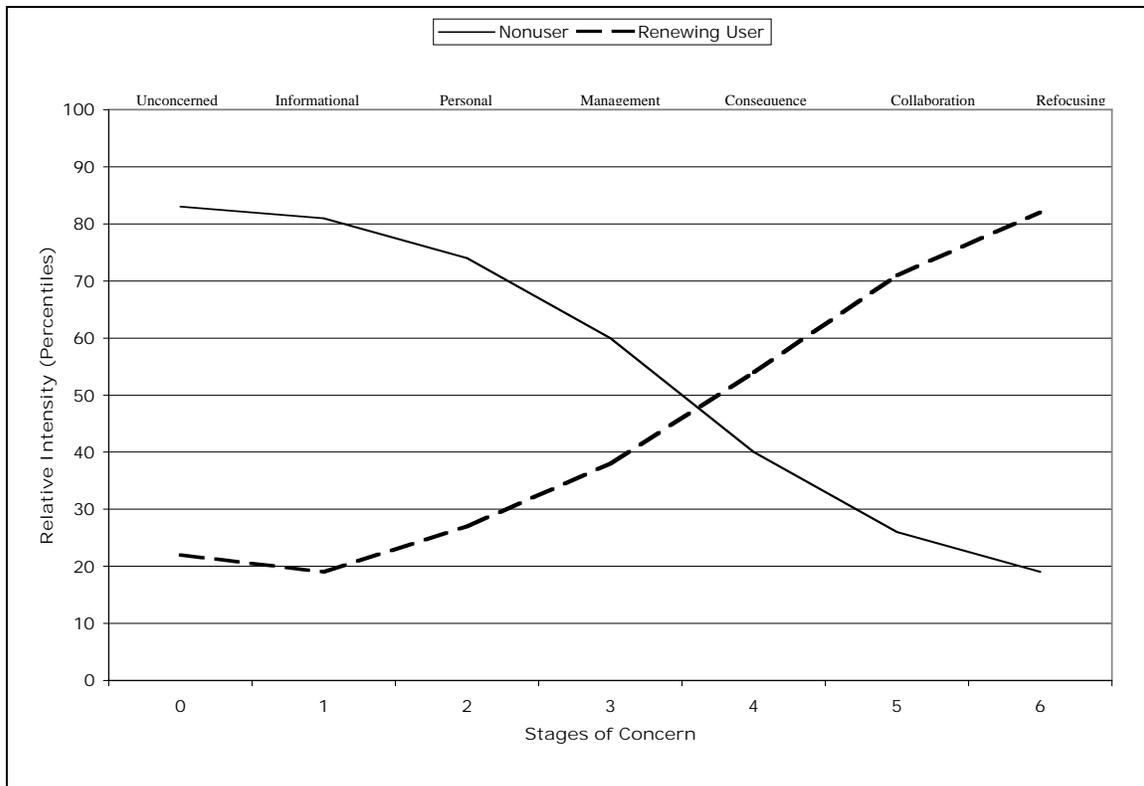


Figure 2. Development of Stages of Concern

The nonuser unmistakably exhibits a profile which is more focused on lower-level, affective self-concerns, whereas the renewing user exhibits diminished concerns about self and more substantial concerns about advancing the innovation in new, productive and creative ways. Profile interpretation can provide valuable insight on an innovation's acceptance for both the individual and for the group. Armed with this information, the program administrator would be in a position to focus on areas of concern that might be holding back implementation (lower stages of concern) or on new and creative applications of the innovation within the school setting (higher stages of concern) (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

The CBAM is a collection of powerful tools for the educational researcher.

Among the three tools (The Stages of Concern Questionnaire, the Levels of Use, and the

Innovation Configurations), however, there are differences in practicality and appropriateness of use contingent upon the particular research project under consideration. In conducting the case study of the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports, this researcher was most interested in looking at the impact that the innovation had on the school's culture and in particular the extent to which staff members accepted and integrated the concepts and strategies of PBS into their day-to-day routines. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire was a valuable tool for obtaining data regarding how staff perceived the innovation and to what extent they "bought in" to the underlying concepts. The administration of the SoCQ was simple and straightforward while easily accommodating the anonymity of participants, and the scoring and tabulation of results made sense in the context of this research project. There was some concern, though, about the use of the Levels of Use tool, if only because the developers caution against using it without thorough training. Additionally, the Innovation Configuration Maps, although potentially useful might have been perceived by staff as an attempt to somehow evaluate their performance, and as such this tool was not used in this study. The CBAM developers make it clear that the tools can be used independently and in any combination, so the use of only the SoCQ is entirely within the developers' guidelines (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006).

The Structural Frame

Another useful way to approach the research question was to consider it in the context of the school organization and attempt to analyze it through the lens of Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural frame: the ultimate success or failure of a reform initiative such as PBS may indeed rest upon inherent structural strengths and weaknesses within

the system itself. Examining the research question from the perspective of the structural frame made considerable sense when the evolution of American society is juxtaposed against the evolution (or lack thereof) of American schools. The mission of schools was initially focused almost exclusively on academic development, and most social and behavioral learning was largely handled by other social institutions: the family unit or the church, for example. As the structure of society has changed (more single-parent households, more “latch-key” children, etc.) it could be argued that schools have not exhibited a parallel change. Indeed, Fullan (1993) identifies the problem of school reform in general as

the juxtaposition of a continuous change theme with a continuous conservative system. . . It is no exaggeration to say that dealing with change is endemic to post-modern society . . . however, we have an educational system which is fundamentally conservative. (p. 3)

Thus, there is a major component of student learning (behavior) that traditionally has been addressed by societal elements that have undergone significant transformation and are no longer performing effectively, creating considerable stress on educational systems that are ill suited to respond. The structural frame requires certain assumptions that Bolman and Deal (2003) assert “reflect a belief in rationality and a faith that the right formal arrangements minimize problems and maximize performance” (p. 44). The central concept in the structural frame is that various organizations tend to promote or inhibit certain kinds of change, depending on the particular nature of their organizational structure (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Mintzberg (1979) suggests five basic organizational designs: simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalized form, and adhocracy (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 73). The professional bureaucracy is the model which appears to most closely align with the typical public school system. One characteristic of this structure is that compared to other organizational structures, the operating core (in this case, teaching professionals) is relatively large – leading to challenges because of the difficulty in coordinating independent actions. Bolman and Deal (2003) make it quite clear that initiating change in this organizational environment is very difficult:

A professional bureaucracy responds slowly to change. Waves of reform typically produce little impact because professionals often view any change in their surroundings as an annoying distraction from their chosen work. The result is a paradox: individual professionals may be at the forefront of their specialty, while the institution as a whole changes at a glacial pace. (p. 77)

Thus when viewed through a structural frame it became easy to see how approaching student behavior from an analytical, data-based perspective has proven to be a challenge and has typically been resisted or ignored.

Another element of the structural frame that sheds light on why strategies for addressing student behavior have remained relatively unchanged for decades is the presence of a tension between clarity and creativity that characterizes many organizations. This concept suggests that when employees' job descriptions become "overdefined, people conform to prescribed roles in 'bureaupathic' ways. They rigidly follow job descriptions regardless of how much the service or product suffers (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 71-72). In other words, clarity of purpose leads, over time, to a myopic

focus that inhibits creative solutions to evolving problems. This idea might explain how the core technology of educational organizations has been able to legitimize the view that its role is to teach academics, not basic appropriate social behavior, even though the lack of fundamental social skills negatively impacts academic learning. Addressing this problem becomes difficult because essentially what is required is not merely a change in the core technology but a complete overhaul of the organization itself: “Because structure must align with an organization’s core process, significant technical change implies structural change (Barley, 1990), but existing structures often hinder adaptation” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 60).

The Human Resource Frame

Elements of the human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) were beneficial in attempting to understand staff response not only to student behavior, but also to a school-wide systematic attempt to address these behaviors, for any significant school improvement initiative might, by its very nature, change the structure of the organization and impact the quality of the relationship between the organization and the individual employee. This frame dovetails with the CBAM’s, “Stages of Concern,” for the focus of this frame is the impact of the organization on the individual. Through this lens, one examines not simply the impact of a specific policy or initiative, but rather the effect the organization has on the individual: “People want to know, ‘How well will this place fulfill my needs?’” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 115). The human resource frame is founded on some basic concepts related to human need that can, perhaps, most easily be understood in terms of Maslow’s hierarchy beginning with basic psychological and safety

needs, progressing to a need for “belongingness” and love, then esteem, and culminating with self-actualization (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 117).

When an organization evolves in ways that fail to address the needs of employees (needs such as belongingness, and esteem, for example), a disconnect between the two develops which Chris Argyris (1957, 1964) asserts can be identified in six discernable employee responses:

- 1) They withdraw – through chronic absenteeism or simply by quitting.
- 2) They stay on the job but withdraw psychologically, becoming indifferent, passive, and apathetic.
- 3) They resist by restricting output, deception, featherbedding, or sabotage.
- 4) They try to climb the hierarchy to better jobs.
- 5) They form alliances (such as labor unions) to redress the power imbalance
- 6) They teach their children to believe that work is unrewarding and hopes for advancement are slim. (Bolman & Deal, 2003, pp. 121-123)

Central to the human resource frame is that idea of employee empowerment. If a policy or change initiative were to be perceived as being imposed from the top down, with little or no attention to the impact the initiative has on the working environment, then one can expect employee frustration and lack of implementation fidelity (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The idea of empowering employees requires that any policy and expectation be accompanied by adequate information and support. Specifically, this would seem to suggest that employees understand the reasons for and the logic behind the innovation and that they would receive whatever training and resource support they felt necessary in

order to avoid alienation and conscientiously implement the policy or reform (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The Political Frame

One assumption of the political frame is that organizations are made up of “coalitions of diverse individuals and interest groups,” and “there are enduring differences among coalition members in values, beliefs, information, interests and perceptions of reality” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 186). Thus when seen from this perspective, school systems can be understood as organizations composed of constituent groups (parents, administrators, teachers, and students) with varying ideas as to the goals and priorities of the organization. This is of particular significance when combined with another assumption of the political frame: organizational decisions revolve around the allocation of scarce resources (Bolman & Deal, p. 186). The relative power of these various coalitions becomes, then, an important area of focus. The advancement of a certain agenda, and the subsequent allocation of resources to advance that agenda, can be seen as the result of a particular coalition’s success in championing its own particular belief system – in other words, the trajectory of the organization’s efforts might not necessarily reflect the needs of all constituents, but rather merely the needs of the coalition that wields the most power – a concept that Russ (1994) defines as “the ability to ‘make one’s will prevail and to attain one’s goal’” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 188). When viewed from this frame, schools can be seen as organizations designed not only to educate students, but also (or perhaps even primarily) to perpetuate the values and beliefs of one or more constituent groups. Thus one can understand why a particular

organizational problem might be consistently neglected in favor of perpetual emphasis on other areas that are viewed as more important by the dominant coalition(s).

The political frame also addresses a dynamic that Bolman and Deal (2003) refer to as “Authorities and Partisans.” They assert that individuals in an organization have specific political roles and that sometimes these political roles create conflict. They cite Gamson (1968, p. 76) when they describe the relationship between these two groups: “Authorities are the recipients or targets of influence, and the agents or initiators of social control. Potential partisans have the opposite roles – as agents or initiators of influence, and targets or recipients of social control” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 193). This observation suggests the possibility of an important relationship in the classroom between the instructor and the student, and this relationship could influence the teacher’s attitudes and approaches to handling student behavioral issues: “Social control is essential to anyone in a formal position because authority depends on it. Officeholders can exert control only so long as partisans respect or fear them” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 193). Thus social control in the classroom is based on a particular teacher-student relationship, and this social control might be threatened if that relationship were altered.

The Symbolic Frame

The symbolic frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003) suggests that organizations develop characteristics or qualities that serve to identify and define that organization. An intriguing aspect of this conceptual framework is that over time, the symbolic role of the organization becomes in many ways more important than the actual technical work for which the organization was designed. The symbols that characterize the organization become central to the development and maintenance of organizational culture (Bolman &

Deal, 2003). Bolman and Deal (2003) note the following assumptions inherent in the symbolic frame:

- What is most important is not what happens but what it means.
- Activity and meaning are loosely coupled; events have multiple meanings because people interpret experience differently.
- In the face of widespread uncertainty and ambiguity, people create symbols to resolve confusion, increase predictability, find direction, and anchor hope and faith.
- Many events and processes are more important for what is expressed than what is produced. They form a cultural tapestry of secular myths, heroes and heroines, rituals ceremonies, and stories that help people find purpose and passion in their personal and work lives.
- Culture is the glue that holds an organization together and unites people around shared values and beliefs. (p. 242-243)

Thus the symbolic frame allows for an understanding of organizations not as rational and objective problem-solving entities but rather as self-perpetuating transmitters of a particular culture. In this view, many activities of the organization can more clearly be seen as rituals, not as time-tested, effective strategies for dealing with problems and situations; the symbolic value of these activities to the organization eclipses any logical or pragmatic value to those the organization purports to serve.

Organizational Culture

The ideas of Edgar Schein (2004) not only illuminate the process that a leader must understand in order to navigate an organization through change, but they also may

help explain how schools have failed for decades to move forward in terms of finding innovative strategies for addressing student behavior problems. Central to Schein's (2004) arguments is the idea that organizations over time develop their own distinct culture:

Any social unit that has some kind of shared history will have evolved a culture, with the strength of that culture dependent on the length of its existence, the stability of the group's membership, and the emotional intensity of the actual historical experiences they have shared. (p.11)

Even a casual evaluation of a school district would have to acknowledge that Schein's prerequisites for organizational culture are present. Not only does an individual building share a particular history, but this history is tied into the larger district to which the building belongs, cementing the building and its inhabitants to a broader set of shared experiences. The teacher tenure structure guarantees a relatively stable group membership, and dealing day after day with the challenges of students, parents, and community caprice certainly contributes emotional intensity. But merely identifying a school system or building as a unique culture does not explain how it is that progressive student behavior management strategies have never gained momentum, nor why change of this nature is so difficult to effect.

Central to Schein's (2004) theory is the notion that once a culture has been established, it transmits aspects of the culture to new group members in a variety of subtle yet powerful ways (p. 18). The result is that new generations of constituents absorb beliefs, feelings, and ways of understanding that direct their behaviors and attitudes. According to Schein (2004), although group members might not realize it, they are being

taught specific values and expectations for thought and behavior: “there is a teaching process going on, even though it may be quite implicit and unsystematic” (p. 19). Over time, Schein (2004) argues, these cultural ways of thinking and dealing with problems become cultural “assumptions” and are assimilated by constituents at an almost subconscious level:

As assumptions come to be taken for granted they become part of the identity of the group; are taught to newcomers as the way to think, feel, and act; and if violated, produce discomfort, anxiety, ostracism, and eventually excommunication . . . If we are willing to argue about something, then it has not become taken for granted. (p. 16)

So, according to this perspective, there are some modes of behavior, or ways of dealing with problems that are above reproach, for to question them threatens the very identity and stability of the organization itself. It is indeed possible to consider methods of dealing with student behavior as one of the fundamental “assumptions” of educational culture. The “spare the rod and spoil the child” mentality can then be seen not as a mere strategy, but as part of the glue that binds together the brotherhood of educators.

Schein (2004) does not suggest that change is impossible. He does, however, believe that “transformative change” requires cultural change. For meaningful change to occur in any organization, not only do new ways of behaving need to be learned, but perhaps more importantly, old ways of behaving need to be “unlearned” (Schein, 2004, p. 321). His description of this process of “unlearning” is divided into three distinct processes which he asserts are necessary for change to occur: the emergence of “disconfirming data,” the association of this data with “goals and ideals causing anxiety

and/or guilt,” and the presence of what he calls “psychological safety” (Schein, 2004, p. 320).

The disconfirming data are essentially some sort of information (social, political, economic, etc.) that clearly points to failure of the organization to accomplish its stated mission. This data must be sufficient to create organizational unease: “it makes members of the organization uncomfortable and anxious – a state that we can think of as survival anxiety, in that it implies that unless we change, something bad will happen to the individual, the group, and/or the organization (Schein, 2004, p. 322). The disconfirming data and anxiety are, though, not sufficient to bring about change. There must also be an environment where group members feel comfortable enough to even consider “unlearning.” It is really this “unlearning” that threatens the integrity and continued survival of the organization, for the fear is that at the individual level, “unlearning” can undermine self-esteem and group membership. Schein calls this necessary environment a state of “psychological safety” (p. 322).

Theory of Organizational Socialization

Culture is perpetuated through socialization, and according to Van Maanen and Schein (1979), organizational culture is likewise achieved through organizational socialization. Understanding how this process works is essential in understanding how a school system comes to view some of its technical responsibilities such as improving academic achievement and managing student behavior. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) define socialization as a process of transmitting values and information – a process that is crucial in allowing an organization’s members to develop ways to cope with the environment:

An organizational culture consists broadly of long-standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language, an ideology that helps edit a member's everyday experience, shared standards of relevance as to the prejudices, models for social etiquette and demeanor, certain customs and rituals suggestive of how members are to relate to colleagues, subordinates, superiors, and outsiders, and a sort of residual category of some rather plain "horse sense" regarding what are appropriate and "smart" modes of thinking, feeling, and doing. (p. 210)

What becomes significant here is that this socialization process is not only powerful but virtually invisible as well: "Once learned, these responses are viewed by insiders as perfectly natural responses to the world of work they inhabit" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 210).

When one begins to look at schools as organizations with their own distinct culture and, more importantly, their own processes for socialization into that culture, the continued acceptance of many seemingly irrational programs and procedures begins to make sense – albeit in a rather discouraging way – for it appears likely that despite clear data which might support the adoption of a given reform initiative, the real hurdle is integrating the initiative into the socialization process. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) offer some encouragement in this regard in their analysis of the complex phenomenon of organizational socialization. They break down the process into six dimensions which are indeed valuable in understanding how the process of organizational socialization is constructed and how one might go about impacting the process so as to gain organizational acceptance of new concepts and strategies (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

The first dimension is “Collective versus Individual Socialization.” Collective socialization would be some training that all participants experience in a group format, which leads to what Van Maanen and Schein (1979) refer to as “in the same boat consciousness” (p. 233). Individual socialization is more targeted and actually tends to more deeply integrate members into the organization (p. 235). The second dimension is “Formal versus Informal Socialization.” Formal socialization involves the individual being segregated from the larger group to which he or she aspires to join, whereas informal socialization involves the individual learning his or her role by “trial and error” while participating with the other group members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 237).

The third dimension is “Sequential versus Random Steps.” Sequential socialization essentially refers to a process where the steps necessary to become a member of the organization are clearly and sequentially ordered (becoming a teacher, for example), whereas random socialization refers to a socialization experience where the steps to becoming a member in the organization are not clearly arranged (becoming a business manager, for example; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 242). The fourth dimension is “Fixed versus Variable.” This dimension refers to the time frame inherent in the socialization process: a fixed time frame is generally more predictable and allows members to move through the socialization process with a cohort, whereas the variable time frame by definition separates individuals as they move toward organizational acceptance, without predictable time frames that are applicable to all (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 246).

Dimension five is “Serial versus Disjunctive.” Serial socialization involves experienced organization members training prospective members – they act as mentors or

role models. By contrast, disjunctive socialization occurs where there are no role models, and the individual is left to forge his or her own way (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 248). The final dimension is “Investiture versus Divestiture.” The investiture socialization process focuses on the value of the prospective organization member “as is” – in other words, he or she already possesses the qualities the organization values. The divestiture socialization process, on the other hand, overtly attempts to eliminate certain undesirable characteristics of the prospective member (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 250-251).

The value of Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) Theory of Organizational Socialization and their Six Dimension of Organizational Socialization is that it provides a tool for a systematic and detailed analysis of how school organization members are socialized into school culture. Such an understanding could lead to better strategies for implementing change initiatives and could provide educational leaders with a better understanding of why some organizational procedures are difficult, if not impossible to supplant.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is the second of five. Chapter One provided an overview of the study, clarifying that the purpose was to understand the implementation process of one particular school improvement initiative (Positive Behavior Supports) in one high school. Chapter Two begins with a discussion of the value of employing multiple conceptual frameworks in order to better understand the problems of school reform implementation. This is followed by a review of the literature supporting the conceptual frameworks used in this study. The conceptual frameworks that were discussed were the Concerns-Based

Adoption Model, the structural frame, the human resource frame, the political frame, the symbolic frame, the organizational culture frame, and the organizational socialization frame.

Chapter Three addresses the research methods used in data collection as well as the strategies for analysis of the data. Chapter Four describes the findings of the research viewed through the lens of multiple conceptual frameworks. Chapter Five presents conclusions resulting from the research and also suggests directions for future research.

Chapter 3: Research and Methods

In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

Robert Yin

This study examined the challenges of instituting a specific change initiative in a school setting. The question driving the study was: What were the significant personal, social, and environmental elements influencing effective second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) in this high school? This chapter discusses the methodology used to collect and analyze the data collected.

Research Design

This investigation was a case study of one high school engaged in second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports. A number of theoretical frameworks were employed to gain an understanding of this implementation process. These frameworks include the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM; George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006), Bolman and Deal’s (2003) structural frame, human resource frame, political frame and symbolic frame as well as Schein’s (2004) theories on organizational culture and Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) Theory of Organizational Socialization. The single case study was an appropriate approach for this investigation given the abundance of data available to this researcher.

Central to the decision to employ a case study approach was the recognition of the importance of context in implementing school improvement initiatives. Yin (2003)

defines a case study as

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In other words, you would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study. (p. 13)

Given the unique opportunity this researcher had as participant observer, a research design that included context as well as phenomenon yielded important confirming and non-confirming data regarding the various theories that were considered in the attempt to understand the implementation of PBS at this one high school.

Case study design, according to Yin (2003), consists of five elements:

1. a study's questions;
2. its propositions, if any;
3. its unit(s) of analysis;
4. the logic linking the data to the propositions; and
5. the criteria for interpreting the findings.

Yin places particular importance on the “form” of the research questions in determining the appropriate design for the study and states that “the case study strategy is most likely to be appropriate for ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions . . .” (p. 22). Since the research question in this investigation was in fact a “how/why” question, the use of a single case study was further supported. Additionally, according to Tellis (1997), “The study’s propositions

sometimes derive from the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions and are helpful in focusing the study’s goals” (p. 12). The propositions for this study were embodied in the theoretical frameworks of CBAM, the Structural Frame, The Human Resource Frame, the Political Frame, the Symbolic Frame, and the theories of Organizational Culture and Organizational Socialization.

Setting

The setting for this single case study was the staff and students of one alternative high school in southwest Michigan, a school composed of approximately 230-250 at-risk high school students. Much of the data for this study was provided by the staff of this high school. During the 2008-2009 school year, there were eleven full-time teachers, all of whom meet state highly-qualified requirements. Also, there were two social workers, a counselor, a supervisor, a part-time special education consultant, a part-time special education teacher, one para-pro, one office assistant, and two campus safety monitors, as well as a part-time police liaison officer. Unlike the rest of the district, teachers and counselors at this high school are non-unionized. This has created some problems but also some benefits. In particular, because the union-teacher pool has no access to the alternative high school, it has been impossible for sub-standard teachers to be assigned to the program. This is a problem in a number of other districts throughout the state that have similar programming for at-risk high school students, resulting in a situation where the most ineffective teachers are expected to deal with the most demanding and difficult students. The situation at this alternative high school is that teachers are there because they choose to be there, and staff turnover occurs infrequently. The high school supervisor (assistant principal) has been involved in this program since its creation in

1997, and a number of the teaching staff as well as one counselor have acquired over ten years' experience at this high school.

This alternative high school is part of a large school system in southwest Michigan consisting of eight elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools (two "traditional" high schools in addition to the "alternative" or "community" high school). The district has an enrollment of 8,536 students in the fall of 2008. The traditional high schools are both Class A high schools with populations of 1,417 and 1,308. The alternative high school has a student population which varies, but during the 2008-2009 school year averaged between 230 to 250. The alternative high school serves not only the city in which it is located but also the surrounding area, drawing approximately 40% of its school population from a nearby urban city as well as from several rural school districts in the area. Not surprisingly, the demographics of this alternative high school differ substantially from the other buildings in the district, with minorities and students from lower socioeconomic levels being disproportionately represented: 33% of the students are African American compared to an average of 6% in the other buildings in the district, and 6% are Hispanic compared to an average of 3% in the other buildings in the district. Additionally, approximately 60% of students receive Free and Reduced Lunch benefits, compared to 19% district-wide.

Students attend this alternative high school voluntarily, and although many of the students who attend have had behavioral and academic challenges in the past, attendance is not viewed as punitive but rather another chance to succeed in a venue that might be more appropriate and supportive. Until recently, no special education services were provided on-site, but this situation has changed; special education support has increased

over the past two years and will likely continue to increase in the upcoming school years. The students at this high school are frequently transient, and regular attendance is an issue that mitigates their chances of success. Although enrollment generally runs around 230-250, it is not uncommon to enroll 500+ students throughout the year, with many staying for only a brief time.

This community high school evolved as need arose in the area, and it has changed considerably from the original intent of its designers. It occupies a large section of a former elementary school building that was reopened in 1984 to house a growing Adult Education program. In 1987, the school board approved the establishment of a program for up to sixty non-adult students who might need an extra class or two to gain their high school diploma. Initially, the school board was reluctant to even grant this permission, believing that the district did not have a high school drop-out problem and that only a handful of non-adult students would likely be interested in a community education program that offered some high school credit. The early programming was all geared to the adult students and simply “adjusted” for younger students as necessary. Within a few years, the program witnessed ever-increasing numbers of younger high school students who were not finding success in the traditional environment. The alternative high school program was given ‘pilot’ status and began operating in 1997. It technically remains a “pilot” program more than a decade later.

Currently, the alternative high school program shares the former elementary school with a large (700+ attendees) day-care program as well as the district’s Community Enrichment Program and adult education programming: High School Completion (HSC) and English as a Second Language (ESL). GED testing has

historically been a component of the adult programming; however, that service was discontinued in 2008.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is Administrator for Community Education and leader of the alternative high school as well as the day-care center, the enrichment program, district facility rental, and the various adult education programs. The enrichment program and the day-care center both have supervisors who manage the programs and report to the Community Education Administrator. Likewise, the high school has a supervisor who manages much of the day-to-day operations of the school and functions much as an assistant principal would in a more traditional setting.

The researcher for this project has served in the position for six years. Prior to accepting this assignment, he spent eighteen years in other capacities within the school district. He was a teacher at one of the traditional high schools for sixteen years, the last four of these serving as the International Baccalaureate Coordinator (IBC) in addition to teaching one IB English class and the IB Theory of Knowledge Class. He has had considerable experience in school improvement, serving as the North Central School Accreditation Building Chair for four years, as well as serving on a North Central Visitation Team as part of the accreditation process for a large, affluent high school in a city about sixty miles from his school district.

Immediately prior to assuming the duties of Administrator for Community Education, the researcher served as an assistant principal, dealing predominantly with student discipline and attendance issues. He readily adopted the system of discipline that was in place when he took on those responsibilities: a system based on progressively

more severe consequences for all infractions and one that eschewed situational judgment in favor of prescribed, mandatory consequences. Yet he questioned the logic of a discipline system that called for a five-day suspension from school for smoking, while requiring only a three-day suspension for the calculated theft of the school's or an individual's property. It became apparent that such discipline structures were arbitrary and built on value systems that were not at all transparent; as a result of expressing this concern, a number of adjustments were made to the school discipline code in an attempt to align the crime with the punishment in some sort of logical and understandable manner.

Additionally, the almost complete failure of the after-school suspension program became blatantly obvious when he noticed that the same individuals were inhabiting the detention room throughout the year and that this experience was having very little if any impact on these students' school behavior. He advocated changing this system but was unable to garner any real support for that initiative. Thus when he learned of an alternative strategy for addressing student behavior problems (PBS), there was immediate interest in and enthusiasm for exploring the program further.

The researcher recognized his role in the process of implementing PBS at this high school. As the building administrator, he has had a significant role in introducing the innovation to the staff and, indeed, to the larger school district. The role of participant observer offers advantages as well as disadvantages, and keeping field note observations unadulterated by his personal reflections was one of the greatest challenges of this project. Field notes were treated similar to transcripts from interviews: organized chronologically and coded. This helped avoid what Spradley (1980) identifies as the

ethnographer's "tendency to translate and simplify" (p. 65). Additionally, as Spradley suggests, the researcher attempted to record observed statements and comments according to the "verbatim principle" and described meetings and other interactions using as much concrete and detailed language as possible (pp. 66-69). Personal reflections were kept separately in journal form and organized chronologically.

Research Questions

The research question guiding this study was: What were the significant personal, social, and environmental elements influencing effective second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) in this high school? Additional guiding questions included:

1. How did staff respond to this school improvement initiative initially and over time?
2. To what extent did the organizational structures of this school inhibit or promote the successful implementation of this school improvement initiative?
3. To what extent did personal apprehension and discomfort inhibit or promote the successful implementation of this school improvement initiative?
4. To what extent did staff feel the improvement initiative conflicted with their personal needs?
5. To what extent did staff feel that the implementation of this school reform initiative altered the political roles and positional power they hold in the organization and in the classroom?

6. To what extent did staff feel that the implementation of this school reform initiative conflicted with traditional and community-accepted perceptions of appropriate school staff behavior?
7. To what extent did staff feel that the school improvement initiative required behaviors that conflicted with the expectations of their peers?
8. To what extent have the requirements of the school reform initiative been integrated into the socialization of staff at this high school?

Design of the Study

The unit of analysis in this single case study was the implementation process of a particular school improvement initiative: Positive Behavior Support (PBS) at one alternative high school. This unit of analysis was time-bounded (as suggested by Yin), encompassing the first two years of PBS implementation at the high school. Yin (2003) further cautions the researcher to proceed carefully when attempting a single case study of a particular program, in that “variations in program definition . . . and program components that preexisted the formal designation of the program” need to be considered (p. 23). The revelation and discussion of preexisting programs were a part of this study, and the definition of the program (PBS) by various actors were embedded in the interview protocol.

Linking the data to the propositions was accomplished through “pattern matching,” which is described by Donald Campbell (1975) in Yin (2003) as a process “whereby several pieces of information from the same case may be related to some theoretical proposition” (p. 26). Given the number of theoretical frameworks serving as propositions for this study, it seemed quite possible that multiple theories would be

confirmed by the data, although some theories might be more useful than others in explaining the phenomenon. This situation presented a problem when addressing the fifth component in Yin's case study design: the criteria for interpreting the study's findings. Pattern matching requires that different patterns be "sufficiently contrasting," which may or may not occur (Yin, 2003, p. 27). There is, though, a more refined strategy suggested by Yin which he calls "Explanation Building" that became significant in this investigation, because components of the various theoretical frameworks all seemed to offer some degree of usefulness in interpreting the study's findings. This process of "explanation building" is iterative and described as follows:

- Making an initial theoretical statement or an initial proposition about policy or social behavior
- Comparing the findings of an initial case against such a statement or proposition
- Revising the statement or proposition
- Comparing other details of the case against the revision
- Comparing the revision to the facts of a second, third, or more cases
- Repeating the process as many times as is needed. (Yin, 2003, p. 121-122)

The process of "explanation building" was helpful in explaining the phenomenon by allowing for the integration of various elements drawn from multiple theories. This single case study made no attempt to address the last two steps suggested by Yin; however, it did provide the groundwork and direction for future case studies of this phenomenon.

This study employed qualitative data collection methods in order to understand and explain staff response to the implementation of PBS at one high school. Also included were quantitative data depicting the degree to which PBS strategies have

contributed to the improvement of student behaviors. It is important to note, however, that this research project was not an attempt to evaluate the success or failure of the school improvement initiative, and the use of information that might be perceived as evaluative of the innovation was included only when it contributed to a better understanding of the social context in which the implementation took place.

Quantitative Data Collection

Valid quantitative data have been particularly difficult to obtain in the at-risk high school setting. This is due to a variety of factors such as the transient nature of the student body and the inability of district data-collection systems to provide meaningful data in a timely manner. This particular school district has historically collected data on student behavior; however, it was only entered into a data analyzing program once a year, typically when the school year had concluded. An enormous benefit of the Positive Behavior Supports system is that it requires ongoing and accurate data collection. Many schools that employ PBS, including this alternative high school, use a data collection tool called SWIS (School-wide Information System) that provides a wealth of quantifiable data that reflect the student behavior climate in the school. SWIS is a web-based data collection system that was developed by University of Oregon faculty as a means of organizing and understanding office discipline referrals (ODRs), and it provides considerable information including, but not limited to, the following:

- The number of office discipline referrals per month.
- The type of problem behaviors leading to office referrals.
- The locations of problem behavior events.
- The problem behavior events by time of day.

- The students contributing to the office discipline referrals.

School staff enter discipline data daily into a secure server housed at the University of Oregon. The data can be summarized numerically and graphically to look at the behavior of individual students, groups of students, or the entire student body (School-wide Information System web site). The district's historical student behavior data as well as the SWIS data are secondary data available from district sources at any time.

Data pertaining to this high school have been collected in the SWIS system since September, 2007, so by the conclusion of the 2008-2009 school year, two years of accurate and useful data had been collected. In particular, the data that gave a good indication as to whether PBS was making an impact on student behavior were the number of office discipline referrals (ODRs). The SWIS system gives accurate breakdowns as to the time, nature, and location of all student discipline events. The district has been collecting similar data regarding the total number of referrals, so the success of PBS in reducing significant student disciplinary events could be quantifiably evaluated using a simple statistical techniques. ODRs were also tracked by individual teachers, information that provided a quantifiable measure of how staff was adjusting to PBS: Were ODRs moving in one direction across the board, or were there significant individual variance among staff? Excessive variation suggested the necessity for follow-up qualitative research to determine the reasons for any disparity.

Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data collection played the most significant role in this project. The researcher's observations as well as the perspectives and observations of high school and district staff were invaluable in terms of telling the story that shed light on the research

questions. It is important to note that all possible safeguards were implemented in order to protect the anonymity of teacher and staff data: questionnaires, surveys, and critical incident reports were collected only after any identifying information had been removed (either by the staff member himself or herself, or by a neutral third-party); interviews were conducted and transcribed by a third-party assistant who is not employed by the district or the high school. All staff were extended the opportunity to participate in an interview, although not all accepted. After the interviews were transcribed, all original recordings were destroyed. All identifying information was removed from the transcripts before they came into the possession of this researcher, who then coded them as quickly as possible. Likewise, all surveys and questionnaires (the SoCQ and the staff survey) were administered and collected by third-party assistants who then provided the information to this researcher.

Error and Bias

Considerable effort was directed toward effectively addressing the problems of error and bias. Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) identify three types of error and bias that threaten the accuracy of data and ultimately the quality of the final report. The first of these types are labeled “reactive effects” or

invalidating effects that result from the influence of the observer’s presence or behavior on the phenomenon under study. They are the contaminating effects of the observer’s research role, personal characteristics, and/or perspective on the observed, with the consequence that researchers may not be observing the very thing they hoped to observe and that they may, in fact, believe that they are observing. (p. 91)

The second type of error and bias identified by Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland they label “perceptual and interpretative distortions.” These distortions are the result of “the research role and/or the observer’s personal characteristics and perspective independent of the information observed” (p. 91). The final type of error and bias is sampling error that results from the observer being unable to “observe a reasonable sampling of relevant aspects of or variations in the phenomenon being observed because of the biasing effects of the observer’s research role, personal characteristics, or theoretical perspective” (p. 91).

All three of these types of errors and bias (reactive effects, perceptual and interpretative distortions, and sampling errors) are significant and were of concern to this researcher. Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) point out that for the control of error and bias, “there are . . . no one or two magic panaceas. However, there are a number of measures that can be employed to neutralize or limit the likelihood of these contaminating/distorting effects by addressing their general sources” (p. 91). Specific strategies are prescribed by Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006), and were incorporated into this research project. One strategy they recommend pertains to sampling procedures. Their recommendation is for “maximum variation sampling,” which requires that the researcher not limit himself or herself to the easiest and most convenient samples, but rather make certain to include “extreme or deviant cases” (p. 93). Given that the staff at the high school is relatively small (20), it was possible to include the input of virtually all elements of the population. Most staff members were willing to take the SoCQ, and fourteen staff members consented to be interviewed (the opportunity was extended to all; however, some declined to participate), and all of the remaining staff

members were surveyed. Thus the sample included not only “typical cases,” but “outliers” as well.

Another recommendation is to employ a “strategic selection of informants” so as to obtain data from “informants who are themselves positioned differently within the group or setting studied, and who might therefore provide access to different kinds of information” (p. 93). Because of the relatively small staff at the high school, it was possible to engage the vast majority of potential informants so as to insure the broadest range of information variation possible. An additional recommendation made by Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) is to use “member checking” or “validation,” which is a process of asking the setting’s members to review the “researcher’s hypotheses, findings, or analyses” (p. 94). This was also feasible for this project, and this researcher employed this strategy in an additional attempt to control for bias and interpretative errors.

One final safeguard employed by this researcher was to use third-party assistants to directly collect the data. All interviews as well as the administration and collection of surveys were conducted by employees of the local RESA (Regional Educational Service Agency). This was not only an attempt to address the problem of error and bias in the data collection, but it also addressed the ethical problem of having a supervisor (this researcher) ask interview questions that might have made participants uncomfortable or less than honest in their responses. All data collected by these assistants were shared with this researcher only after any and all identifying characteristics were removed.

Thus it was clear to this researcher that because he was the administrator responsible for all aspects of the alternative high school under study, bias and error posed

very real threats to the success and value of this project. It was equally clear, however, that safeguards could be embedded in the research design to minimize the likelihood of corruption due to bias and error. Specifically, the strategies of maximum variation sampling, strategically selecting informants so as to obtain the broadest possible kinds of information, member checking, and employing assistants to conduct interviews and administer surveys all helped to insure the minimization of distortion due to error and bias. Being close to the subject under scrutiny no doubt presented some disadvantages – disadvantages that could be effectively addressed when they were readily acknowledged – however, there were also significant advantages. As Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) point out:

. . . it is critical to question the accuracy of your data and to take actions that will facilitate their veracity, but it is equally important to understand the context in which the “facts” occur: the situations in which behaviors are enacted, accounts are given, and documents are created. The facts of social life are socially embedded artifacts, and the researcher’s understanding of the data requires that they be accurately placed within the subjective and intersubjective contexts that make them meaningful. (p. 94)

Thus, this researcher’s direct involvement in the setting was actually an advantage, because proper controls for bias were embedded in the research strategy.

Data Collection

The data collected in this study were selected from the six broad categories of evidence suggested by Yin (2003): “documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (p. 83). Additionally, the

researcher employed Yin's three principles of data collection in order to most effectively address the issues of construct validity and reliability: the use of multiple sources of evidence, the creation of a case study database, and the accurate maintenance of a chain of evidence. The collection of multiple sources of evidence will allow for "converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation," which ultimately makes any conclusions reached in the case study much more accurate and convincing (Yin, p. 98). The creation of a case study database, separate from the actual report, allows, at least potentially, other researchers to review the data without being influenced by the written narrative, and, as Yin points out, increased "markedly the *reliability* of the entire case study" (p. 102). The maintenance of a chain of evidence was also a principle that was followed in order to increase the reliability of the information. This involved establishing a clear logical and sequential connection between the various steps of the research process from "initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions" (p. 105).

Spradley (1979) describes ethnography as "the work of describing a culture. . . Rather than *studying people*, ethnography means *learning from people*" (p. 3). He further states that there are three primary sources of information from which to glean cultural inferences: "(1) from what people say; (2) from the way people act; and (3) from the artifacts people use" (p. 8). To understand the process of implementing PBS at this high school required learning from the people directly involved in that process, thus supporting the appropriateness of the sources of data indicated below. Additionally, Spradley (1980) suggests that there is value in keeping a fieldwork journal:

In addition to fieldnotes that come directly from observing and interviewing . . .

ethnographers should always keep a journal. Like a diary, this journal will contain a

record of experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during fieldwork. A journal represents the personal side of fieldwork; it includes reactions to informants and the feelings you sense from others. (p. 71)

Data collection consisted of:

1. Interviews and Questionnaires (what people say and how people act)
 - a. Representatives from high school staff subgroups were interviewed by a third-party assistant, and the interviews were recorded and transcribed; all identifying characteristics were removed before they were forwarded to this researcher. All staff members were invited to participate in the interviews, although not all accepted. The interviews were structured through the use of prompting questions, but interviewees were allowed to elaborate and make additional comments and observations as they responded to the prompts. Questions for the interviews were developed by considering the various theoretical frameworks. The interview questions are included in Appendix C. A matrix indicating the correlation between interview questions and the various theoretical frameworks is included in Appendix D.
 - b. The alternative high school staff members who chose not to be interviewed were invited to complete a 34-question survey. This survey was administered and collected by third-party assistants who forwarded the resulting data to this researcher after all identifying characteristics were removed. Questions for the interviews and surveys were developed

by considering the various theoretical frameworks employed in the study.

The survey appears in Appendix E. A matrix indicating the correlation between survey questions and the various theoretical frameworks is included in Appendix D.

- c. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) has developed a questionnaire (SoCQ) about problems in the implementation of new initiatives. This survey was administered and collected by third-party assistants who forwarded the resulting data to this researcher after all identifying characteristics were removed. All staff were extended the opportunity to participate in this survey.
2. Documents and other Artifacts (the artifacts people use)
 - a. Minutes and notes from staff meetings and PBS team meetings.
 - b. Articles appearing in the local newspaper.
 - c. School improvement plans.
 - d. Presentation materials (handouts and PowerPoint slides).
 - e. Photos, charts, graphs, and so on.
 3. Critical Incident Reports (what people say and how people act)
 - a. Specifically developed critical incident reports designed to get staff to reflect on their perceptions of PBS, its implementation in the high school environment, and its impact on students. As part of the implementation process, staff had been asked to periodically complete critical incident reports. These critical incident reports have become historical/district data.
 4. Personal Observation and Reflection (as suggested by Spradley, 1980)

- a. The researcher maintained a written record of observations regarding the impact the implementation of PBS is having on the culture of the high school.

Interview and survey questions naturally arose from the theoretical frameworks employed to guide this study. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire SoCQ was used to determine the degree to which high school staff had accepted and integrated the Positive Behavior Support initiative. The data gleaned from this tool were juxtaposed with data derived from interviews and surveys. All staff were given the opportunity to complete the SoCQ. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Appendix A contains the invitation to participate in the SoCQ along with the Informed Consent document, while Appendix B contains the instructions for completion.

The primary theory inherent in the structural frame that was considered for this study was the concept that there are elements in the structure of an organization that either inhibit or support change. The researcher attempted to identify, through survey and interview, staff perception as to what these organizational elements were and to what extent they have been recognized and modified so as to increase the likelihood of the success of PBS. For example, the following questions were included in a survey and/or addressed in an interview:

1. What organizational changes have been made at this high school that have functioned to make PBS more successful?
2. What is there about the way this high school works that makes it difficult to execute the strategies of PBS?

The professional bureaucracy model in the structural frame most closely aligns with the organizational structure of the high school that was the focus for this study (and indeed, most high schools in this area) primarily because of the large operating core (teaching staff) who, because of the nature of how the technology is delivered (individual classrooms which make consistent administrative and peer scrutiny difficult), are able to improperly implement or even ignore any change initiative. Specifically, then, indicators of inconsistent implementation provided the basis for follow-up survey and interview data collection. For PBS, these indicators were incidents of antisocial student behavior (documented by Office Disciplinary Referrals) that were significantly different than the peer mean.

The human resource frame provides a useful way to not only analyze the degree to which the change initiative (PBS) has been successfully implemented but also to determine what human resource factors might have impeded the implementation. The central question that was investigated here was: Does PBS make this high school a more or less attractive place to work? This question was addressed in a survey as well as through staff interviews. Additionally, certain objective data were also considered to help identify any changing staff attitudes about the environment: absenteeism, external job searches, and even staff participation in morale-building activities (pre-school-year picnic, holiday party, etc.).

The central questions suggested by this frame were also investigated through the data-gathering techniques of survey and interview. Questions that yielded data related to how the adoption of PBS supported or conflicted with employees' beliefs about the role of the school in perpetuating certain societal values were:

1. What values do you [staff] feel are communicated to students through the implementation of PBS strategies?
2. To what extent are these values consistent with the values of our community?

To address the “Authorities and Partisans” dynamic, questions were constructed that attempted to discern if staff perceived any change in the nature of their relationship with students, in an attempt to discover if staff believed PBS caused an increase or an erosion of student respect for teachers.

As PBS was implemented in this high school, other district and area schools were watching closely to see how this reform initiative unfolded. Indeed, there was from the beginning a district/area “awareness” that this high school was “kind of different” because they were trying this “new thing.” Historically, this alternative high school has had a reputation as a sort of warehouse for students the other area high schools simply wanted to “disappear”; the unwritten directive was to operate quietly and stay “under the radar.” The implementation of PBS, however, has served to raise awareness and subsequently forced some uncomfortable issues to the surface – issues like basic resource (textbook) allocation, for example. The symbolic meaning of this high school has changed over the last several years, and no doubt some of that change is the result of the introduction of PBS. Again, internal surveys and interviews were used to determine the extent to which staff was comfortable with a different emerging symbolic role for their high school. The following questions were helpful in obtaining data related to the symbolic frame:

1. How do you believe this high school is viewed by the staff of the other two high schools in the district?

2. How does this perception differ (if at all) from the view of this high school held by the staff of the other two high schools five years ago? Ten years ago?
3. How do you feel Central Administration views this high school? How is this perception different (if at all) from the views held in the past? Are any changes the result of changes in programming at this high school, or are they the result of changes in Central Office personnel?

Schein (2004) suggests that organizations transmit certain values and assumptions that collectively form an organizational culture, and it is Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) Theory of Organizational Socialization that attempts to explain some of the mechanisms that transmit these values and assumptions. Looking closely at Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) six dimensions helped to deconstruct the process of organizational socialization that accompanied the implementation of PBS at this high school, and also assisted in developing an understanding of the various successes and failures of that implementation. These data were gathered through observation and interview: for example, the first dimension (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), which addresses collective versus individual socialization, was used as a lens through which the degree of school culture connectedness of individual staff members was assessed. In other words, if most staff received basic training as a cohort, but a new staff member who missed the cohort training was individually trained, how was the organizational culture identity of the new staff person impacted? Did he or she accept the tenets and values of PBS to the same degree as did those trained as a cohort? Was the new staff member perceived differently by those who had cohort training and previous experience?

Not all of the six dimensions were relevant to this study: for example, the third dimension (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), which deals with the preliminary steps necessary to become a member of the organization (in the case of a school culture, becoming a teacher as the result of completing a four-year program, intern-teaching, passing the state test, etc.), addresses socialization elements outside the parameters of this investigation. Other dimensions, however, seemed valuable to consider and were measured by interview and observation.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine if PBS strategies were indeed having an impact on the students at this high school. The purpose of this study, however, was not to support or refute the merits of this systematic approach to managing student behavior but rather to understand the stresses on the organization that were brought about by the adoption of PBS and the subsequent redefining of roles that were internalized by staff. For this reason, multiple regressions to determine interaction effects was not part of this study. It was, however, important to determine if the PBS system was generally effective in order to accurately understand staff and organizational reaction.

The primary analysis, then, focused on how the staff adjusted (or failed to adjust) to the implementation of a new innovation that required them to view their roles differently. This information emerged qualitatively from the stories they told through interviews, critical incident reports, and through anonymous survey techniques. These interviews and surveys took place following the second year of implementation of PBS at

this high school. Also, qualitative data were derived from documents and personal observation and reflection.

There was no shortage of qualitative data related to the implementation of PBS at this high school. The challenge, though, was not only to collect the data, but to organize and analyze it effectively. As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out, it makes considerable sense to integrate data collection and analysis as early as possible: “It helps the field-worker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data” (p. 50).

This project employed a data base computer program that allowed the summary and reflective comment recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) to be incorporated along with the write-ups into an easily accessible and sortable data organization system. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and then entered into the data base. The information gleaned from these interviews was coded according to the theoretical framework to which they pertained so as to not lose meaning as the mass of data accumulated. Additionally, coding helped maintain focus for data collection and ongoing analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) mention the important role coding has in assisting the researcher in not only organizing information but also in understanding it in open and productive ways:

To do it [resist overload], you will need a variety of safeguards against tunnel vision, bias, and self-delusion . . . Just as important, you will have to accompany each wave of data collection with a corresponding exercise in condensation and analysis. This step is where coding and other forms of ongoing iterative reflection come in. (p. 56)

Documents and other artifacts were similarly organized and coded following Miles and Huberman's suggestion to use a document summary form (p. 54).

Critical incident reports were chronologically organized, entered into the data base, and coded in alignment with the particular theoretical lens that was relevant. These reports were helpful in understanding how PBS has been integrated into the day-to-day operating procedures of staff members. Critical incidents, according to Cohen et al. (2000), "typify or illuminate very starkly a particular feature of a teacher's behaviour . . . they have important insights to offer" (p. 310).

Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasize the iterative nature of coding, stating that the initial coding process is only the beginning: "Just naming or classifying what is out there is usually not enough. We need to understand the patterns, the recurrences, the plausible whys. As Kaplan (1964) remarks, the bedrock of inquiry is the researcher's quest for 'repeatable regularities'" (p. 69). To discover these "repeatable regularities," Miles and Huberman suggest pattern coding: "Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation. They pull together a lot of material into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis. They are a sort of meta-code" (p. 69). The development of pattern codes was an important step in the process of rendering raw data meaningful, and this project employed this strategy as well as the memoing technique that is recommended by Miles and Huberman as a follow-up to pattern coding:

Memos are primarily conceptual in intent. They don't just report data; they tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster, often to show that those data are instances of a general concept. Memos can also go well beyond

codes and their relationships to any aspect of the study – personal, methodological, and substantive. They are one of the most useful and powerful sense-making tools at hand. (p. 72)

The strategies outlined above – coding, pattern coding, and memoing – are all attempts to impose order on vast quantities of data. But clearly organizing the data was not enough: there needed to be some strategy for rendering meaning from the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) fiercely recommend data displays as the means by which data can be effectively analyzed:

Valid analysis requires, and is driven by, displays that are focused enough to permit a viewing of a full data set in the same location, and are arranged systematically to answer the research questions at hand. A ‘full data set’ does not, of course, mean the complete field notes. Rather the condensed, distilled data presented are drawn from the full range of persons, events, and processes under study. With extended text, there can easily be ‘selective stacking’ of the data – even with good intentions. An organized display wards off this problem. (p. 92).

Data displays are generally in the form of matrices and networks, but there are a variety of types that can be used to more clearly describe and understand the phenomenon. This project employed event listing and role-ordered matrices and, ultimately, a conceptually oriented data display. Two types of conceptually ordered displays used were the conceptually clustered matrix and the thematic conceptual matrix. The conceptually clustered matrix allowed the data items to be analyzed for their alignment with the same theory, and the thematic conceptual matrix allowed for conceptual sorting of information appearing in other displays. As the data were further organized and understood through

the use of descriptive data displays, this study culminated in causal analysis which was supported by the use of explanatory effects matrices as well as case dynamics matrices. As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out, “Field research is a process of progressive focusing and funneling. As data are collected, we can see, more and more clearly, factors that bring the apparent flotsam and jetsam of local events into a meaningful pattern” (p. 151). The various data displays described above were useful tools for helping the researcher understand the meaning of the data he assembled. To fully understand the data which was uncovered by this research project, it was ultimately funneled into a form that shed light on the relationships among the various variables contributing to the success or failure of this school initiative: the causal network. According to Miles and Huberman (1994):

Doing a causal network forces a more inferential level of analysis that pulls together the data into a single summarizing form. You have to look at all of the data and the preceding conclusions, and map them in a coherent way. If you’ve done it right, you will have respected the complexity of local causality as it has played out over time, and successfully combined “process” and “variable” analysis. (p. 160)

It is important to note that as the data collected were “focused and funneled” through the use of various data displays, the researcher attempted to minimize the possibility of distortion through the technique of member checking. Member checking, according to Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006), “involves the solicitation of group or setting members’ assessment of the researcher’s hypotheses, findings, or analyses. Insofar as this strategy is feasible, it can provide an additional check on observational and

interpretative errors” (p. 94). The setting and the relationship between the researcher and setting members was such that member checking was feasible and easily arranged.

Chapter Summary

This chapter is the third of five chapters. Chapter One provided an overview of the study and establishes that the purpose of the study was to understand the implementation of a school reform initiative (Positive Behavior Support) in one high school in southwest Michigan. Chapter Two is a review of the literature that supported the conceptual frameworks used in the study. This chapter addressed the setting of the study, the role of the researcher in the setting of the study, the design of the study, the research methods used in data collection, as well as the strategies used for analysis of that data. Chapter Four will discuss the findings of the research, and Chapter Five will present conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 4: Data and Analysis

It is a very sad thing that nowadays there is so little useless information.

Oscar Wilde

This chapter presents an analysis of the data that were collected in the form of artifacts, observation, surveys, and interviews. This study examined the significant personal, social, and environmental elements influencing effective second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) in one alternative high school in southwestern Michigan. The analysis of the data employed multiple theoretical frameworks, including the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM; George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006), Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural frame, human resource frame, political frame and symbolic frame as well as Schein's (2004) theories on organizational culture and Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) Theory of Organizational Socialization.

The implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in one alternative high school in southwestern Michigan was the unit of analysis for this single case study. The unit of analysis was time-bounded, including only the first two years of implementation. The data were linked to the propositions through "pattern matching" and "explanation building" (Yin, 2003). The study included quantitative data to assess the degree of the innovation's success, so as to better understand how the innovation was perceived by staff. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed to better understand how staff responded to the reform innovation.

Care was taken in the collection of data to protect the anonymity of staff. Critical incident reports, surveys, and questionnaires had all identifying information removed

before they came into the possession of the researcher. This was accomplished through the use of a third-party assistant who is not employed by the district or by the high school. All staff participation in the data collection process was voluntary. Interviews were transcribed, and the original recordings were destroyed before the data were forwarded to the researcher.

Stake (1995) points out that “in qualitative case studies, we seek greater understanding of the case. We want to appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of its embeddedness and interaction with its contexts” (p. 16). To accurately and fairly present the data and its analysis, then, it is necessary to address the context within which the school improvement initiative (PBS) occurred. This chapter begins with a discussion of the environment in which the data were collected: the community, the school, the staff, and the students. The success of the initiative will also be discussed to provide additional contextual information, not to evaluate the merits of the program. Finally, data will be presented and analyzed within the context of multiple theoretical frameworks.

The Community

The school studied for this research is located in a community that has a distinctive and interesting history. The local library has a special room dedicated to various facts and artifacts relevant to the historical underpinnings of the city and the larger community. What is perhaps most telling is not the collection of historical data points, but rather how the historical narrative is presented. The library’s webpage begins the depiction of the city’s history with the arrival of four settlers from Genesee, New York, in the spring of 1831, essentially minimizing the area’s history prior to 1831. Elsewhere, there are references to the Pottawatomie Indians who inhabited the area prior

to the early 1800s: the city's website, for example, notes that "The Indians hunted, fished, grew corn, dwelt in conical shaped wigwams, and greeted the early settlers in peace."

The history time line moves swiftly from 1831, mentioning several other influential settlers and the establishment of a large pharmaceutical plant in 1945 to recent decades where the concluding reference is to the establishment of the district's second high school in 1965 which has given "the city a unique rivalry that continues today." That the rivalry between the district's two high schools is important enough to mention on the city's webpage suggests an intimate connection between the school district and the larger community.

The city is a relatively affluent community of 46,475 according to the 2007 U.S. Census. The per capita income of its inhabitants is \$27,830, compared with the state average of \$24,966. What is perhaps even more revealing, however, is that the city has a significantly higher rate of educational attainment than the rest of the state: 37.7% of its inhabitants have attained a BA degree or higher, as compared to 24.5% in the state of Michigan (2007 U.S. Census). The city's website, though, states that "Over 46% of . . . residents possess a bachelor's degree or higher." This informational/promotional website further states that " [the city] is also home to the region's most educated work force, possessing the creativity and intellectual skills to compete in a global market." Despite the statistical disparity between census data and the data on city's website, it is very clear that the city takes pride in the educational attainment of its citizens as well as in its schools and the learning opportunities they provide.

The community is not particularly diverse in terms of ethnicity, a noticeable difference from the large urban city that borders it to the north. Of its more than 46,000

inhabitants, 88.9% are White according to 2007 U.S. Census figures. The largest minority group is African American, yet still this group comprises only 4.4% of the population, followed by Hispanics and Asians, who each make up about 2.8% of the city's population.

The School

The school considered in this study is an “alternative” high school that has coexisted among the traditional schools in the district in relative obscurity until recently. It is housed in a former elementary building that was closed for several years but then reopened in 1984 to accommodate a large and growing Adult Education program. According to a former Adult Education teacher and current high school employee, in 1987, the district's School Board approved an experimental program for no more than sixty non-adult students who were deficient in credits and in danger of not graduating from high school on time. Initially, the school board was reluctant to establish this program, believing that the district did not have a significant drop-out rate and that the program was not really necessary. During the early years of the program, the curriculum remained focused on the needs of the adult students who attended classes along with the younger students; classes were adjusted over time as necessary. In 1997, the School Board gave the program official “pilot program” status, and it remains technically a pilot program more than ten years later. Although an adult high school completion program is still in place, fewer than twenty adult participants attended during the 2008-2009 school year.

The school occupies about one third of the building as well as five additional portable classrooms that replaced four dilapidated portable classrooms in 2008. The other

two thirds of the building are used by a very large day-care program as well as the district's Community Enrichment Program. The district's English as a Second Language (ESL) program is administered from this site but was moved to another location in the district in 2007 because of the growing number of students in the alternative high school. GED testing had historically been an important activity in the building; however, that service was discontinued in 2008.

The Staff

The school has a staff of twenty-two: thirteen teachers, three social worker/counselors, one paraprofessional, two campus safety monitors, one secretary, one behavior specialist, and one administrator (High School Supervisor). This number does not include the Building Administrator who is the researcher for this project. The teaching staff and the counseling staff at this school, although district employees, are not members of the local bargaining unit. As such, they do not pay union dues, nor are they granted any of the benefits normally attributed to union membership.

When the alternative high school program was created, the staffing structure was intentionally constructed to deflect any direct comparison to similar positions in the district: for example, instead of a "Principal," the program has a "Building Administrator," and instead of an "Assistant Principal," the program has a "High School Supervisor." The rationale for this strategy is not altogether clear and appears in no official documents; however, it does appear that the originators of the program did not want the program's teachers to become unionized. Initially, teacher pay structures were somewhat less than the pay structures for unionized teachers in the district, and advancement through a traditional "step" structure was limited by a somewhat subjective

evaluation procedure (one that actually weighed student perception of a given teacher's performance) as well as by a very limited number of possible step increases. When the current Building Administrator (this researcher) assumed responsibility for the program in the fall of 2004, teachers could only advance through a series of six wage-increase steps. He was successful in implementing three additional step increases, so by the 2008-2009 school year, teachers could gain wage increases through a nine-step structure. Additionally, the evaluation structure was altered to more closely resemble the teacher evaluation process used in the rest of the district.

This relationship with the rest of the district has generated a unique perception among the school staff in terms of their value as professionals and the value of the school in general. When this researcher began his relationship with the school in the fall of 2004, he consistently heard staff refer to the alternative high school program as "Building 13," an implication that the alternative high school program and its staff were "outliers" who were underappreciated and not fully respected. When the present Building Administrator (this researcher) arrived in the fall of 2004, the alternative high school staff rarely if ever attended district functions such as the Opening Day festivities and monthly departmental meetings. Initially, it was clear to this researcher that teachers in the alternative high school program truly felt that if they could ever get a teaching job in one of the traditional buildings, their careers would be on more solid ground. Consequently, during the first several years of the present administration, a number of alternative high school teachers routinely applied for other positions in the district.

There has not been as much staff turn-over in the alternative program as might be predicted given the often-vocalized perception that teaching in a traditional building

would be a career advancement. Since 2004, only one teacher has moved to another teaching position elsewhere in the district. Four other teachers have left the program: two to accept administrative positions (one within the district, and one in a nearby district), one moved out of the area, and one was terminated because she did not meet state Highly Qualified standards. Table 2 provides an overview of the staff at the alternative high school and also suggests that staffing at the alternative high school is reasonably stable with minimal turn-over.

Table 2

Staff Breakdown by Type, Number, Education, and Average Years of Service

Type and Number	Education			Years at This School	Years in Profession	% of Career At This School
	HS	BA/BS	MA			
Teachers (13)	0	9	4	5.96	8.5	70%
Social Worker Counselor (3)	0	2	1	14.67	21.33	69%
Instructional Paraprofessional (1)	0	1	0	.9	1.5	60%
Campus Safety Monitor (2)	2	0	0	.5	.5	100%
Clerical (1)	1	0	0	10	10	100%
Behavior Specialist (1)	0	1	0	14	14	100%
High School Supervisor (1)	0	0	1	29	31.5	92%
Totals (22)	3	13	6			

This table is intended to provide a general overview, but it is important to note that among teachers eight of thirteen have taught in this high school for their entire careers, and five have more than nine years of service.

The Students

The students at this high school vary widely in terms of their backgrounds and their reasons for choosing an alternative high school setting. Students attend the program voluntarily in that it is not used as a punitive venue for misbehaviors occurring in other district and area schools. Virtually all of the students attending this school are labeled “at-risk,” suggesting that dropping out of school prior to graduation is a very real possibility.

Data collected in the 2008-2009 school year indicated that approximately 89% of enrolled students were reading significantly below grade level, and 95% of enrolled students did not possess the fundamental math skills necessary to be successful in Algebra I, the lowest level high school math class available in a traditional high school that is implementing the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). In 2008, fewer than 20% of the students at this school achieved proficiency in English/Language Arts (ELA) and math on the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), compared to over a 60% proficiency rate at the other two high schools in the district (SchoolDataDirect).

The student demographic also differs radically from the other two high schools in the district. The free and reduced lunch population trends around 62% compared to 18.8% district-wide. Gender composition is similar to the other schools in the district; however, there are considerable ethnic differences. According to 2008 data, the student population of this school was 22.1% Black compared to 6.5% Black district-wide. Additionally, this school had a significantly higher number of Hispanic (6.9% versus

2.5%) and multi-racial (5.4% versus .9%) students than the district as a whole (SchoolDataDirect).

Student enrollment, according to the official state count, has been between 220 and 250 during the period in which Positive Behavior Supports has been implemented at this school, although during both years, more than 500 students have enrolled annually, with many staying for only a brief time. Grade breakdown (SchoolDataDirect) in this school as indicated in Table 3 suggests that many students are not able to overcome some of the obstacles that inhibit their academic success:

Table 3

Percentage of students in grades 9-12

Grade	Percentage of Student Population
9	31.9
10	33.3
11	5.9
12	25

The reason for disproportionate numbers of students in grades 9 and 10 is that most students come to this school after struggling in a traditional high school for at least a year. Thus when they arrive, they are often 16 or 17 years old but significantly deficient in earned credits so that they are classified as 9th or 10th-graders.

The Reform Initiative

The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges of implementing a school reform initiative in one particular high school in southwest Michigan; it was not

intended to be an evaluation of the particular program that has been implemented: Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). However, in order to fully understand the issues surrounding the reform initiative's acceptance by staff, some information regarding the implementation of the program as well as indicators of PBS's perceived value need to be addressed.

Several staff members, including this researcher, began to explore the possibility of adopting Positive Behavior Supports in the spring of 2007. After considerable discussion among this group, a decision was made to embrace the program beginning in the 2007-2008 school year. A core team of eight staff members, consisting of teachers, administrators, and support staff, began training in August of 2007. By the time students arrived to begin the 2007-2008 school year, a plan for implementing PBS had been developed by the core group of eight and shared with the rest of the staff. The core group (PBS Team) spent several days prior to the start of the school year working with all staff in educating them about the initiative and helping them prepare to implement the program. Launching PBS in the high school was a very visible and resource-intensive enterprise, involving groups of staff members meeting after school and on the weekends to develop specific strategies for teaching, monitoring, and reinforcing the behavioral expectations inherent in the initiative. Apprehensive staff members were paired with more confident staff members when the program was introduced to students.

During the first several months and indeed throughout the first year of implementation, there was considerable external support for the initiative. The school was assigned an "External Coach" who monitored the implementation and provided feedback to staff on a regular basis at staff meetings. Most professional development days

during this first year as well as during the second year of implementation were devoted to some aspect of Positive Behavior Supports. Additionally, a portion of weekly staff meetings was devoted to PBS implementation strategies and concerns. During the second year of implementation, an attempt was made to focus specifically on PBS only every other staff meeting, because dealing with the basic operational issues of running a school as well as PBS at every meeting was proving taxing in terms of time and energy. During these meetings, staff regularly discussed the data that indicated the impact of the innovation on students and the school environment. These discussions also included staff observations and suggestions related to implementation of the innovation.

There are two quantifiable indicators of progress when assessing PBS in a school. The first and most significant indicator is the number of Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs) issued during the school year, and the second is a survey tool administered to staff and students by external PBS coordinators from the local Regional Educational Services Agency: the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ).

Office Disciplinary Referrals

The Office Disciplinary Referral (ODR) data are presented in Figure 3. Because student enrollment fluctuates, the ODRs are presented per one hundred students, so yearly comparisons become more meaningful. As Figure 3 indicates, there was a sharp reduction in ODRs during the initial implementation year (2007-2008). This 23% reduction was a clear indicator to Positive Behavior Supports implementers that the innovation was working. The 11% increase between the 2007-2008 school year and the 2008-2009 school year appears to indicate some slippage in the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Supports as a deterrent to unproductive behavior. However, there was some

debate among staff regarding the reasons for this increase. Several staff members pointed out that the increase in ODRs during the 2008-2009 school year could be seen as a direct result of the decision to target a specific behavior: inappropriate language/profanity.

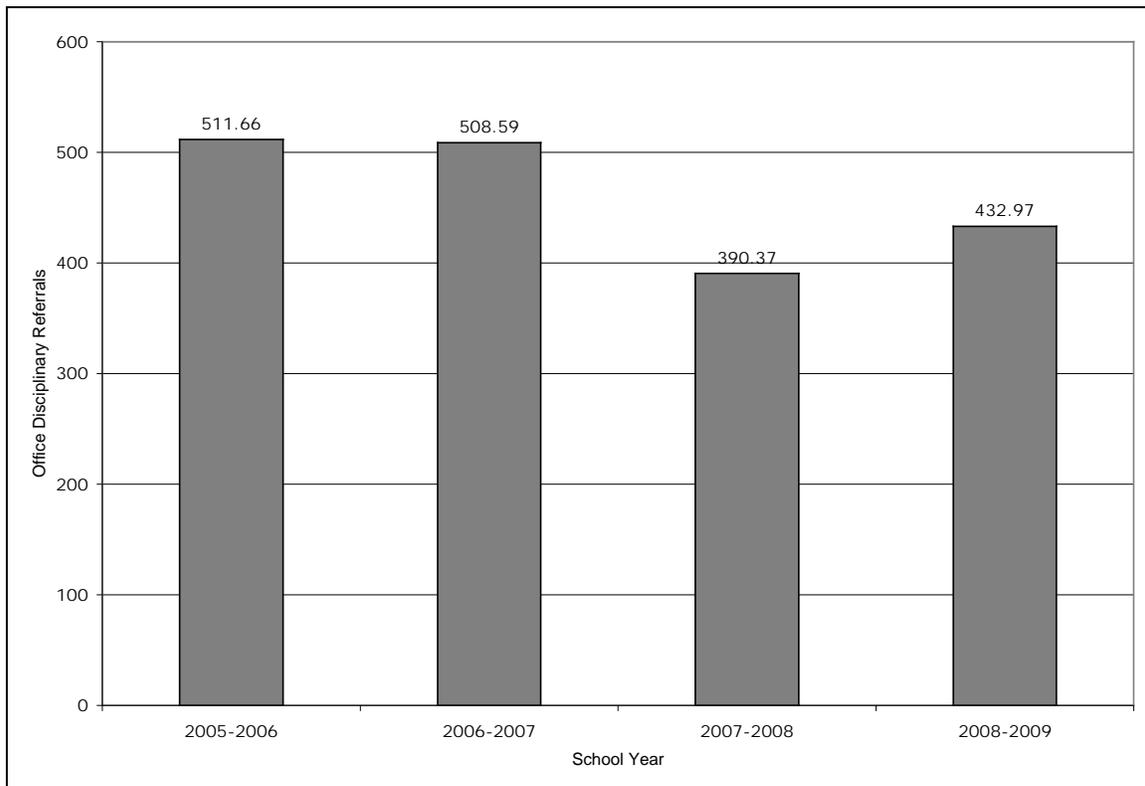


Figure 3. Office Disciplinary Referrals per 100 Students

School Wide Information System (SWIS) data from the 2007-2008 school year indicated that inappropriate language/profanity was the second-highest category for ODRs (18.8% of all ODRs for the year). Subsequently, a decision was made to make inappropriate language a focus of Positive Behavior Supports efforts. A strategy was developed based on the tenets of PBS that involved tracking the infraction in each classroom, with very specific plans in place to teach appropriate language expectations as well as acknowledge improvement and correct all violations of the expectation.

Consequently, the ODRs issued by staff for inappropriate language/profanity actually increased from 18.8% to 25.7%. The school's School Improvement Plan (SIP) directly addresses the impact of the inappropriate language/profanity focus:

. . . ODRs actually increased by 11% during the 2008-2009 school year, suggesting some sort of decreasing effectiveness of PBS. However it is important to note that at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, the staff decided to target "Inappropriate Language/Profanity" in a concerted effort to address this behavior. A variety of PBS-type interventions and acknowledgements were implemented, and the net result was that the school environment continued to improve, however the number of ODRs for "Inappropriate Language/Profanity" increased dramatically . . . (School Improvement Plan, Spring 2009, Section 8).

The SIP then presents calculations that suggest adjusting Inappropriate Language/Profanity ODRs to 2007-2008 levels would actually result in an additional 4% decrease in overall ODRs for the second year of implementation. Regardless of whether or not this adjustment is justified, what is clear is that there was a perception among staff members that Positive Behavior Supports continued to be an effective initiative during the second year of implementation.

Benchmarks of Quality

The second tool used to measure the efficacy of the Positive Behavior Supports initiative is the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ). The BoQ is based on the Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET). The BoQ is administered annually to the high school staff by a team of external PBS coaches/evaluators who are part of a grant-funded PBS implementation initiative coordinated by the local Regional Educational Service Agency

(RESA). According to the external evaluators, the SET is a tool used to measure the initial level of PBS implementation and includes “external interviews of staff and students, along with observations of the building environment” (SET, 2007-2008). The external evaluators then use the SET to determine the general focus and the specific questions of the BoQ, which is a fifty-three-question survey focusing on ten areas of consideration. The results of the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) for both the initial and the second year of implementation appear in Table 4.

Table 4

Benchmarks of Quality Scores for Initial and Second Year

	Category	2007-2008 School Year	2008-2009 School Year	Score Increase/Decrease
	Overall BoQ	84%	81%	-3%
1	Schoolwide PBS Team	71%	100%	+29%
2	Faculty Commitment	83%	67%	-16%
3	Effective Discipline Procedures	83%	83%	No Change
4	Data Entry and Analysis Plan	78%	89%	+11%
5	Expectations and Rules Developed	100%	91%	-9%
6	Reward/Recognition Program	94%	65%	-29%
7	Lesson Plans for Teaching Expectations/Rules	77%	100%	+23%
8	Implementation Plan	85%	77%	-8%
9	Crisis Plan	100%	100%	No Change
10	Evaluation	69%	69%	No Change

The data indicate a 3% drop in the overall score from the first to the second year of implementation. BoQ standards, however, suggest that an overall score of 80% or more is “excellent,” so it would seem that the implementation of the innovation remains on track. Several categories remained similar from the first year to the next (Category 3, Category 9, and Category 10), whereas some areas indicated marked improvement. The

effectiveness of the Schoolwide PBS Team, for example, improved dramatically (29%), and the BoQ narrative cites some significant strengths: “The team has administrative support, . . . a protected meeting schedule that meets twice monthly, . . . a clear mission/purpose, [and] broad representation.” Additionally, the BoQ report notes the improvement in the Data Entry and Analysis Plan (Category 4) can be attributed to a number of strengths such as the development of “a system to collect and analyze ODR data [which is] entered weekly [and] shared with the faculty one-two times monthly (at staff meetings).” Likewise, there was dramatic improvement in the Lesson Plans for Teaching Expectations/Rules (Category 7), with the report mentioning that 100% of the staff indicated that they purposefully and creatively taught the expectations during the year.

Two declining categories that appear to pose a threat to the continued success of the innovation are Faculty Commitment (-16%) and Reward/Recognition Program (-29%). Declining faculty commitment is indeed a serious threat to the innovation, and the explanations for this decline given in the BoQ narrative are few as well as surprising: “Faculty could be more involved in the annual establishment and/or review of behavior goals for the building, [and] faculty could be given more opportunities to share ideas and provide feedback throughout the year” (BoQ, 2008-2009). This is surprising in that through regularly scheduled bi-weekly PBS-focused staff meetings, faculty is provided with just the opportunities suggested. It appears that there is a perception among staff that they are not sufficiently a part of the innovation’s dynamic development and that there is inadequate provision for their input into how PBS is being implemented.

The dramatic decline in the Reward/Recognition Program category is also telling. The BoQ report essentially indicates that staff was not fully participatory in terms of the primary PBS recognition strategy that the school had adopted: giving out tickets for exemplary student behaviors. The survey indicated that during the 2007-2008 school year, 96% of students had at some point been acknowledged by being given a ticket which enters them in a weekly drawing for a prize. In the 2008-2009 school year, however, this number dropped to 29%. According to staff member responses, only 73% admitted to having given out these acknowledgement tickets during the preceding week compared to 100% during the previous year. Clearly, staff participation in the acknowledgement component of PBS had declined. Staff acknowledgement of appropriate student behaviors is one of the key components in the Positive Behavior Supports initiative, and it is also one of the aspects of the program that requires staff to view student behaviors differently: imposing consequences for inappropriate student behavior is a well-established element of a public school system, whereas regularly and systematically recognizing and acknowledging positive student behavior is not. The Benchmarks of Quality narrative for 2008-2009 also makes another suggestion in this area which is quite interesting: “Review and expand recognition of staff for positive contributions.” Essentially, then, the suggestion is that to improve the implementation of the innovation – an innovation that is founded on aggressively correcting inappropriate behavior and rewarding appropriate behavior – the strategies of the innovation should be directed to the implementers as well as the targeted group (students). That this does not seem to be happening suggests a failure to fully understand or accept the innovation; that is, staff appear to view PBS as a “program,” not a “perspective.”

Summary of Intrinsic Reform Initiative Data

Thus the two primary quantifiable indicators of progress regarding the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports provide some very useful information. The dramatic decline in Office Disciplinary Referrals (ODRs) during the first year of implementation suggests that the innovation can be effective; certainly staff would perceive this decline as an indicator of success. However, the slight increase in ODRs during the second year of implementation, coupled with a minor erosion of the overall Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) score during that same year, suggests that the staff is beginning to drift from rigorous adherence to PBS strategies even though those strategies had been perceived as effective. That the staff indicated a clear decline in two areas of the BoQ (Faculty Commitment and Reward/Recognition Programs) further suggests that the innovation is losing some degree of staff support. To understand how and why a school improvement innovation that is perceived as being effective is nonetheless beginning to lose some acceptance, data will be considered through the theoretical lenses of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), the Structural Frame, the Human Resource Frame, the Political Frame, the Symbolic Frame, and the theories of Organizational Culture and Organizational Socialization.

Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM)

The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) was administered by a third-party assistant to eighteen staff member on September 30, 2009. This researcher was not in any way involved with the survey administration or collection. Upon distributing and collecting the Informed Consent document, the third-party assistant monitored the distribution and completion of the survey by the eighteen staff members, collected the

surveys, and then reviewed them at his office to make sure they contained no identifying characteristics. When he was convinced that all participants' identities had been fully protected, the surveys were forwarded to this researcher.

There are a variety of strategies for interpreting SoCQ data based on percentile scores, which are derived from the raw survey scores. The Individual Stages of Concern Raw and Percentile Scores appear in table form in Appendix F. The interpretations used in this study include Peak Stage Score Interpretation, First and Second Highest Stage Score Interpretation, and Profile Interpretation. Individual Item Analysis can also be a useful strategy for interpreting the SoCQ data; however, in this case, it did not always yield clear patterns that might be useful in answering the research questions. The Individual Item Analysis Data, though, is included in Appendix G.

Peak Stage Score Interpretation

The Peak Stage Score Interpretation involves looking at the highest score (peak score) for individuals as well as for the group. Higher scores reflect more intense levels of concern in that category. It is possible that multiple stage scores are within one or two percentage points, and if so, both scores can be considered as peak scores. It is important to note that the developers clearly state that “the percentile figures are not absolute; instead they are relative to the other stage scores for that individual” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 32).

Table 5 indicates the Stages of Concern Peak Scores for all respondents. Peak scores for each staff member are highlighted. The Participant designation is an arbitrary label assigned to the questionnaires as they were being analyzed. Note that staff members SoCQ-1 and SoCQ-11 have two scores indicated because they are either identical or

within only one percentage point of one another. Therefore, the total staff number at the bottom equals 20, and the total percentage scores are slightly more than 100%.

Table 5

Stages of Concern Percentile Score Indicating Peak Concern(s)

Participant	Stages of Concern Percentile Score						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
SoCQ-1	22	19	39	52	48	44	52
SoCQ-2	61	54	70	34	24	31	30
SoCQ-3	91	80	80	73	63	80	87
SoCQ-4	69	45	55	23	66	93	20
SoCQ-5	31	63	67	73	19	31	14
SoCQ-6	61	88	83	77	48	68	42
SoCQ-7	97	57	70	69	54	80	65
SoCQ-8	40	19	21	39	43	48	26
SoCQ-9	22	80	63	23	54	52	26
SoCQ-10	75	37	35	47	11	19	14
SoCQ-11	22	57	63	47	59	64	47
SoCQ-12	48	23	39	43	5	12	26
SoCQ-13	81	90	76	60	66	93	30
SoCQ-14	69	60	83	30	71	28	20
SoCQ-15	97	45	76	69	82	84	38
SoCQ-16	96	66	85	39	71	80	77
SoCQ-17	40	80	72	47	63	68	20
SoCQ-18	75	30	35	52	7	22	20
Total Peak Concerns							
Number	7	3	3	2	0	4	1
%	39%	17%	17%	11%	0%	22%	6%

Scores in Stage 0 indicate the amount of attention the respondent is giving to the innovation. They are essentially a reflection of the degree to which the respondent is involved with the innovation relative to all the other activities and initiatives that place demands on the respondent's time and energy. As George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer (2006) describe it:

A low score on Stage 0 is an indication that the innovation is of high priority and central to the thinking and work of the respondent. The higher the Stage 0 score, the more the respondent is indicating that there are a number of other initiatives, tasks, and activities that are of concern to him or her. (p. 33)

Implications of high Peak Concern Stage 0. Clearly, a high number of staff (39%) at the high school under study indicate Stage 0 as the Peak Stage of concern. This suggests that there are a number of other elements in the working environment which compete for the respondent's attention, and that implementation of the innovation is not necessarily a top priority with a substantial number of staff members. Low scores in this stage would suggest that the innovation has been accepted by the respondent and has now become simply part of the day-to-day process of job performance; this does indeed seem to be the case with a small number of respondents (Staff Member SoCQ-5 for example). That Stage 0 concerns are dominant for such a high percentage of the staff suggests that even after two years of implementation, many staff members have not fully accepted all aspects of Positive Behavior Supports and have not necessarily integrated the features of the innovation into their daily work.

Implications of high Peak Concern Stage 1. High scores in Stage 1 indicate a need for additional information. Stage 1 totals are tied with Stage 2 totals as the second-most populated concern category for the population under study. It is important to note that this is not necessarily a reflection of how much the respondents already know about the innovation, but rather simply that there is a need for additional information: “They are not concerned about ‘nitty-gritty’ details but, rather, want fundamental information about what the innovation is, what it will do, and what its use will involve” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 33). It is worth noting after school-wide use of the innovation for two years that there is still a need for basic information about the innovation. Not only have most staff received multiple trainings in the use of Positive Behavior Supports, but also the use and effectiveness of the innovation have been discussion topics at weekly mandatory staff meetings for two years, with very focused and deliberate attention placed on this subject during the second year of implementation. The data suggest that despite whatever attempts were made to provide clear conceptual and implementation explanations of Positive Behavior Supports to all staff members, there is a significant group (17%) who have not had their questions answered nor their concerns addressed.

Implications of high Peak Concern Stage 2. Stage 2 concerns are personal or “self” concerns. According to George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer (2006), respondents who register peak concerns at Stage 2 are focused on how the innovation impacts them personally, in terms of their workload, their status within the organization, and their abilities to meet the demand of the innovation. Again, relative to other categories, a significant percentage of respondents (17%) indicate peak concerns at the Stage 2 level. George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer (2006) have noted that researchers have noticed a high

correlation between Stage 1 and Stage 2. Indeed, in this study it appears that the scores for respondents who indicated a Peak Stage Score in either Stage 1 or Stage 2 had relatively similar scores in the other category, as close as within 6% of one another: respondent SoCQ-6, for example. The conclusion drawn by the CBAM research team is that even though it is not uncommon for Stage 1 and Stage 2 concerns to occur at about the same time, they are sufficiently distinct to warrant the continuation of the two categories (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 33).

Implications of high Peak Concern Stage 3. Stage 3 concerns focus around the logistical challenges of implementing the innovation. Clearly this remains somewhat of a concern in that 11% registered Stage 3 as their Peak Concern, and overall a number of other respondents rated this concern fairly highly.

Implications of high Peak Concern Stage 4. Stage 4 is focused on the consequences of the innovation. Specifically, respondents with a Peak Score at Stage 4 are concerned with how the innovation is impacting students: its relevance and effectiveness in addressing student need. Interestingly, not one member of the staff participants had a Peak Score at this stage.

Implications of high Peak Concern Stage 5. After Peak Score at Stage 0, the next highest Peak Score among the participants was at Stage 5 (22%). This stage indicates a focus on collaboration and the need to work with others to successfully implement the innovation. In the context of Positive Behavior Supports, the amount of concern surrounding collaboration makes sense. Implementation of PBS involves a number of school-wide activities such as reward celebrations, as well as the consistent teaching of PBS expectations across the school environment: from the classroom to the

office to the cafeteria. It is not surprising, then, that the challenges of collaboration remain a concern for a substantial number of staff members.

Implications of high Peak Concern Stage 6. Only one of the respondents indicated Stage 6 (Refocusing) as their Peak Stage of Concern, and this particular individual also had an identical Peak Score at Stage 3 (Management). Stage 6 concern would suggest that staff have fully assimilated Positive Behavior Supports into their problem-solving strategies and have become comfortable enough with it that they are willing to explore potentially effective modifications and adaptations to the specific environment. Stage 6 concern implies a confidence in the innovation that all but one member of the staff seemingly do not yet have.

Summary of Peak Stage Scoring Interpretation. When considered as a whole, the Peak Stage Scoring Interpretation suggests that staff at the school are predominantly concerned about Self issues related to the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (see Figure 5: The Stages of Concern About an Innovation). In fact, 73% of the staff indicated a Peak Stage Concern at Stage 0, Stage 1, or Stage 2. This is not necessarily what one might hope for following the second year of the implementation of the reform innovation. As will be more clearly explained in the discussion of Profile Interpretation, the emphases on Stages 0-2 are more characteristic of nonusers of an innovation than they are of experienced users.

First and Second Highest Stage Scores Interpretation

Another way to consider the data is to look for patterns among the respondents' highest and second highest stage score (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 34). This can be done in a rather straightforward manner by determining the percentage of Second

Highest Stage of Concern for all respondents at a given Peak Stage of Concern. These data appear in Table 6.

Table 6

Percent Distribution of Second Highest Stage of Concern Relative to First Highest Stage of Concern

Highest Stage of Concern	No. of Staff	% of Staff	% Second Highest Stage of Concern						
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
0 Unconcerned	7	39%	0	0	29	29	0	29	14
1 Informational	3	17%	0	0	100	0	0	0	0
2 Personal	2	11%	50	0	0	0	50	0	0
3 Management	2	11%	0	0	50	0	0	0	50
4 Consequence	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Collaboration	4	22%	25	25	25	0	25	0	0
6 Refocusing	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Because concern about an innovation is developmental, one would expect that the Second Highest Stage of Concern would often appear adjacent to the Peak Stage of Concern.

However, this is not always the case, and at least theoretically, any combination is possible (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 35). Some adjacent concern patterns are evident in the data: for example, Table 6 reveals that 100% of respondents with a Peak Stage Concern 1 (Informational) have a Second Highest Stage of Concern at stage 2 (Personal). In addition to adjacent-concern patterns, researchers have also discovered

several common nonadjacent combinations that frequently appear: individuals who score high on Stage 3 and second highest on stage 6, for example. According to George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006:

Individuals with this combination are concerned about management of the innovation (high Stage 3) and have some ideas about how to change their use or the innovation itself (second high Stage 6). Individuals who score low on Stage 6 do not have ideas about what to do and are apt to be stuck with their time and efficiency problems. A common adjacent combination is for individuals who score highest on Stage 3 to have their second highest concern on Stage 2. That arrangement might indicate that respondents have uncertainty and doubt about whether they can master the innovation. In some cases, it reflects a fear of losing one's job. (p. 35)

The data in Table 6 reveal exactly the above situation for two staff respondents: both scored high on Stage 3, and one scored second highest on Stage 6, while the other scored second highest on Stage 2. These patterns provide examples of how the researcher can begin to holistically arrive at an understanding of staff concern regarding the innovation.

Because of considerable individual variation, it is perhaps most useful to look at the Stages of Concern that reflect the majority of staff, and then consider the additional information provided by factoring in the Second Highest Stage of Concern. When making these analyses, it is necessary to continually refer to Figure 1: The Stages of Concern About an Innovation in order to attach meaning to the combinations. The majority of the staff scored highest at Stage 0, which indicates little concern about or involvement with Positive Behavior Supports (the innovation): they are still somewhat

uncertain about the innovation. This group falls into three discernable subcategories (each representing 29%): 1) those with the Second Highest Concern at Stage 2, who are uncertain about the demands of the innovation and the effects of the innovation on “existing structures or personal commitment”; 2) those with the Second Highest Concern at Stage 3, who are concerned with the management components of Positive Behavior Supports (resources, scheduling, organizing, etc.); and 3) those with the Second Highest Concern at Stage 5, who are concerned with the challenges of cooperating with others to make Positive Behavior Supports a successful program. One staff member at Highest Stage of Concern 0 indicated a Second Highest Concern at Stage 6, which would suggest that because of little concern or involvement with the innovation, he or she might prefer to refocus on an alternative innovation.

It is likely significant that one of the Second Highest Stages of Concern (5) for the majority of staff (the 39% who indicate the Highest Stage of Concern at Stage 0) is also the Highest Stage of Concern for the second largest group (22%). This analysis, then, seems to suggest that collaboration with peers is a significant concern for this staff. This interpretation is further strengthened by the comments of two staff members, both of whom indicated a Peak Stage Score of 5. Respondent SoCQ-4 commented on the demographics page of the questionnaire that, “You must teach it consistently. You must buy into it totally. You must have administrative support.” Similarly, respondent SoCQ-8 observed that, “You must have sincere buy-in from the majority of your staff, or forget it.”

As George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer (2006) point out, juxtaposing the first and second highest stage score can reveal valuable staff concern information, but it also

reflects “the complexity of concerns data” (p. 37). Thus even though this analysis allows for a better understanding of individual respondents, the best use of this analysis is in its ability to reveal general patterns. For example, an additional observation that might reveal useful information would be that one individual (SoCQ-1) had a Peak Stage of Concern 3 (management) and a Second Highest Stage of Concern at 6 (refocusing), suggesting that the individual is concerned about the best way to incorporate the innovation and might have some useful ideas as to how to more effectively gain benefit from the innovation. Although it would no doubt be beneficial to allow this individual to share his or her thoughts with the entire staff, the overall pattern suggests that the staff might not be ready to accept or even to understand these suggestions: the majority of the staff (65%) have concerns that are in the lowest three stages of concern (Unconcerned, Informational, and Personal), and every grouping of the Highest Stage of Concern, with the exception of 0 (Unconcerned), has at least 50% of its Second Highest Stage of Concern within these same three lowest stages.

Holistic interpretation of first and second highest stage scores. A holistic interpretation, then, would suggest that there is substantial concern among staff members about involvement with Positive Behavior Supports (Stage 0), information about Positive Behavior Supports (Stage 1), and the personal demands and implications of using Positive Behavior Supports (Stage 2). Furthermore, there is substantial concern regarding the ability of the staff to collaborative effectively in order to insure the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (Stage 5).

Profile Interpretation

Profile interpretation is perhaps the most common method for analyzing the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) and can be useful in understanding both individual as well as group data. When attaching meaning to any SoCQ data, it is necessary to reference the Stages of Concern definitions appearing in Figure 1 in order to understand what the relative percentage scores indicate about the respondent. It is important to remember that the profile of any given individual or group represents a “snapshot” of where that group or individual is at that particular point in time. However, it is also important to understand the linear progression of concerns over time:

Hypothetically, as individuals move from nonuse and scant awareness of an innovation to beginning use and, eventually, more highly sophisticated use, their concerns move through the defined stages. They begin with their concerns being most intense at Stages 0, 1, and 2, then shift to Stage 3, and ultimately register their highest levels of concern at Stages 4, 5, and 6. (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 37)

Thus when an innovation has gained acceptance and support within a school culture, users' levels of concern would appear as a positive wave when depicted as a graphic profile. Figure 4, adapted from George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer (2006), indicates several possible user profiles.

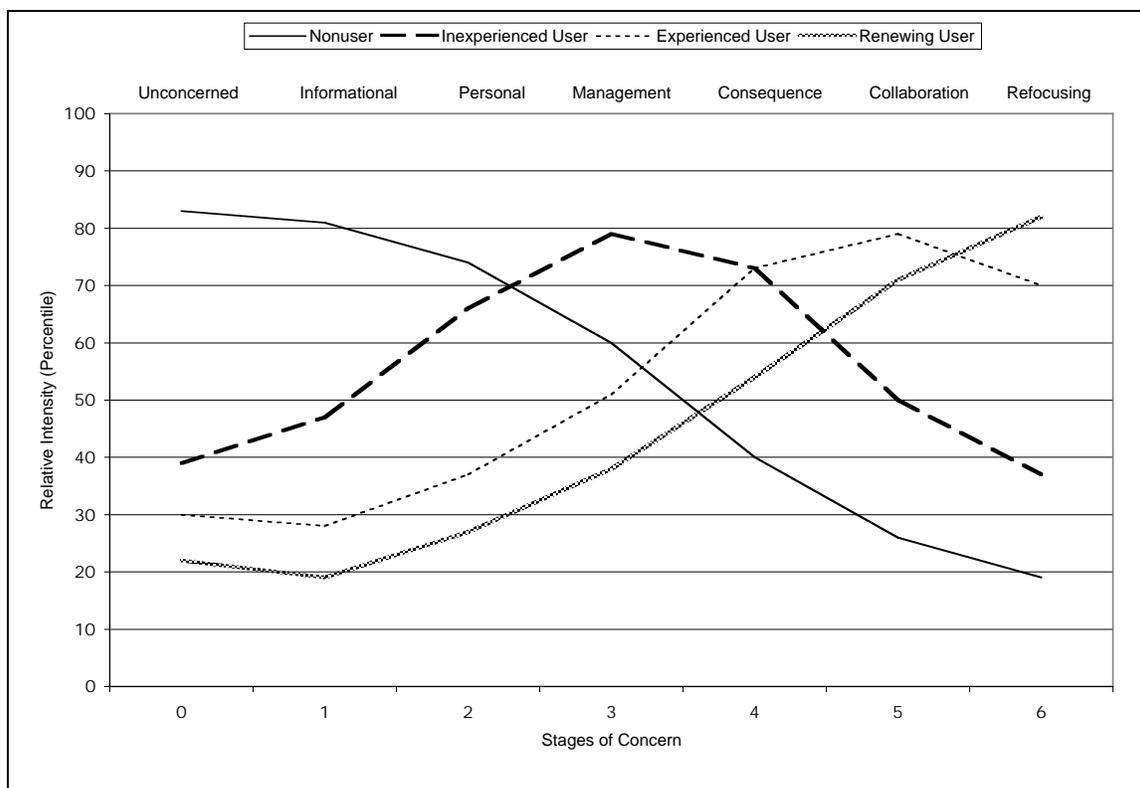


Figure 4. Hypothesized Development of Stages of Concern

As Figure 4 indicates, nonusers are typically focused on Stages 0, 1, and 2, with very little emphasis on Stages 4, 5, and 6. A nonuser profile suggests that the innovation has not been significantly understood and accepted: there is uncertainty about the innovation and some concern as to how the innovation might impact status or relationships within the group. Initially, one might reasonably expect a number of nonuser profiles within the group, or perhaps a nonuser profile representing the group as a whole. However, over time, if an innovation has gained acceptance and support among individuals within the school, one might expect to see a profile more in line with the one labeled “Renewing User.” The other two potential profiles indicated in Figure 4 (“Inexperienced User” and “Experienced User”) represent evolving developmental phases moving from self- and

task-concerns to a focus on effectively collaborating with other and using the innovation in even more useful and creative ways.

As might be expected, the individual profiles within any group can exhibit considerable variation, and not all conform to easily identifiable patterns as described above. Yet the patterns are informative, and they can provide important information about the levels of concern that characterize the organization's response to the innovation. The staff of the high school used for this study were given the SoCQ after two years of experience with using Positive Behavior Supports. Some patterns emerge among individual staff members, and the collective profile is particularly telling. A summary of pattern distribution appears in Table 7: Profile Pattern Distribution. It is important to recognize that not all profiles fit the categories perfectly (SoCQ-11, for example, does not have enough unique characteristics to justify categorization), but the distribution indicated below reasonably reflects dominant characteristics of the individual staff profiles.

Table 7

Profile Pattern Distribution

Profile Pattern	Respondents Corresponding to this Pattern		
	Number	Percentage	Respondents
Nonuser (Typical and High Unconcerned)	6	33.3%	SoCQ-3 SoCQ-6 SoCQ-10 SoCQ-15 SoCQ-16 SoCQ-18
Negative One-Two Split	3	16.7%	SoCQ-2 SoCQ-7 SoCQ-12
High Collaboration	3	16.7%	SoCQ-4 SoCQ-8 SoCQ-13
Informational	2	11.1%	SoCQ-9 SoCQ-17
Intense Management Concerns	1	5.5%	SoCQ-5
High Management Concerns with Ideas	1	5.5%	SoCQ-1
Multiple Peak Concerns: Personal & Consequence	1	5.5%	SoCQ-14
Indeterminate	1	5.5%	SoCQ-11

One pattern that is exhibited by a number of staff members is the “Typical Nonuser Profile” illustrated by the profile of Respondent SoCQ-6, which appears in Figure 5.

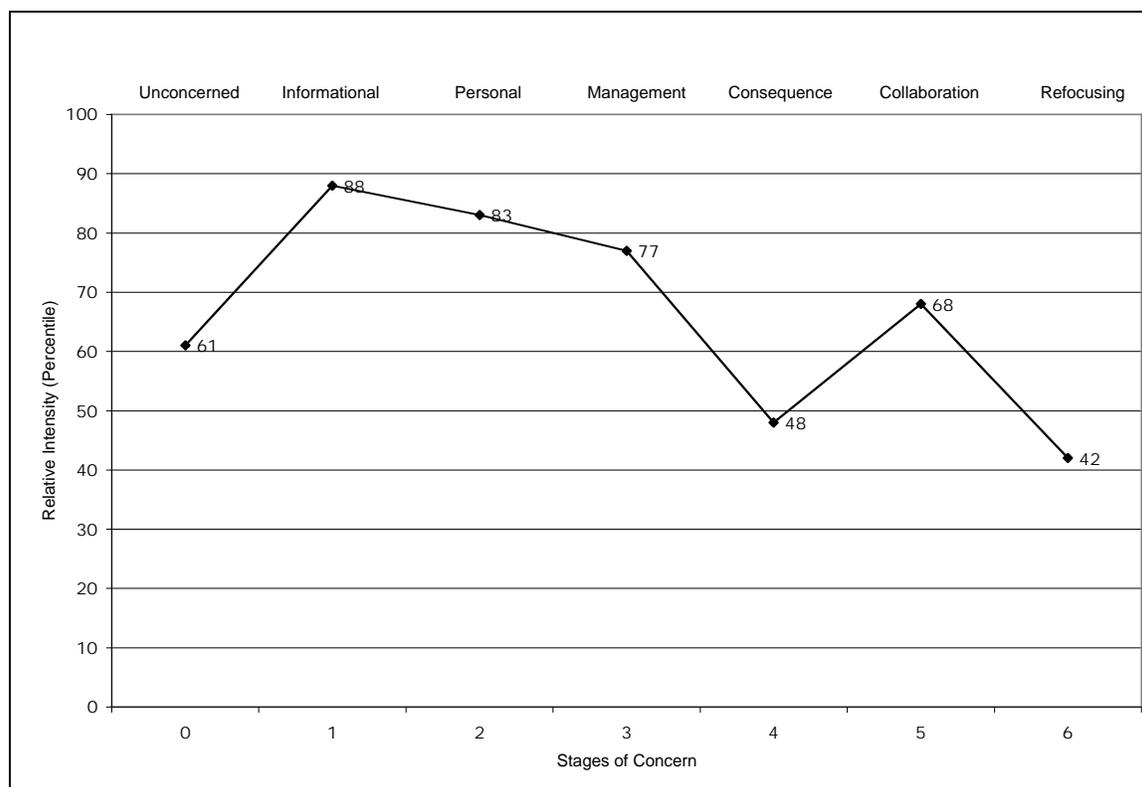


Figure 5: Profile of participant SoCQ-6 typifying the profile of a nonuser of the innovation.

According to George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer (2006), the nonuser profile is one of the most easily identified profiles. There are, however, distinct patterns within the nonuser profile that are important to acknowledge. Of particular importance in the nonuser profile is the relative position of Stages 1 and 2. For example, in the profile of SoCQ-6, the respondent is not fully aware of the innovation and “somewhat more concerned about other things” (p. 39). But because of the relatively high Stage 1 and Stage 2 scores,

it can be inferred that the individual is interested in learning more about the innovation. This individual does not have significant management concerns

(signified by medium intensity on Stage 3) and is not intensely concerned about the innovation's consequences for students or collaborating with others (low intensity on Stages 4 and 5). The low, tailing-off Stage 6 score suggests that the individual does not have other ideas that would be potentially competitive with the innovation. The overall profile suggests and reflects the interested, not terribly over concerned, positively disposed nonuser. (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 39)

The appearance of this profile within the group might be a concern, but the respondent (SoCQ-6) also indicated that he or she has had only one year experience with the innovation – important information that makes the profile understandable, and indeed useful in that it serves as a reminder that some staff members have less experience with the innovation than others and will need support at a more basic level. The profile of SoCQ-10 (Figure 6) also typifies a nonuser; however, this profile is more of a cause for concern.

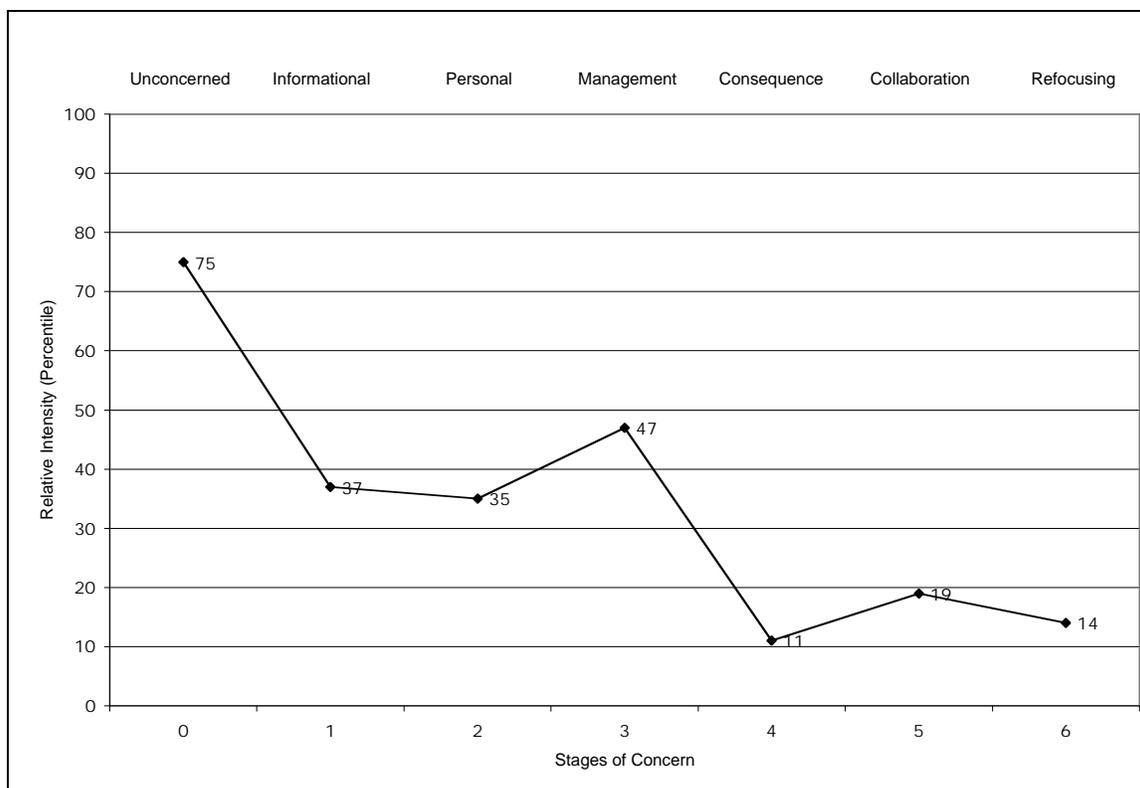


Figure 6. Profile of participant SoCQ-10 indicating nonuse of the innovation.

SoCQ-10 identifies himself or herself as an intermediate user with two years of experience. Furthermore, the relatively low Stage 1 and Stage 2 scores suggest that this user does not fully understand the innovation and has little desire to learn more. He or she seems most concerned about managing the innovation (higher Stage 3) but does not appear interested in its impact on students or in collaboration or adapting the innovation to the environment (low Stage 4, Stage 5, and Stage 6). It appears that this individual presents a problem to the educational leader who wants to fully integrate Positive Behavior Supports into the day-to-day functioning of the school: he or she has not yet accepted the innovation in any meaningful way, and it appears that acceptance is unlikely without some sort of intervention. Respondents SoCQ-15 and SoCQ-18 (Figure 7) also present nonuser profiles that warrant concern.

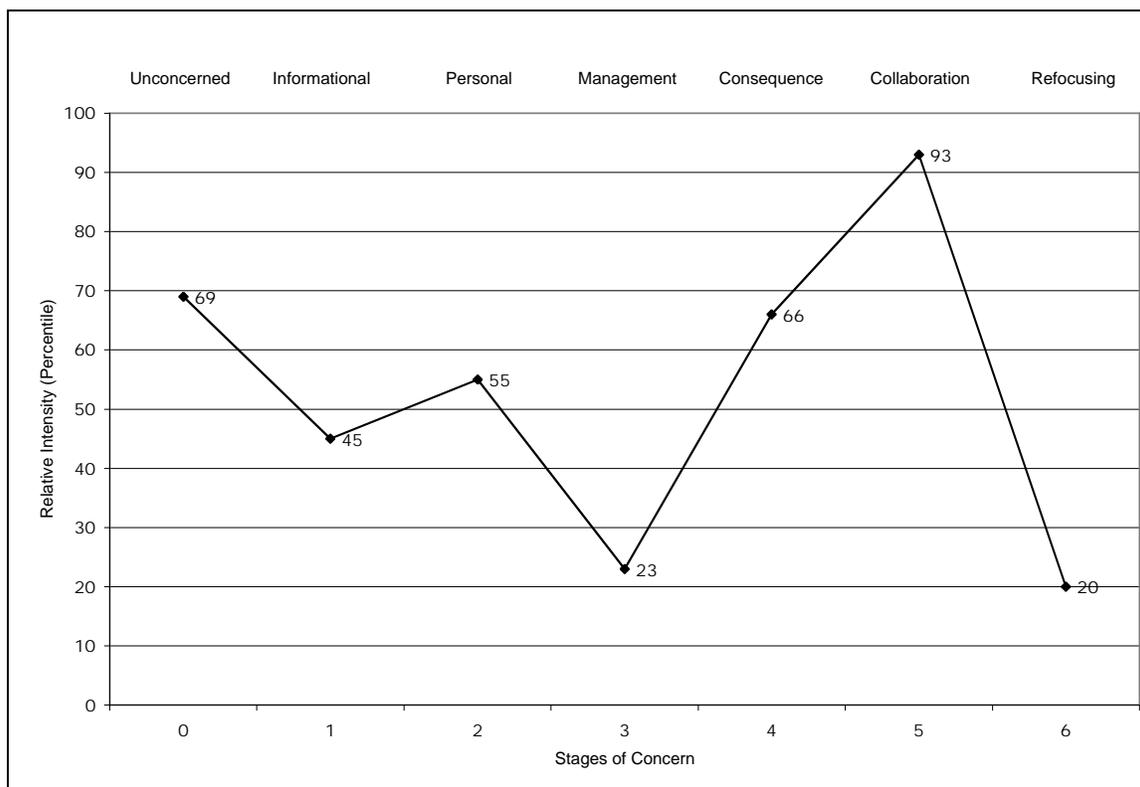


Figure 7. SoCQ-18: High Unconcerned or Nonuser

There is a clear similarity between SoCQ 10 and SoCQ-18 (Figures 6 and 7). Not all of the six respondents' profiles match as closely, yet they clearly fall into the nonuser profile category. Since fully one third of the school staff exhibit the nonuser profile, it is evident that some level of non-use of the innovation threatens the ultimate success of Positive Behavior Supports. It is important to recognize that these profiles represent respondents' concerns two years into the innovation's implementation, and of the group, only two of the respondents indicated less than two years of experience in using the innovation.

Another interesting nonuser profile that appears among the staff is characterized by CBAM researches as a "Negative One-Two Split:

A “negative one-two split” occurs when the Stage 2 score is higher than the Stage 1 score . . . These profiles depict individuals with various degrees of doubt and potential resistance to an innovation. When Stage 2 concerns override Stage 1 concerns, the concerns about an innovation’s effect on personal position or job security usually are greater than the desire to learn more about the innovation. Experience indicates that when general, non-threatening attempts are made to discuss an innovation with a person with this profile, the high Stage 2 concerns are intensified and the Stage 1 concerns are further reduced. An individual with this kind of profile probably will not be able to consider a proposed innovation objectively until his or her personal Stage 2 concerns are reduced (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, pp. 40-41).

The profile of SoCQ-2 is quite clearly the “Negative One-Two Split” as indicated in Figure 8.

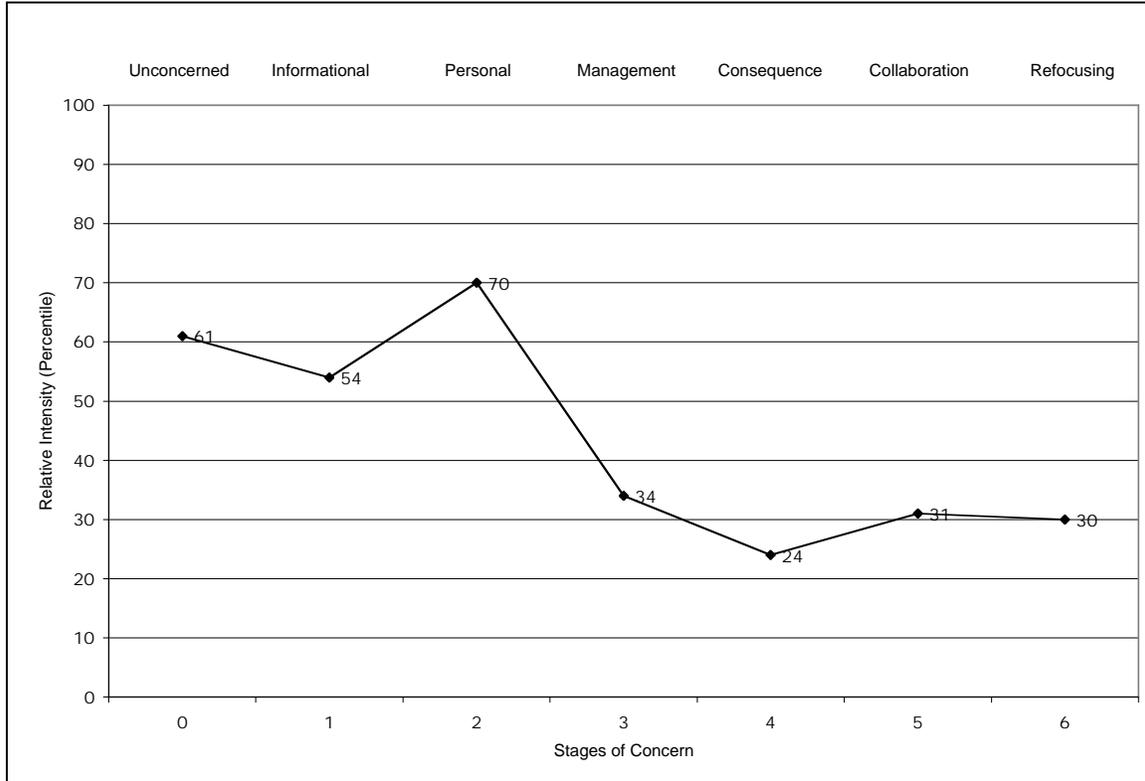


Figure 8. Negative One-Two Split

As potentially disconcerting as this profile might be to school leaders who want to see the successful and sustained implementation of the innovation, there is one bit of positive information contained in the profile: the relative direction of the Stage 6 score. If the Stage 6 score tails up on a Negative One-Two Split profile, there is a strong indication that not only is the respondent “stuck” on personal concerns about the innovation, but also that the respondent has ideas about another innovation that he or she would prefer to implement. That the profile for SoCQ-2 does not “tail up” suggests that the respondent

does not have competing ideas as to how the problem the innovation addresses should be solved (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 42).

Two single peak profile groups also emerge from the data: High Collaboration (SoCQ-4, SoCQ-8, and SoCQ-13) and High Informational (SoCQ-9, SoCQ-17). These profiles indicate clear and intense concerns (either collaboration or informational) and provide important information for the school leader. As is always the case, it is important to look at the relative strengths of other concerns within the profile when interpreting the data. For example, the profile of SoCQ-4 appears in Figure 9 and clearly indicates a focus on collaboration. The relative intensity of this concern is evident and suggests that “the respondent is very interested in working with his or her colleagues or others in coordinating use of the innovation” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 43).

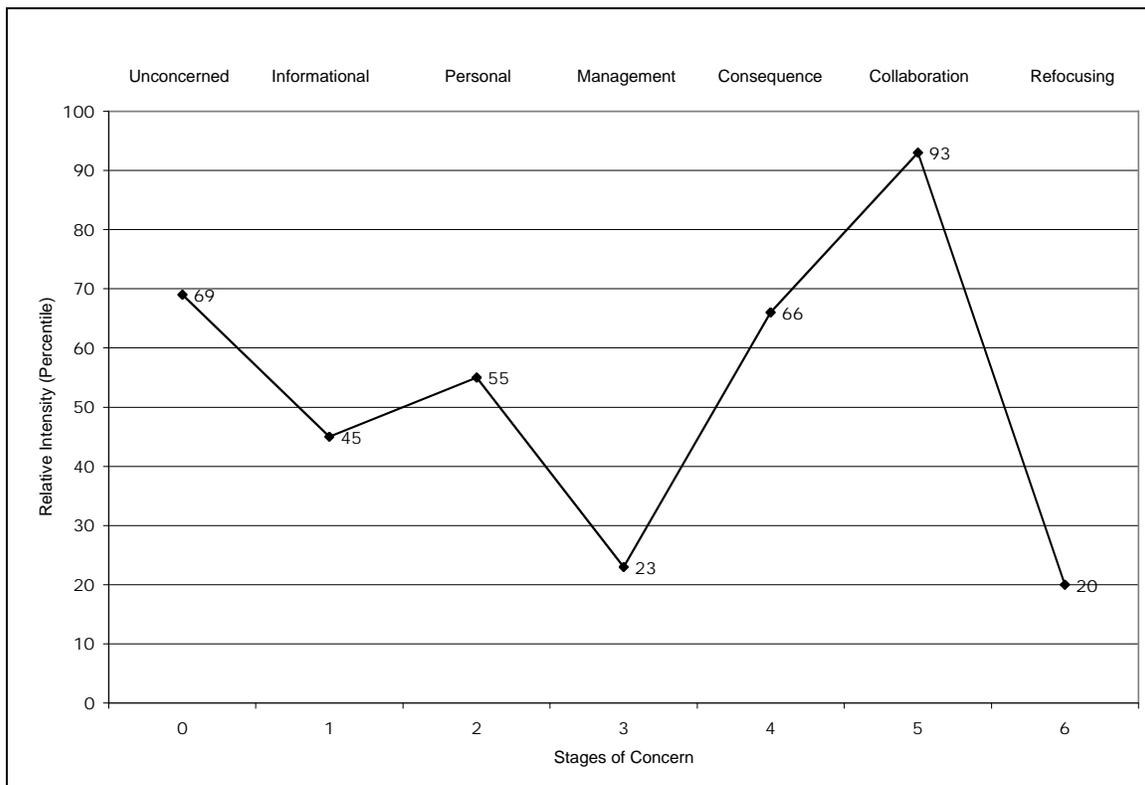


Figure 9. SoCQ-4: High Collaboration Profile

Additionally, the low, tailing-off Stage 6 score suggests that the respondent is not particularly resistant to the use of Positive Behavior Supports but simply concerned with the challenges of working with the rest of the staff to make the innovation successful. A similar single-peak pattern emerges among other individual respondents, suggesting high levels of concerns with obtaining information about the innovation (SoCQ-9, SoCQ-17), and managing the innovation (SoCQ-5). Of particular interest is the double-peak profile of SoCQ-1 which is appears in Figure 10.

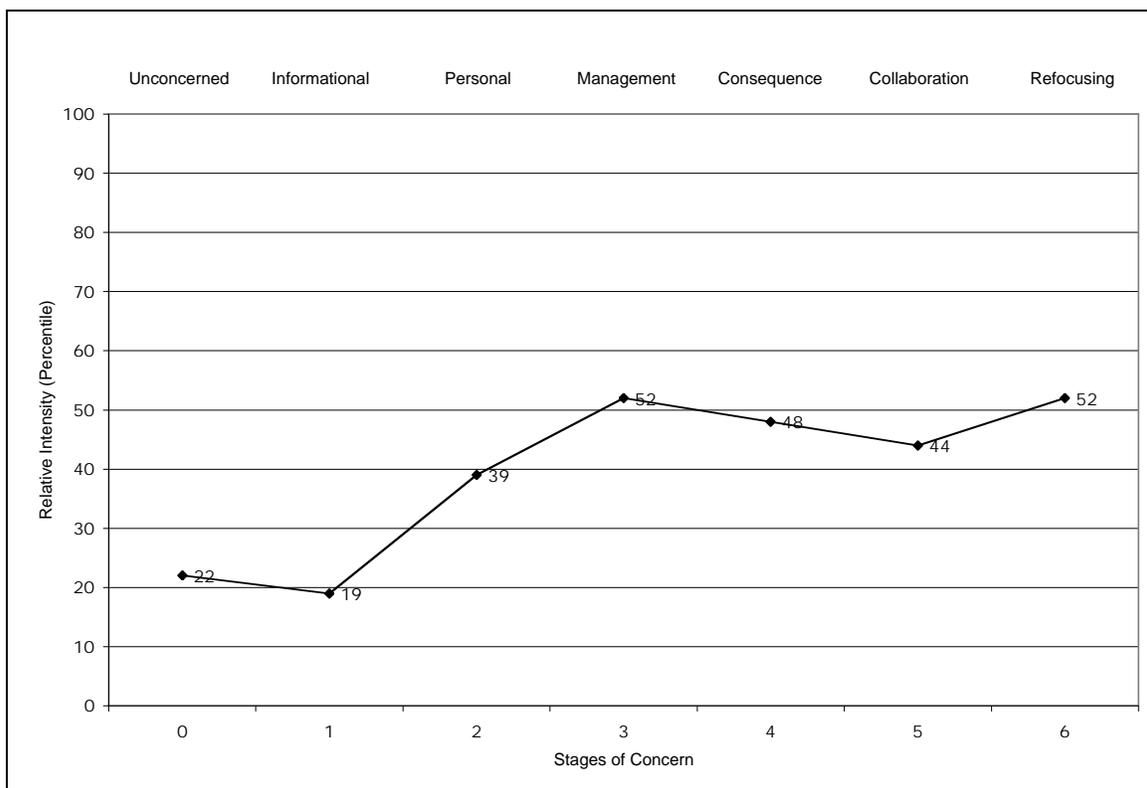


Figure 10. SoCQ-1: High Management Concerns with Ideas

Of all the staff profiles, SoCQ-1 most clearly presents as a “Renewing User” and indicates that he or she has ideas about how to make Positive Behavior Supports even more effective (high Stage 6 score). This individual would certainly be an asset for the

educational leader attempting to successfully implement the Positive Behavior Supports initiative.

Discernible patterns among individual profile interpretations. The profile interpretation strategy yields a wealth of useful information helpful to the educational leader concerned with identifying common areas of concern that stand in the way of successful innovation implementation. Although there is certainly individual variation among respondents in this study, clear patterns emerge:

1. After two years of attempting to implement Positive Behavior Supports, at least half of the respondents indicate profiles that suggest “nonuse” (Table 7).
2. There remains considerable concern about the personal implications of the innovation, collaboration with other staff members, and management of the innovation (high Stages 1-3 and high Stage 5).
3. There is very little concern among staff members about how to modify the innovation to make it even more successful (relatively low Stage 6).

These themes appear quite plainly in the Group Profile (Figure 11), which is a collective glance at the concerns of all eighteen respondents.

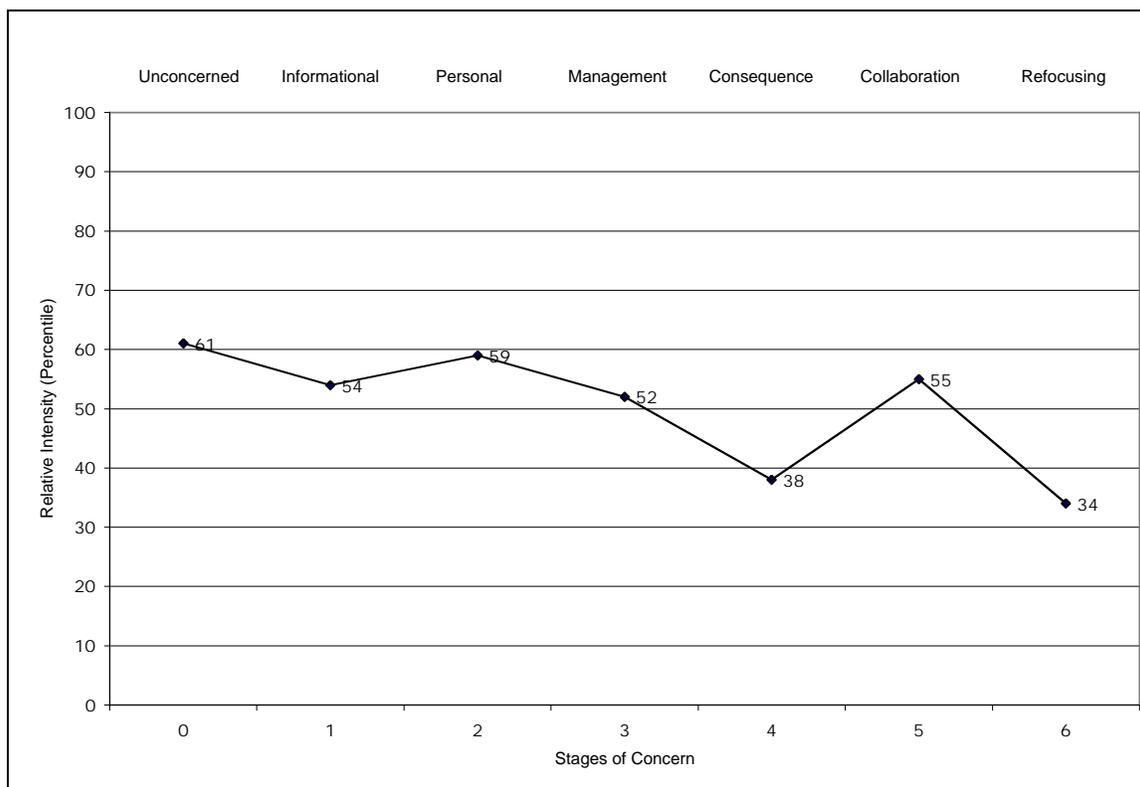


Figure 11. Concerns profile for group

Summary of Statement of Concerns Questionnaire Interpretations

The interpretations of the Statement of Concerns Questionnaire data used in this study (Peak Stage Score Interpretation, First and Second Highest Stage Score Interpretation, and Profile Interpretation) yield valuable information about the status of the implementation of PBS in this high school.

Peak Stage Score Interpretation is derived from the data indicating the highest peak concerns at Stage 0, Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 5. The high Stage 0 scores (39%) suggest that many staff members have not yet fully accepted the innovation (PBS) and have not yet incorporated all components of the innovation into their day-to-day routines. The high Stage 1 scores (17%) suggest the need for additional information about Positive

Behavior Supports, while the high Stage 2 scores (also 17%) suggest that there remain unresolved concerns surrounding the impact of the innovation on the individual's work load, ability level, and organizational status. The high Stage 5 scores (22%) reflect ongoing concerns about the necessity of peer collaboration in order make the reform initiative successful in this environment.

The focus on Stage 0, Stage 1, and Stage 2 is further supported by a holistic First and Second Highest Stage Score Interpretation. Additionally, the emphasis on Stage 5 (concern about collaboration) is also evident in this interpretation. Likewise, the Individual Profile Interpretation suggests that despite some variation among individuals, as a group, the predominant concerns still center on the early developmental "self" concerns (Stage 0, Stage 1, Stage 2) as well as the concern of Collaboration (Stage 5) that involves the challenges and nuances of working productively with peers. Furthermore, within the framework of this interpretation, the management of the innovation (Stage 3) begins to emerge as a concern.

Thus the various interpretations suggest consistent patterns of attitudes surrounding the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in this high school: following the second year of implementation of this reform initiative, staff remain concerned primarily with issues of self-impact and the challenges of implementing the initiative collaboratively. Also, there is some evidence of concern about the management of the innovation within the context of the school environment. What is noticeably absent from predominant staff concerns is a focus on the impact of the innovation on students (Stage 4 – Consequence) and the desire to modify or redesign the innovation to make it even more effective (Stage 6 – Refocusing).

Emerging Themes

Several themes begin to emerge when the intrinsic PBS data (Office Disciplinary Referral data and Benchmarks of Quality data) are juxtaposed with data gleaned from the Concerns-Based Adoption Model's Statement of Concern Questionnaire. These data suggest specific areas of concern that potentially threaten the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in this high school. These areas of concern include staff commitment and collaboration concerns, implementation concerns, and self concerns. Additional information, however, is needed to verify the accuracy of these interpretations. Stake (1995) points out that "to gain the needed confirmation, to increase credence in the interpretation, to demonstrate commonality of an assertion, the researcher can use any of several protocols . . . the fourth is actually the one most recognized: methodological triangulation" (p. 112-114). To achieve methodological triangulation, several other data-gathering strategies were employed in this study: interviews, questionnaires, critical incident reports, artifacts, and researcher observation.

Fourteen staff members were interviewed in the fall of 2009 by a third-party assistant who arranged for the interviews to be transcribed and then reviewed the transcripts for any possible identifying characteristics before providing them to this researcher. Six additional staff members opted for a survey instead of an interview. This survey was likewise conducted by the third-party assistant. Additionally, critical incident report exercises were anonymously completed by staff members during the 2008-2009 school year as part of the normal activities of the school. Not all of these critical incident reports were focused on the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports; however, several of them did deal specifically with aspects of this reform initiative. Artifacts used

to inform this study included staff meeting agendas and minutes, as well as school improvement documents.

The following sections further examine the themes mentioned above through a consideration of not only PBS and CBAM data, but also the additional data provided by a staff survey, staff interviews, critical incident reports, artifacts, and researcher observation.

Staff Commitment and Collaboration Concerns

When viewed holistically, the intrinsic PBS Data (Office Disciplinary Referral data and Benchmarks of Quality data) along with the CBAM data begin to support an emerging picture of the status of second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in this high school: The PBS innovation was initially successful, but there is some evidence of mitigated success during the second year. One area that appears to be impacting the continued success of the school reform initiative is staff commitment to implementation as well as the challenges of effective staff collaboration.

The Benchmarks of Quality data indicate a declining score in the area of Faculty Commitment, from an 83% score in the spring of 2007-2008 to a 67% score in the spring of 2008-2009. This 16% decrease in score is clearly significant; however, it is only addressed briefly in the BoQ narrative which cites the following two “needs”: “Faculty could be more involved in the annual establishment and/or review of behavior support goals for the building. [and] Faculty could be given more opportunities to share ideas and provide feedback throughout the year” (BoQ, 2008-2009). The document offers no specific suggestions as to how to address these needs and mentions as a strength only that “Data regarding school-wide behavior is shared with all staff at least monthly (at staff

meetings)” (BoQ, 2008-2009). The document does not mention that according to weekly staff meeting minutes, time is provided at least twice monthly to address any concerns, ideas, or suggestions that staff might have regarding the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in this school.

The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) also points to staff collaboration as an obstacle threatening to derail the successful implementation of the Positive Behavior Supports initiative. Peak Stage Score Interpretation reveals that 22% of staff indicated collaboration concerns as the highest peak stage. Additionally, the Second Highest Stage of Concern for 39% of the staff is collaboration. This suggests that for many staff members, there is a focus on the challenges of collaborating with others in order to make the innovation a success. The nature of that focus requires further clarification.

Several questions included in the staff survey were designed to gauge the level of concern regarding full participation of the staff in the PBS initiative. The breakdown of responses seems to suggest a general compliance with the implementation demands of the innovation, yet at the same time a lingering apprehension regarding the staff’s comfort level with the PBS.

All respondents with the exception of one who indicated “Don’t Know” agreed either “Somewhat” or “Strongly” with the statement that “Generally, staff faithfully implemented PBS strategies during the first year of implementation (2007-2008 school year)” (Question 24, Staff Survey Responses, Appendix H). The same pattern held for a similar question pertaining to the second year of implementation, with all respondents registering an opinion regarding second year implementation (Question 25, Staff Survey Responses, Appendix H). Thus there seems to be a general perception among these

respondents that most staff attempted to faithfully implement the innovation with even some increased fidelity to the innovation occurring during the second year.

These survey data, then, suggest that collaboration concerns are not the result of any staff member overtly refusing to implement the program. Rather, the concerns arise from the recognition that the basic tenets of the PBS innovation might be difficult for some staff members to fully assimilate. In response to the question, “It is important for staff at this high school to accept the underlying theory and principles of PBS,” all respondents indicated that they “Strongly Agreed” (Question 29, Staff Survey Responses, Appendix H). Additionally, all respondents either “Somewhat Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that “PBS is a very different way of addressing student behavior issues as opposed to the traditional way of addressing student behavior issues” (Question 21, Staff Survey Responses, Appendix H). Thus there seems to be a general recognition among respondents that in order for Positive Behavior Supports to succeed in this high school, staff must be willing to accept the core philosophical underpinnings of an innovation that differs substantially from traditional ways of addressing student behavior issues.

There appears to be some evidence, though, that some staff members continue to struggle with this important element of the implementation. All but one respondent “Somewhat Agreed” that “Some staff members are quite uncomfortable with PBS and would prefer more traditional approaches to dealing with student behavior issues” (Question 23, Staff Survey Responses, Appendix H). The suggestion that there is not complete acceptance (or at least the perception of complete acceptance) of the innovation by all staff members is evident in other data sources as well.

One staff member noted in a critical incident report that his/her feeling about the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Supports were “both positive and negative. I say this because staff has not completely bought into the program.” Another staff member commented similarly in a response to the same critical incident exercise: “I believe that some staff only use PBS when reminded.” That some staff have “not completely bought into the program” and that others need to be “reminded” to use the innovation strategies certainly indicates a concern, but the reason for lack of acceptance or for the necessity of reminding staff to adhere to the innovation requires further examination: Do staff deviate from implementing the program with fidelity because they don’t believe in it, or because they don’t fully understand it, or because they find it difficult to break more established patterns of behavior?

Impact of Belief in Effectiveness on Staff Collaboration and Commitment

If not all staff have “bought into the program” and are not reliably implementing Positive Behavior Supports, or even if they would prefer more traditional methods of dealing with student behavior, the reasons for their apprehensions seem not to be due to a lack of belief in the effectiveness of the program. When the topic is effectiveness, there appears to be a consensus that traditional strategies are much less effective than those inherent in the Positive Behavior Supports initiative. As one staff member observes, “[previous student behavior control practices] were not viewed as effective . . . tools were not in place. There were more punitive interventions [and] many referrals.” Another staff member noted that previous strategies “were band aids, reactionary, [with] very little that was proactive which is what I like about PBS.” Other staff members commented that, “I feel like it is working. PBS has definitely made a huge positive change” and “PBS has

really changed us; it works great . . .” This positive perception of the effectiveness of PBS is supported by yet another staff member who observed that,

The teaching of PBS during the first week of the semester has enabled students to understand the advantages as well as the reasons for the expectations the school has set. By empowering students to create classroom rules this has also given students the ability to buy into the classroom expectations. These two steps have reduced student write-ups.

While another staff member noted that,

I have noticed numerous students with bad attitudes and behavior work hard to turn things around to be able to participate in rewards and celebrations. I have also noticed the pride when their names are displayed for a job well done and how upset they become when they feel overlooked.

So this concern surrounding staff commitment and the subsequent challenges of effective collaboration does not appear to arise from any widespread disbelief in the effectiveness of Positive Behavior Supports.

Impact of Understanding on Staff Collaboration and Commitment

Another explanation for staff commitment and collaboration concerns might be a lack of understanding surrounding the initiative, or at least the perception of some lack of understanding among certain staff members. This, however, does not appear to be the case. The data suggest that although there is certainly room for improvement, implementation strategies have ultimately provided most staff with a fundamental understanding of the strategies and tools offered by the Positive Behavior Supports initiative. Indeed, many staff members indicate a positive experience in terms of

effectively learning about PBS and understanding how to use the PBS strategies in the school environment. For example, one staff member describes the experience of learning about PBS with his or her peers as “very successful; everyone bought-in, whether they followed through or not.” Several staff members even describe acquiring the understanding of PBS as exciting and stimulating: “It was really good in the first year. Loved those Professional Development days when we were all together. We really made great progress,” and “I remember at the end of the school year and training in the summer – some staff were dragging their feet, but even they decided it sounded interesting with little or no resistance.” Another staff member remarked that teaching the PBS innovation to staff went “pretty well. I think the new staff gets it. Seasoned staff is a great resource.”

One of the challenges of second-year implementation was to make sure new employees gained an understanding of the innovation, and the data suggest that the experiences of new staff members were mixed. As one new staff member observed, “[PBS has been communicated to me] pretty well. PBS is more clear to me than a lot of the other things here.” Another staff member noted that “I think it’s been communicated successfully. Administration makes sure that training and help is available.” However, a new teacher mentor points to a flaw in the PBS implementation strategy:

Four new staff seem to do a very good job. I’m a mentor to one of the new teachers and I don’t think I’ve done such a good job of mentoring. It’s more like on-the-job training. I think there should be some special training for them.

Another veteran staff member reiterated the need for immediate, structured training for new staff members: “I think they need full training in order to fully comprehend [PBS]. Get more people trained. I was fortunate and was here at the beginning.” Yet another

staff member suggested that there “needs to be a new employee orientation, a video, something . . .”

Clearly, then, the data suggest a need to bolster training and instruction pertaining to Positive Behavior Supports, particularly for new staff members. Yet, despite this implementation shortcoming, it appears that veteran and novice staff members do find ways to gain understanding about the innovation. Certainly, there is nothing in the data to suggest that a lack of understanding mitigates staff commitment or undermines the process of staff collaboration surrounding the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports.

Impact of Established Patterns of Behavior on Staff Collaboration and Commitment

Another possible explanation for the high level of concern surrounding staff commitment to the innovation and to the collaborative work necessary to make the innovation a success in this high school might be the difficulty experienced by some staff members in breaking from established patterns of behavior. Indeed there is considerable support for this explanation. Many staff members seem to recognize this obstacle, yet there is some variation in terms of how seriously they perceive it as a threat to successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in this high school.

Several staff members appear to believe that regression to previous behaviors is merely a temporary problem and will disappear over time. As one staff member observes, “With any new implementation, some people slip back. PBS will become second nature as we continue.” Another staff member reiterates this observation: “It’s very hard not to fall back to old practices.” Still others attribute recidivism to personal and environmental stresses: “I think everyone wants to be on board; they want to be able to implement it

well. But because we are still learning there are some who go back to comfortable behaviors especially when under stress.” Or, as stated by another staff member: “All of staff gets it. Some have bad days, it gets personalized and they forget and pursue personal agendas.” These accountings of commitment slippage are relatively optimistic and seem to suggest that the staff who are not fully committed are merely exhibiting temporary setbacks, and are not a particular threat to successful Positive Behavior Supports implementation.

Yet some staff members perceive the issue as being a bit more threatening, not only to a successful implementation of this particular school reform innovation, but also to the school environment. Differentiating between staff who embrace the innovation and staff who have little interest in the innovation, one staff member commented that “The people who buy in are the ones that don’t have one foot out the door, either by looking for a new job or waiting for retirement. [They are] not interested in being here for the long haul and [not] interested in teaching the kids.” Another staff member also seems critical of his or her peers and attributes some staff’s mitigated involvement and success with the innovation to their personalities: “If you can’t be on time yourself, why expect your students to be. Model what you teach. Don’t swear, don’t use your cell phone. It’s a simple concept.” A different staff member attributes a lack of commitment to:

Classroom management style. I feel a strong correlation between how many years a teacher has been in the classroom and how their style is more regimented and traditional. [It is] harder for them to make the transition than a younger, less experienced teacher. Younger teachers seem to buy in more quickly.

This researcher has indeed observed faculty members expressing, in perhaps a more subdued manner, similar frustrations related to their peers. On several occasions when Positive Behavior Supports planning required staff working in teams to solve a problem or to prepare sharable lesson plans, he noted the premeditated and intentional assignment of certain staff members to certain groups by team leaders. The rationale expressed by these staff leaders was that they wanted to mitigate any negativity and subversion to the groups' goals by pairing non-committed staff members with enthusiastic innovation supporters. It has been this researcher's observation that staff members who have not fully committed to Positive Behavior Supports and who threaten effective collaboration are few, and indeed many of them have actually made some strides toward limited acceptance of the innovation. Still, the existence of these non-committed staff members clearly remains a significant concern to the staff as a whole.

Staff Commitment and Collaboration Through the Lens of Organizational Culture and Organizational Socialization

It is helpful to look at the problem of staff commitment, and the consequent difficulties this lack of commitment creates for successful collaboration, through the lens of organizational culture and the theory of organizational socialization. Schein (2004) defines the culture of a group:

as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 17)

Within the context of secondary education, classroom management as it focuses on student behavior can be seen as a key “assumption,” which Schein (2004) defines as a “nonnegotiable value” (p. 16). This value gets “negotiated” only when there is sufficient disconfirming data (indicating the failure of an accepted assumption) that results in anxiety which occurs in an environment of psychological safety (Schein, 2004, p. 320). As the result of the adoption of Positive Behavior Supports in this high school, the assumption of how to deal with student behavior issues has been essentially renegotiated, thus changing the pattern of assumptions that has been learned and accepted by the group, consequently threatening the stability of the group. The pre-PBS record of student discipline in this high school certainly qualifies as disconfirming data, and those concerned about these data were no doubt anxious. That PBS seems to have been accepted by most staff members in this high school suggests that an environment offering some degree of psychological safety did indeed exist. How, then, does Schein’s theory account for the outliers who remain less than collaborative and committed?

Schein (2004) points out that in order for a culture to effectively change, the group members must not only learn something new (Positive Behavior Supports), but also they must “*unlearn* something as well” (traditional methods for controlling student behavior; p. 320). He further points out that most of the difficulties that arise from change have to do with the *unlearning*, because what we have learned has become embedded in various routines and may have become part of our personal and group identity. The key to understanding resistance to change is to recognize that some behavior that has become dysfunctional for us may nevertheless be difficult

to give up because this might make us lose group membership or may violate some aspect of our identity. (p. 321)

Based on numerous comments made by staff members, Schein's ideas regarding the difficulty of "unlearning" seem to be of some value in understanding the concerns regarding commitment and collaboration. The previously mentioned staff member observation is an ideal example of how the challenges of "unlearning" have surfaced during the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports: "I think everyone wants to be on board; they want to be able to implement it well. But because we are still learning there are some who go back to comfortable behaviors especially when under stress."

So, when examined through the lens of organizational culture, the problem of commitment and collaboration becomes an issue not so much of reluctance to accept new reform initiatives, but rather an issue of the individual's inability to surrender (or "unlearn") more deeply ingrained strategies.

The Theory of Organizational Socialization also sheds light on the concern of staff commitment and collaboration and may lead to a better understanding of the frustration that leads some staff members to resist commitment to the program and effective engagement in meaningful collaboration surrounding implementation challenges. Schein (2004) notes that "once a group has a culture, it will pass elements of this culture on to new generations of group members" (p. 18). Van Maanen & Schein (1979) identify these elements as:

Long-standing rules of thumb, a somewhat special language, and ideology that helps edit a member's everyday experience, shared standards of relevance as to the prejudices, models for social etiquette and demeanor, certain customs and

rituals suggestive of how members are to relate to colleagues, subordinates, superiors. . . (p. 210)

It is apparent that not only has the culture of this high school been significantly changed through the adoption of Positive Behavior Supports, but also the entire process of socialization has also been modified as it relates to appropriate “etiquette” for dealing with student behaviors. The emphasis on implementing and sustaining the PBS initiative has been focused (at least during the second year) on new staff. This focus, although certainly important, might have come at the expense of veteran staff members whose re-socialization into the modified culture poses an even greater challenge. Staff comments such as, “Younger teachers seemed to buy-in more quickly” support the idea that mentoring and training directed toward new staff members, although certainly not perfect, was at least effective in terms of socializing them into the high school environment. However, this focus may have actually intensified the alienation of staff members who are characterized in this staff comment regarding the uneven acceptance of PBS among the faculty: “[Their reluctance is the result of their] attitudes and values. Sometimes they just can’t accept [PBS] because of what has been ingrained in them.”

Implementation Concerns

The Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) tool identifies and evaluates various implementation strategies such as the School wide Team, Data Entry and Analysis Procedures, and the Lesson Plans for Teaching Expectations/Rules Team. These elements are specific modifications to the school organizational structure that have been necessitated by the adoption of the Positive Behavior Supports initiative. The BoQ data show general improvement in some of these areas between the 2007-2008 and the 2008-

2009 school year. However, there also are explicit needs identified in this report that when juxtaposed with a moderate concern level indicated in the SoCQ data suggest the need for implementers' attention to this area.

The BoQ indicate that scores for the School wide PBS Team rose 29% in the second year of implementation (from 71% to 100%), citing strengths such as "The team has administrative support," "The team has a protected meeting schedule that meets twice monthly," "The team has a clear mission/purpose," and "The team has broad representation" (BoQ, 2008-2009). Furthermore, the Data Entry and Analysis Plan score rose 11% between the spring of 2008 and the spring of 2009 (from 78% to 89%). The strengths cited in the document include "There is a system to collect and analyze ODR data (SWIS)," "Data are entered weekly," "Data are shared with the faculty 1-2 times monthly (at staff meetings)," and "Data are analyzed at least monthly by team/staff" (BoQ, 2008-2009). Additionally, a need is indicated that is described as "Additional data (student/staff attendance, grades, surveys, etc.) are collected for use. This data needs to be shared with the team/staff" (BoQ, 2008-2009).

Also, Lesson Plans for Teaching Expectation/Rules saw a significant score increase, rising 23%, from 77% in the 2007-2008 school year to 100% in the 2008-2009 school year. Among the strengths cited were "100% of surveyed staff reported they taught the expectations this year. Methods used included modeling, role-playing, describing with examples and non-examples, practice in locations, reinforcement in the moment, quizzes, games and quick reviews" (BoQ, 2008-2009). Despite the high score in this area, several significant needs were also cited, including "Lesson plans need to be frequently taught using at least 3 different strategies within the same classroom" and

“Faculty AND students need to be involved in the development and delivery of lesson plans” (BoQ, 2008-2009). Also, the BoQ data note that only 38% of the students interviewed knew all four of the basic expectations that form the foundation for the PBS program in this school (Be Here, Be On Time, Be Positive, Be Productive). Furthermore, the 2008-2009 BoQ Report noted that six students interviewed did not know any of these expectations.

The BoQ data indicated a decline, however, in the score for several implementation areas. The Development of Expectations and Rules declined by 9% in the 2008-2009 school year, with the BoQ report suggesting several areas that need improvement, including “Continue to gain staff feedback/involvement in the review of rules and expectations,” “Review and ensure that school rules remain linked to the expectations and continue to be posted through the building,” and “Continue to emphasize that rules and expectations apply to both students and staff” (BoQ, 2008-2009). The Reward and Recognition Program score saw the most dramatic decline, falling 29% in the 2008-2009 school year. Important needs cited for this area are all related to staff participation in the program. Specifically, the report notes that the reward and recognition program should be reviewed with staff and that staff should be recognized for their active participation in rewards and recognition programs. The final implementation area indicating a declining score on the Benchmarks of Quality report was the implementation plan itself, which fell by 8% during the 2008-2009 school year. The report offers numerous suggestions for improvement including the need for scheduled training sessions for new staff and students as well as booster training sessions for previously trained staff. Additionally, the report suggests that team members should

randomly survey students and staff to determine the degree of expectation comprehension (BoQ, 2008-2009).

The CBAM's SoCQ framework includes Management (stage 3), a developmental stage reflecting concern related to the organizational structures that promote the successful implementation of the innovation: managing, scheduling, and organizing (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 8). Generally, the SoCQ data do not suggest a dominant Management concern. However, it is worth noting that within the context of the Individual Profile Interpretation data, Stage 3 does indeed begin to emerge as a concern, and that when juxtaposed with the specific "Needs" identified in the BoQ report, attention to this area is warranted.

The staff survey data are clear in that the respondents all feel that appropriate changes have been made in the school's organizational structures that serve to maximize the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports. All respondents "strongly" agreed that organizational changes have been made that have allowed PBS to be more successful. Additionally, all but one of the respondents "strongly" agreed that the organizational structure of the high school makes it easy to implement the strategies of PBS. The only respondent who did not strongly agree with this statement agreed "somewhat." Interestingly, however, when asked whether organizational features of the high school made it very difficult to implement PBS, only 50% of respondents indicated that they did not feel that this was a problem whereas the other respondents either agreed "somewhat" or indicated that they didn't know. These data seem to suggest that the overall structure of the school creates a supportive environment for the PBS initiative;

however, there are still features of the organization that might inhibit successful implementation.

Other data reinforce the perception that there are some organizational elements of the high school that support the implementation of PBS. One staff member cited the importance of administrative clarity in terms of supporting the initiative:

I think it's more of an administrative shift. In previous years and previous administrations, it wasn't clear who was in charge. Now that [X] is designated as the High School Supervisor, and [Y] is the Building Administrator, they work together to support us. All counselors are trained as well.

This observation was echoed by another staff member who also noted that the significance of the administrative structure in terms of lending support for the initiative: "The nice thing is that we have administrative support. Ninety percent of the staff is doing it with consistency." Another staff member attributes committee structure as the organization change that has most solidly functioned to make PBS successful:

I would say that we've streamlined some of our groups and set up action committees and have found the effective way for sharing and coordinating ideas.

The Esteem Team is an effective way of communicating with staff and being better organized.

Several staff members attribute the size of the school and the flexibility within the programming as key organizational support structures that make implementation of PBS relatively easy. One staff member noted that implementation is "easier because of our smaller environment. Expectations should be the same from room to room, and communication is high." Another staff member reiterates the value of having a smaller

school when it comes to developing new programs: “I think the size makes it easier. It’s manageable, especially when learning something new.” Yet another staff member cites the importance of flexibility that characterizes this high school:

Flexibility makes it easy. We have the leeway to take a day to teach and re-teach PBS and still address our curriculum. Behavior first, then curriculum. This is a much smaller school, and most of the teachers know the students and can address behaviors even outside of their classrooms.

However, even though an important feature of the high school organization is instructional flexibility, there is some evidence that the rigorous schedule for teachers, who teach four out of four class blocks without a planning period, is anything but flexible and works against successful implementation of the initiative. This frustration is expressed by a staff member:

[The difficulties in executing the strategies of PBS] are the time frames and the ability to share information. There is professional development that comes along with [PBS], but there’s not a lot of flexibility to further reinforce, brainstorm or communicate with each other.

This researcher has observed numerous high school staff members voice similar frustrations regarding the lack of time inherent in the organizational structures of the school year as well as in the school day. Indeed, one of the organizational challenges from an administrative perspective has been how to find the time to collectively evaluate data and discuss concerns about the innovation. During the first year of implementation, staff meeting agendas and minutes reflect a clear attempt to discuss PBS issues on a weekly basis. However, during the second year of implementation, there was a

recognition that the PBS discussions were consistently being subjugated to the necessity of addressing basic operational issues. During this second year of PBS implementation, an attempt was made to rectify this problem by designating bi-monthly meetings specifically for PBS implementation work. However, this plan proved unworkable in that operational issues continued to usurp the agenda, due to their time sensitivity.

Thus despite several positive elements inherent in the organizational structure of the school, there are clearly some elements that present a threat to continued successful implementation of the PBS initiative. The BoQ alluded to a “need” regarding the relatively low percentage of students who were able to identify the core expectations of the school. The transient student population, although not strictly an organizational feature of the school, is a functional feature of the organization nonetheless, and a feature that also causes concern for staff. One staff member cited sporadic student attendance patterns as the feature of this high school that most significantly complicates the successful execution of PBS strategies:

[The greatest] difficulty? Getting kids here each day. I have some homeless students and getting them to school can be difficult so it’s hard to address each issue/concern with success. For me it personally has been a challenging element. There are days when I go home and think only of the bad things. But, the core model [of PBS] gives me some hope.

Other staff members voice the same concerns: “[We have a] broad spectrum of students. Some are really bright and others struggle with attendance. It can be difficult getting the message out due to our ever-changing transient students,” and “The most difficult

[challenge] is student turnover. Either the term ends or the student leaves. Huge struggle for me.”

In terms of the organizational structure supporting the Positive Behavior Supports initiative, there appear to be several elements working to promote the success of the program (administrative structure/support, committee structure, instructional flexibility, and the relatively small size of the school), whereas there are also some significant challenges within the school’s organizational structure that potentially threaten the success of the initiative (time limitations that restrict communication and collective problem solving, and the transience and sporadic attendance of many students).

The Implementation of PBS Through the Lens of the Structural Frame

Bolman and Deal (2003) assert that “structures must be designed to fit an organization’s circumstances . . . [and that] problems and performance gaps arise from structural deficiencies and can be remedied through analysis and restructuring” (p. 45). The data collected in this study suggest that there are a number of elements in this school’s organizational structure that work to promote the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports. Specifically, the relatively small size of the school (approximately 250 students), strong administrative support for the initiative, and instructional flexibility all work to increase the likelihood of successful implementation. Some of these structural elements are the result of a certain amount of “analysis” and calculated “restructuring.” For example, establishment of supportive administrative and committee structures as well as flexible instructional schedules were deliberate attempts to alter the organizational environment so as to support the PBS initiative. In this particular school, there were also supportive organizational elements in place that were

not so much intentional as serendipitous. In particular, the relatively small size of the school has made implementation of PBS much easier than it might have been in a more populated school environment. At the same time, another element which is largely out of the control of school staff has worked against the success of the initiative: a student body that is characterized by poor attendance.

A typical school appears to resemble the professional bureaucracy model advanced by Mintzberg (1979) and described by Bolman and Deal (2003) as “responding slowly to change” (p. 77). Bolman and Deal (2003) characterize the professional bureaucracy as plagued by “chronic conflict between administrators and professionals.” Interestingly, neither of these characteristics seem to apply to the high school that is the focus of this case study: despite some struggles and set-backs, the staff at this school has been able to make some significant gains in terms of instituting the reform initiative, and the data suggest that the movement toward successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports has been bolstered through collaboration between the professional staff and the administration. However, it must be noted that this relatively small school is part of a much larger organization that has its own structures in place: the school district.

The data suggest that the major implementation challenge to the success of the reform initiative is the current lack of adequate time for planning, sharing information, and working through implementation problems. This high school is required to conform to the district calendar which has seen significant erosion of planned professional development time over the last several years in addition to having to function on a daily basis without scheduled planning time. Staff has been willing to sacrifice personal time in order to move forward with the initiative: for example, the initial PBS team met in the

summer of 2007 for training, and during that fall on the weekends to devise lesson plans and implementation strategies. However, meetings outside of scheduled employment time frames have since diminished. Additionally, the necessity of addressing externally mandated requirements such as routine budget issues as well as state-mandated curriculum issues have served to further erode opportunities for planning and sharing data.

It seems clear, then, that a major threat to the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in this high school does indeed reside in the organizational structure of the larger school system. However, given the finite autonomy that this school has within the context of the school district, it is not at all clear how this obstacle can be overcome. This observation is consistent with Bolman and Deal's (2003) critique of professional bureaucracies: "The result is a paradox: individual professionals may be at the forefront of their specialty, while the institution as a whole changes at a glacial pace" (p. 77). The individual professionals in this school might indeed be limited in their success by the over-arching organizational structures that restrict their adaptations.

Self Concerns

The SoCQ data unmistakably indicate that staff at this high school are disproportionately focused on "Self" concerns regarding the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports: Peak Concern percentile scores reveal that 73% of the staff remain predominantly in these initial developmental stages (Stage 0, Stage 1, and Stage 2). The high scores in Stage 0 indicate that respondents are not particularly concerned about the innovation probably due to "a number of other initiatives, tasks, and activities that are of concern to him or her. In other words, the innovation is not the only thing the respondent

is concerned about” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 33). High Stage 1 scores indicate that the respondent would like to know more about the innovation. It is important to note that high scores in this stage do not necessarily reflect the amount of knowledge that the respondent has about the innovation, but rather they indicate that the respondent needs more information about “what its use will involve” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 33). High Stage 2 scores are correlated with a high degree of concern about the personal implications of the innovation: the demands of the innovation as well as the impact of the innovation on routines, roles, and status (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 33).

Competing Initiatives and Activities

Positive Behavior Supports is a school reform initiative that provides structure to the implementation of student behavior interventions, student behavior management strategies, and student acknowledgement activities that reward and reinforce appropriate behaviors. Within the framework provided by PBS, a number of specific interventions, management strategies, and acknowledgement activities are possible and indeed necessary. This high school has provided staff with various training to help them more effectively address inappropriate student behaviors. These trainings have included No Disposable Kids (NDK), a program designed to help staff deescalate emotionally charged situations; Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), a program designed to translate crisis situations into instructional opportunities; and CHAMPS, a program which staff members describe as specific PBS strategies for the classroom. Other programs and activities in this school that command the regular attention of staff members are the varied and ongoing activities of Community Mental Health (CMH), which provides on-site mental

health and drug use screening and treatment programs; Advocacy Services for Kids (ASK), which provides support for families of troubled students; and Check-and-Connect, a program to help very high-risk students stay on track through regular scheduled adult monitoring.

This researcher has observed some staff confusion regarding how these various initiatives fit with the PBS innovation. The Positive Behavior Supports initiative is intended as an umbrella strategy which can help organize and structure any number of intervention and acknowledgement activities. Yet sometimes staff seem to indicate that some of these intervention strategies are somehow in competition with Positive Behavior Supports. For example, this researcher has heard a staff member mention that, “PBS is good, but NDK is better,” as if the two were somehow mutually exclusive. Other data also support the contention that some staff members perceive some of the skills trainings as competing with the Positive Behavior Supports initiative. For example, when describing how PBS was introduced to the staff, several staff members reflected the view that various skills trainings and PBS are interchangeable programs: “We did the whole role playing thing. CHAMPS training was introduced and some teachers were able to participate.” Another staff member describes the introduction of PBS to the faculty as being very successful, although his or her phrasing indicates an understanding that implies that certain trainings are interchangeable with Positive Behavior Supports training: “[The process of introducing PBS to the staff was] good. LSCI and CHAMPS training was very helpful. Training as a group is best.” A newer staff member’s description of his or her learning about PBS also indicates a conceptual merging of Positive Behavior Supports with specific skills training:

[The training] was very informal for me. My formal training came months after I started here. CHAMPS was my first training. I don't feel like I was formally trained until LSCI. Prior to that I asked for a lot of help along the way.

Information from staff meetings is minimal.

These observations provide support for the contention that the multiplicity of programs within the high school distract staff from a clear focus on the Positive Behavior Supports initiative and are perhaps even confusing in that they are sometimes perceived as being in competition with the reform innovation.

That the staff of this high school is distracted from a clear focus on Positive Behavior Supports by other concerns is evidenced in the minutes of staff meetings. For example, the minutes from a December meeting during the second year of PBS implementation discussed the fallout from "the Superintendent and the Curriculum Director's visit to English classes to view writing instruction. They also visited our science classrooms which made her aware of our need to bring our classrooms up to speed for chemistry." Other staff meeting minutes data point to additional district-mandated programs, such as "John Collins Writing" training, that clearly compete for the time and attention of faculty.

The most evident competing initiative, however, is the state-mandated curriculum: The Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). Several staff members have voiced concerns about the difficulty of implementing this curriculum and its impact on the school's ability to successfully embrace Positive Behavior Supports:

All [staff] accept and believe that Positive Behavior Supports is a valid school-wide initiative. The Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements [however] are a

huge struggle. Sometimes, MMC requirements trump Positive Behavior Supports with a lack of time to devote to PBS.

Yet another staff member voiced a similar frustration: “There are always grumblers, but as a whole we really accept Positive Behavior Supports, teaching and support staff alike. The main grumble is the Michigan Merit Curriculum and having time to teach what we need to teach.” Other faculty seem to echo the concern about the Michigan Merit Curriculum: “With the MMC curriculum, PBS can be cumbersome.” And “[It is] challenging. PBS came to us at the same time MMC did, and it caused much anxiety for the teaching staff. A big crunch . . .”

Additional data sources do then support the contention that a number of competing programs and distracting activities have had an impact on the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports. These data reinforce the SoCQ data indicating that 39% of the staff in this high school have not fully engaged with the PBS initiative due to a preoccupation with other tasks and expectations.

Need for Additional Information About the Innovation

Another self concern that is supported both by SoCQ data as well as by observational and interview data is the need for continued training and additional information. The BoQ data also allude to the need for ongoing dissemination of information: “The team should schedule time to present and train faculty and staff on lesson plans to teach students the expectations, rules, and the respective rationale” (BoQ, 2008-2009).

One staff member made this need very clear: “[We need] some more ongoing training for all teachers and staff at the same time to get everyone in the loop.” Another

staff member observed that there are significant shortcomings in the training protocol and describes the training process as a “huge downfall. When I started, there were no rules, just do what you think. Not until fourth term did I finally get some clue to PBS. Terms prior were rough; I struggled a lot.”

These staff observations exhibit an unmistakable need for additional information. What is perhaps most informative about this information void is the frustration among staff that it seems to have created: “[We need] more time to analyze data, communicate with one another, professional development, all the things that would allow us to talk.” No staff member seems to have directly asked for “information,” but rather there is a frequently voiced frustration with the impediments to acquiring the information needed: “We need more money to train.” and “We need time and review.”

Implications of the Innovation for the Individual Staff Member

Any new school reform initiative understandably creates apprehension among staff in terms of the impact of the innovation on their time, their status, their relationships with peers, and their level of job satisfaction. There is considerable data to support the contention that generally, the introduction of Positive Behavior Supports has positively impacted staff and improved their work environment. All respondents participating in the staff survey indicated they strongly agreed that the implementation of PBS has changed the working environment of the school. Furthermore, all respondents except one (who indicated that he or she “Didn’t Know”) strongly agreed that the implementation has made this high school a better place to work. Additionally, all respondents agreed that PBS has had a positive impact on staff morale at this school. As one staff member expressed it:

[The high school environment is] much better. I feel like everyone is on the same page, both students and staff. Previously, we had our own classroom expectations. Some of the environments were better than others and we had students that had the same teacher for the entire day because they were comfortable. With PBS, I feel they are comfortable the entire day no matter what teacher they have.

All respondents who participated in the staff survey with the exception of one (who indicated that he or she “Didn’t Know”) further indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement that PBS has had any negative impact on staff morale. Indeed, quite the opposite seems to be the case: “[This high school is a] better place to work. [We have] specific expectations, students are clear as to what is expected of them. There is learning [going on] in the classrooms and less room for behavioral issues.” Another staff member expressed the impact PBS has had on staff morale this way: “PBS has had such a positive effect on our staff. We don’t get pulled down by the negatives. We can talk to each other for help.”

The data gleaned from critical incident reports, surveys, and interviews are unambiguous concerning the positive impact that the Positive Behavior Supports initiative has had on the work environment and staff morale in this school. Much of this environmental improvement seems to be the result of the innovation having established shared goals and strategies with which all staff feel comfortable. As one staff member noted, the innovation has improved morale through setting “positive expectations for [staff]. They know how to ask for help. It’s creating a better work environment and better staff relations. There is not as much bickering.”

Clearly, then, any individual concerns about the PBS initiative are not centered around how it has impacted the work environment. Another possible area of individual concern, however, might be related to how the innovation intersects with personal attitudes and beliefs. All respondents who participated in the staff survey indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement that “the values embedded in PBS are consistent with my own values.” Additionally, all staff members who were interviewed reaffirmed the consistency between their personal values and the values inherent in the innovation. However, when it comes to the relationship between the values inherent in PBS and the perceived values of the larger community, one staff member noted a disparity: “No, [these values are not shared] because the school board and the district see school as academic education only. They don’t see the child as a whole person. But social needs are important.” This statement seems to be an anomaly, though, and for the most part, staff acknowledge the consistency between PBS values and community values, with one staff member observing that, “We all want productive and positive members of society.”

It appears that there are few self concerns regarding the consistency between the values inherent in the innovation and the personal values of staff and the larger community. Staff also seem comfortable with the effect the innovation is having on students and their relationships with students. Staff survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the use of Positive Behavior Supports has improved their relationships with students. When the issue of staff-student relationships was phrased negatively, all respondents except one (who indicated that he or she “Didn’t Know”) strongly disagreed with the statement that “the use of PBS in this school has eroded my relationship with students.”

The improved relationship between staff and students is also indicated in many observations made by faculty. One teacher notes that his or her relationship with students has changed:

[PBS has changed my relationship with] those students who have trouble being here and on time. I still give them the time to find out what is going on in their lives rather than [focusing on] their grades. I want them to believe me that I care about them and I truly believe they do. I love teaching PBS because I believe in it.

It gives me the opportunity to show them I care. It helps me stay fair.

Other staff member observations reinforce the idea that their relationships with students have improved. As one staff member put it, “I find myself with more positive connections, especially with kids I never thought I would connect with.” Or, as stated by another teacher, “I believe it has made it better for me. I can focus on a problem student and try to make a change; it’s rewarding.”

In addition to the positive impact on the school environment, on staff morale, and on staff relationships with students, several staff members have indicated the transformative impact that the innovation has had on their thinking. As one teacher noted on a critical incident report: “This shaped my view as far as the foundational premise of PBS: students misbehave for a reason, and that reason, if identified, can be addressed to prevent misbehavior in the future.” Or, as expressed by another teacher, “We used to assume the students knew the rules and our responses were aimed at punishment. Now we can use the [PBS] signs as reminders to the students and correct behaviors without punishment.”

Another area that might be of concern to staff and would make them apprehensive about adopting the innovation has to do with their perceived status within the larger context of the district. The data collected for this case study suggest that the perception among staff members of this high school is that their peers in other buildings in the district have historically had a negative view of this high school. Staff survey respondents all indicated that they “Somewhat” or “Strongly” agreed with the statement that “The staff at the other two district high schools have a negative view of this high school.” A common sentiment is expressed by this high school staff member:

They don't feel like we do much of anything here. I have been asked at district departmental meetings, “Do your kids know how to read?” They have no idea what we do here. They think we are full-time babysitters; I don't like going to district meetings.

Another staff member echoes a similar perception:

[They say] “Oh, God bless you for working there. I don't think I could take it over there. Personally I feel the same way about them. There is a general misconception about our staff and our students. I feel it's a good fit for me.

The data indicate that this perception might indeed be changing, and some of that change is the result of the school's adoption of PBS. All but one of the staff survey respondents (who indicated that he or she “Didn't Know”) indicated that they somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement that “the use of PBS has improved the perception of this high school among the staff of the other two district high schools.” Still, staff remain tentative about any changing perceptions about this high school program as indicated by one staff member: “I think the perception is improving only marginally. We have invited them to

participate in our Challenge Day and Open House and other activities. Their opinions may have changed.” Other staff members seem more optimistic about changing perceptions such as this staff member who noted that “At a training session, a comment was made about our PBS t-shirts. I received many great comments.”

Self Concerns Through the Lens of the Human Resource Frame

Bolman and Deal’s (2003) human resource frame focuses attention on the relationship between the organization and the individual. They stress that it is essential for an organization to adequately address the needs of its employees (p. 115). This emphasis on the organization’s impact on the individual reflects many of the Stage 2 personal concerns in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model’s Stages of Concern. The data collected for this study generally suggest that the Positive Behavior Supports initiative has successfully fulfilled some important employee needs: a more supportive work environment and improved staff morale. As stated by one staff member, “[PBS has] made it a better place to work. I have been here ten years. Since instituting PBS we have fewer problems and it gives us better tools to deal with our student population.”

Another important employee need, according to the Human Resource Frame, is what Bolman and Deal (2003) call employee “empowerment” (p. 143). They state that this empowerment requires that employees are given adequate information and support. Based on the data collected in this case study, there is some evidence that lack of empowerment might be mitigating the success of the reform initiative. The need for ongoing training and additional information about PBS has been clearly expressed by staff, and the relatively high Stage 1 Peak Score on the Stages of Concern Questionnaire reinforces this need for additional information about the PBS initiative.

Self Concerns Through the Lens of the Political Frame

A key element of the Political Frame involves what Bolman and Deal (2003) call “Authorities and Partisans.” Authorities are essentially the agents for social control, and the partisans are the recipients of that control (p. 193). In the public school setting, the faculty can be viewed as the “authorities,” while students perform the role of “recipients.” One potential concern regarding the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports is the departure from these rigidly-defined roles and a deviation from the traditional power structure that usually characterize the teacher-student relationship. Clearly, the staff member still possesses authority, however it is not used in the dictatorial way that often defines that relationship.

The data collected in this case study suggest that the modification of this traditional relationship has not been an impediment to the adoption and acceptance of the reform initiative by staff. Generally, the staff feel that their relationships with students have improved as the result of having adopted Positive Behavior Supports, although it has required a change in the way staff deal with student behavior issues. As one staff member observed, “I think I’m quicker to reinforce instead of discipline.”

Self Concerns Through the Lens of the Symbolic Frame

A key assumption of the Symbolic Frame is that “people create symbols to resolve confusion, increase predictability, find direction, and anchor faith” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 242). Collectively, these symbols create culture, something described by Bolman and Deal (2003) as “the glue that holds an organization together and unites people around shared values and beliefs” (p. 243). Positive Behavior Supports is a strategy that deviates from traditional ideas about how schools should deal with

unproductive student behaviors, and the innovation's acceptance might be mitigated if it is seen as somehow threatening to accepted (and expected) characteristics or qualities that identify the organization.

According to the data collected, the staff of this high school does not believe that the adoption of PBS has negatively altered the symbolic interpretation of the school. Indeed, there is some evidence that many staff members believe that adoption of the reform initiative has actually improved the perception of the alternative high school among others in the school district. One staff member observed that the other two district high schools are "starting to see what is happening here with PBS. They like what they are seeing and want to implement it into their own programs." Another staff member reinforces this observation: "I have noticed those schools have a more positive attitude about us and are finally realizing the job that we do here is helping them as well."

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented data resulting from surveys, interviews, artifacts, and personal observation. From the triangulation of this data, several patterns and themes emerged. It is clear that the staff at this high school believe that the reform initiative (PBS) is effective, although concerns about implementation persist and serve to stifle the creative development and evolution of the innovation. These concerns are centered around how staff can integrate the requirements of PBS with all the other expectations and demands on time that exist in the school environment. There are also some concerns about the ability of the school's organizational structure to effectively support the PBS reform. Another concern indicated by the data is focused on the peer collaboration necessary to make the innovation successful. Staff furthermore indicated the need for

more training and information about PBS. The data also suggest that staff's occasional failure to adhere to PBS strategies is the result of the inability to reject previously learned behaviors, particularly during periods of personal stress.

Chapter Five will discuss the implications of these findings as well as the recommendations for action they suggest. The chapter will also include recommendations for further study and the researcher's reflection on the research process.

Chapter 5: Findings and Recommendations

What we think, or what we know, or what we believe, is in the end, of little consequence. The only thing of consequence is what we do.

- John Ruskin

Schools have been grappling with the challenges of reform implementation for decades. DuFour (2004) notes that attempts at school reform have been characterized by cycles of initial enthusiasm, eventual frustration, and ultimate desertion of the reform initiative:

In this all-too-familiar cycle, initial enthusiasm gives way to confusion about the fundamental concept driving the initiative, followed by inevitable implementation problems, the conclusion that the reform has failed to bring about the desired results, abandonment of the reform, and the launch of a new search for the next promising initiative. Another reform movement has come and gone, reinforcing the conventional education wisdom that promises, “This too shall pass.” (p. 6)

Fullan (1993) describes the process from a historical perspective as “fighting an uphill battle” resulting in disillusionment: “We have never really recovered from the profound disappointment experienced when our expectations turned out to be so far removed from the realities of implementation” (p. 1). Yet, despite the rather dismal track record of school reform implementation, the need for change remains.

A particular concern for many schools is the appropriate management and control of student behaviors. Indeed, “effective school-wide management of disruptive behaviors and safety for students and adults continues to be a major national concern” (Oswald,

Safran, & Johanson, 2005, p. 265). In response to this need for more safe and effective schools, many school leaders have tuned to the Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) reform initiative. However, in order for this reform innovation to succeed, careful attention must be given not only to the initial first-year adoption of the reform, but also to the emerging implementation challenges occurring during the second and subsequent years of implementation.

This chapter presents a summary of the findings revealed by data collected during the study of one alternative high school in southwestern Michigan that was engaged in second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports. An interpretation of the findings will also be discussed as will the inherent implications for social change and the recommended actions to bring about this change. Finally, recommendations for future research will be presented.

Overview

This inquiry was a single-case study of one alternative high school in southwestern Michigan that had completed the second year of implementing Positive Behavior Supports. The study attempted to answer the research question: What were the significant personal, social, and environmental elements influencing effective second-year implementation of this school reform initiative?

Data in this qualitative single-case study were derived from surveys, interviews, and artifacts. These data were examined through multiple theoretical frameworks including the Concern-Based Adoption Model's Stages of Concern (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006) and Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural frame, human resource frame, political frame, and symbolic frame as well as Schein's (2004) theories on

organizational culture and Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) Theory of Organizational Socialization.

This study discovered that staff in this high school generally had confidence in the effectiveness of the reform initiative, Positive Behavior Supports. However, even after the second year of implementation, most staff remained at relatively low levels of implementation sophistication, harboring nagging concerns about how they can effectively integrate the innovation's demands into the myriad expectations that occupy their daily schedules, and how the innovation can successfully be managed within the school's organizational structure. Additionally, the staff indicated a need for more training and information about the reform initiative. There was also a clear recognition that staff collaboration was necessary for the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports and that this collaboration presented a serious challenge. Although not all staff adhered to the requirements of the initiative at all times, these failures appeared to be not so much willful reluctance to accept the tenets of the reform as they were the tendency to revert to status-quo behaviors when confused or under stress. The following sections of this chapter will discuss these observations in greater detail.

Interpretation of the Findings

This single case study looked at the second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in one alternative high school in southwest Michigan. This high school has a number of unique characteristics that need to be considered prior to any general extrapolation of the findings to other high schools. First of all, the high school that is the focus of this study is an alternative high school that has a student population that is disproportionately inclined toward unproductive social and academic behaviors.

By necessity, staff is forced to focus on these behaviors to an extent that might exceed the norm in other high schools. Consequently, this particular reform initiative might have had greater appeal to this staff than many other reform initiatives, and staff members therefore might have been willing to work harder at implementation than is typical for a high school staff confronting a reform innovation.

Another unique characteristic of this high school is that teachers are required to teach four consecutive ninety-minute blocks during the school day, with only a twenty-five minute lunch break. They have no individual planning time scheduled during the day, nor any structured time for the collaborative discussion of concerns, other than an after-hours staff meeting held weekly. It is therefore possible that the emphasis on collaboration concerns are amplified in this particular environment due to the excessively demanding schedule. That the staff at this high school by necessity deal with an atypically high level of unproductive student behaviors, and that they do so within a system that does not allow for much mental escape during the course of the school day, undoubtedly contributes to a level of stress that works against creative solutions to problems and encourages status-quo behaviors.

All school buildings have their own unique culture, and even though this high school no doubt has a distinctive culture of its own, it shares many more similarities than it does differences with other high schools in Michigan. It therefore seems plausible that some of the findings of this study can reasonably be used to better understand reform initiative implementation regardless of the particular initiative or the particular school.

Confidence in the Effectiveness of the Innovation

Schein (2004) suggests that organizations develop their own distinct cultures, and that as these organizational cultures develop they evolve certain ways of thinking and dealing with problems that become subtly ingrained in the identity of the group (p. 16). When the researcher initiated this study, he fully expected to find that the primary challenge to effective implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in this school would be the staff's lack of confidence in and comfort with the innovation. The stern schoolmaster who is as much an unflinching disciplinarian as she is a disseminator of knowledge is an archetype deeply fixed in the collective consciousness of American society in general and of American teachers in particular. The ability to regularly distribute punishment is, in the minds of many educators, associated with effective classroom management and linked to the very definition of an effectual educator. PBS is based on strategies for controlling student behavior that run counter to the historically common strategies focused on punishment: "detention, suspension, or expulsion" (Crone & Horner, 2003, p. 4). Therefore, this researcher reasoned, an acceptance of Positive Behavior Supports as a more efficient way of dealing with student behavior might very well be viewed by staff as a weakness or deficiency and as a threat to the cultural identity of the group. This, however, proved not to be the case.

There was no doubt that this school had a history of fervently embracing punishment-based disciplinary strategies and that there was an understanding among school staff that the consistent application of these strategies characterized the effective educator. As one staff member noted, "They [pre PBS strategies] were reactionary . . . [but] they were generally accepted by staff." Nevertheless, staff readily accepted the

innovation and became comfortable with it: “Most of us are comfortable and secure with PBS, and have not encountered any negatives,” observed one staff member. An obvious reason for staff acceptance of the innovation was its effectiveness: “Like any new initiative, staff wondered how it was going to affect them. I think they quickly came aboard [when they understood] how it could make their life easier,” observed another staff member. Yet another voiced this comment: “I definitely think [staff] have accepted PBS. They go with what works.”

The data collected in this study suggest that school culture is not necessarily an insurmountable impediment to implementing the PBS change initiative. Schein (2004) asserts that “transformative change” requires cultural change and that the first step toward achieving this cultural change is the emergence of “disconfirming data” (p. 320). It appears that there were indeed sufficient “disconfirming” data suggesting the inadequacy of pre-PBS tactics. As one staff member noted, prior to the implementation of PBS, student behavior control strategies were not particularly successful: “No, they were not viewed as effective. Tools were not in place. There were more punitive interventions and many more referrals.” Another staff member also acknowledged the inadequacy of pre-PBS procedures: “[It was] hit or miss. Again, a lot more knee-jerk reaction [by both] teachers and administrators. Sometimes people thought it was appropriate; sometimes you were on your own.”

Schein (2004) also discusses the necessity of a psychologically safe environment if meaningful change is to occur (p. 320). What he describes is an environment where educators feel supported by administrators as well as peers. Thus another reason that staff at this high school have expressed confidence in and acceptance of the innovation is that

they apparently felt that they were adequately supported: “The nice thing is that we have administrative support. Ninety percent of the staff is doing it with consistency,” observed one staff member. Another alluded to the peer support that is a characteristic of the school: “I think the small, close-knit community helped to implement PBS because we know what everyone is doing and [have] the ability to come together and communicate.”

The data collected for this study clearly indicate that when the reform initiative is perceived as effective, the possibility of altering the identity of the group is not an obstacle sufficient to obstruct acceptance of the initiative. The culture of this organization did indeed change as the result of the recognition of disconfirming data and the existence of an environment of psychological safety. This cultural change is acknowledged by staff and clearly connected to the adoption of the innovation: “[The school] is a much better place to be. Less negativity, more togetherness, and [it has] changed our outlook.” Or, as expressed by another staff member: “[PBS has] definitely created a much more ‘same page’ aspect for staff and students. [The] incentive-based reward system is going well, instead of focusing on the negative.”

The Challenge of Moving Beyond Basic Implementation

Although it was apparent that staff had confidence in the innovation and had accepted Positive Behavior Supports as part of the school culture, it is equally apparent that even after the second year of implementation, staff had not been able to fully exploit the potential of the innovation. The CBAM data indicate that many staff members conform to a “non-user” profile. This user profile does not mean that the individual has rejected the innovation, but rather it suggests that he or she cannot get beyond rudimentary implication activities (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006). Indeed, the data

collected indicate very little individual capacity for adapting and evolving the innovation to better address specific areas of concern.

This lack of ability to effectively adapt the initiative to emerging problems became evident to the researcher during the course of this study. Early in the second year of implementation, the Office Disciplinary Referral (ODR) data pointed to the students' use of inappropriate language and profanity as a major source of classroom disruption. A team of staff members determined to use Positive Behavior Supports strategies developed an intervention they called "Swear Charts" to address this problem. Although there was some attempt to integrate the teaching of expectations and to reward students when they conformed to these expectations (both elements of Positive Behavior Supports), the program was largely centered on punishing the undesired behavior (not a focus of Positive Behavior Supports). Even the PBS elements of this plan quickly eroded: the clarity of instruction surrounding the problem readily became focused on clarifying the tiered consequences that would occur when students used profanity in the classroom. The result of this undertaking was that ODRs for inappropriate language increased dramatically (from 18.8% to 25.7% of total ODRs), an event not consistent with the goals of the reform initiative. This situation was discussed at numerous PBS staff meetings, but staff seemed unable to move beyond the consequence component of the strategy.

It became readily apparent to the researcher that despite strong evidence that the reform initiative could be effective (dramatic reduction in overall student Office Disciplinary Referrals), and despite staff's professed belief in the value of the innovation, second-year implementation of Positive Behavior Supports had stalled. As one staff member observed: "There was strong commitment the first year. Second year, the

commitment may not have been as strong.” According to George, Hall, and Stiegelbauer (2006), such stagnation frequently results from the need for additional training or the difficulty of integrating the demands of the innovation with competing demands and expectations (p. 38-39). These findings require further discussion.

The Challenge of Additional Training

The need for a different training model is evident from the data collected in this study. The training format for Positive Behavior Supports that occurred in this school was fairly typical of school reform initiative training in general. It was an approach commonly described as “train the trainers”: initially, a core group of staff members received formal training, and this group was then saddled with the expectation of teaching and coaching other staff members. From the very beginning, this strategy proved ineffective and divisive: staff immediately began to separate themselves into two groups: those who had received the initial training and those who did not. This disparity among staff members has lingered and seems to have mitigated the potential success of the initiative. The training inequality was clearly noted by one staff member: “[We need] ongoing training for all teachers and staff at the same time, to get everyone in the loop.”

Another feature of this training model that seems to have been less than effective is that it is heavily front-loaded. During the initial implementation year, training for the core PBS team was regular, and support resources in terms of external coaching and money for materials and incentives was readily available. However, during the second year of implementation this situation was dramatically different: very little was planned in terms of formal training, and the emphasis seemed to be on helping new staff members comprehend the basics of the initiative, not on reinforcing strategies and concepts with

previously exposed staff members. This shortcoming of the implementation model was unmistakably apparent to staff who consistently noted the need for “time and review.” To further complicate the situation, the formal training that was available was not specifically Positive Behavior Supports training, but rather other kinds of supplemental training that purports to be based on concepts similar to PBS (CHAMPS training, for example). The unfortunate result of this diversion from clear PBS training was that it obscured participants’ understanding of Positive Behavior Supports as a system for managing student behavior, and staff began to confuse concepts with techniques: “PBS is good, but NDK is better.”

Following the first year of implementation, the emphasis on training centered around new staff members and those who seemed to be struggling with the initiative. On the surface, this appears to have been a logical and reasonable strategy. However, given the less than fully developed understanding of the initiative that seems to be common among many veteran staff members (even those who were core team members), focusing primarily on new and struggling staff members may have been a mistake. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) point out that culture is perpetuated through a process of socialization that involves a process of transmitting values and information. It seems important, then, to make sure that the senior members of the organization have a grasp of important cultural elements sufficient that they can effectively communicate and reinforce these concepts to those becoming socialized into the organization (new staff members). From this perspective, it actually makes more sense to emphasize the continued training of established staff members to insure that they become effective purveyors of the school culture. If veteran staff members project ambiguity and confusion regarding the initiative,

its integration into the school culture seems unlikely, and serves to undermine whatever progress might be made by newer staff members who are attempting to assimilate the culture's "appropriate and 'smart' modes of thinking, feeling, and doing" (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979, p. 210).

The Challenge of Diminishing Financial Resources to Support the Initiative

It is worth noting that one serious threat to the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports is the dramatically shrinking pool of financial resources available for staff training and for directly implementing components of the initiative. During the first year of the reform, there was substantial grant support available for PBS activities. Funding for the PBS initiative was not nearly as generous during the second year, and subsequent years face uncertain funding. An important component of the PBS reform is that students are frequently acknowledged for appropriate behaviors. Certainly praise and recognition can be employed to this end; however, it is periodically necessary to distribute rewards in other ways, such as formal recognition ceremonies which inevitably require some expenditures. One staff member's assessment of the second year of PBS implementation addresses this issue quite bluntly: "[During] the second year, not as much money. Rewards cost money and we don't have it. . . We keep trying to be creative regarding our reward system." Other staff members echo this concern, citing a need for "more money to train," and "more money for resources" as requirements for the continuing success of the initiative. The "seed money" strategy appears to be all too common in initiating reform initiatives, and Senge et al. (1999) observe that "this 'shoestring' model may be a terrible way to sustain initiatives, but it does get them

started” (p. 171). Unfortunately, the model of reform that front-loads resources in terms of both training and direct financial support appears to be quite common in education:

. . . it is the responsibility of district administration to coordinate the optimal use of funding and time . . . toward continuous learning and improvement. With the help of school staff, they must ensure that staff development, follow-up, school improvement planning, and the effective use of early release times are not left to chance, but are strategically planned to promote better results. The absence of such deliberate planning in these areas is one of the most alarming realities of education in our time. (Schmoker, 1999, p. 116)

It seems exceedingly unlikely that any reform initiative, no matter how effective it might be, can sustain itself over time without adequate financial support for professional development and for other implementation expenses. However, in the case of this reform, sustainability seems to have been overlooked as a critical component of the implementation plan.

The Challenge of Limited Time and Competing Initiatives and Activities

The staff of this high school is similar to most every other high school staff in Michigan in that it has been asked to manage ever-increasing numbers of tasks and activities, as well as to keep up with and implement complex and ever-changing state-mandated curriculum requirements. As Supovitz (2006) notes, teachers operate within a framework of “abundant constraints”:

Teachers must work with a curriculum they did not formulate, accept crowded and inflexible schedules, and have little time within the workday to prepare new lessons or reflect on past ones (Labare, 2004). Furthermore, teachers often have

added responsibilities like hallway or lunchroom monitoring, coaching, or other tasks when they are not teaching (Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusick, 1986).

Ingersoll (2003) argues that teachers have relatively little control over most of the organizational aspects of their school environments. His research demonstrates that teachers generally perceive that they have low levels of control over such areas as hiring, school policies, and resource allocation. (p. 103)

Given that this was the environment into which Positive Behavior Supports was introduced, it is easy to understand why after two years it has not evolved into particularly sophisticated forms. The demands that have been externally imposed on the staff of this high school in the last several years include a district-mandated writing program, district-mandated science curriculum sequencing, several forms of state-mandated testing, and a complex and expansive state-mandated core subject area curriculum, the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). It is this last demand, the MMC, that has tended to usurp staff's creative energy and focus, seemingly at the expense of the advanced development of PBS. "With the Michigan Merit Curriculum, Positive Behavior Supports can become cumbersome," remarked one staff member. Another staff member reinforced the challenge of this particular competing expectation: "[It is] challenging. PBS came to us at the same time MMC did, and it caused much anxiety for teaching staff." Yet another staff member identified the threat posed to the PBS initiative by the MMC quite clearly:

All [staff] accept and believe that Positive Behavior Supports is a valid school-wide initiative. The Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements [however] are a

huge struggle. Sometimes, MMC requirements trump Positive Behavior Supports with a lack of time to devote to PBS.

It is clear to this researcher that one of the most significant threats to the successful implementation of PBS in this school is the problem of ever-increasing expectations and requirements, without any commensurate reduction in the requirement inventory: demands have been made upon school staff with little if any input from the staff members themselves, and these demands are “in addition to,” not “in place of.”

The predictable result of demand accumulation without any relief from demand reduction is that “not enough time” becomes the rationale or excuse for innovation stagnation. One staff member expressed his or her single most salient frustration with implementing the PBS initiative as the “time frames and the ability to share information. The professional development that comes along with it [is good, but] there’s not a lot of flexibility to further reinforce, brainstorm, or communicate with each other.”

The need for time to learn, collaborate, and reflect when introducing a change initiative is well understood. Senge et al. (1999) acknowledge the ever-present challenge of “not enough time” available to implement a change initiative:

Every successful learning initiative requires key people to allocate hours to new types of activities: reflection, planning, collaborative work, and training. “Core teams” must take the time to design the next stages of the initiative. Work groups need a day or two every month for “skillful” discussions about business issues. Being part of a network of committed people can take up a great deal of time, not just in meetings but in conversation, e-mail, and reading. Without enough time to

spend on regular practice of conversational or systems thinking skills, profound change cannot occur, even if there is strong interest. (p. 67)

This sobering comment casts a very real and dark shadow on the future of not only this particular school reform but the entire enterprise of school reform in general. One of the first training sessions for the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports included a slide that cautioned against attempting to introduce this new initiative without first removing something else from the extensive inventory of expectations and demands. However, no instruction was included as to what could realistically be removed or even how that might be possible, given the ever-increasing expectations of the community, the district, and the state.

It is important to note that Positive Behavior Supports has enjoyed the degree of success that it has in this high school perhaps due to a bout of initial enthusiasm that prompted core team members to meet during the summer prior to the first implementation year and during weekends during that first fall. The willingness of staff to continually sacrifice their personal time to the success of the initiative is a finite resource, however, and certainly cannot be relied upon to insure the ongoing success of the reform. The second year of implementation saw further erosion of the time available to advance the PBS initiative in the reduction of scheduled days for professional development. Nonetheless, the staff continued to look for creative ways to maintain a focus on the reform. Senge et al. (1999) notes that one way to address the time problem is to directly address it: "Is there some old, limiting policy that controls the amount of time flexibility? . . . Can another policy accomplish the same goals, while simultaneously adding control over time flexibility?" (p. 73). One attempt to gain control over time

involved the restructuring of weekly staff meetings. During the first year, PBS discussion was a component of the weekly meeting; however, often little PBS work was accomplished because other agenda items related to the day-to-day functioning of the school usurped the time available. Subsequently, staff attempted to employ an every-other-week format for staff meetings, so that normal school business issues were handled one week, and the alternate week was devoted exclusively to PBS work. Unfortunately, this strategy was not successful and abandoned after the second year of PBS implementation: frequently, the PBS meeting agenda was altered at the last minute because of some pressing operational issue that demanded the staff's attention.

Another strategy that proved to be more successful was to creatively restructure the instructional calendar so that additional professional development time became available. This tactic was possible only because staff at this high school are not part of the district's bargaining unit, thus allowing a degree of flexibility in formulating the sequence of instructional days. Essentially, the school remained in session all day during the district's first high school exam schedule (a half-day for other high school students). This made it possible to dismiss school a few days earlier at the end of the year, and the recaptured time was used for staff development. This policy has been helpful, although these days at the conclusion of the school year are perhaps not the most productive for staff members who are focused on the upcoming summer break. Additionally, any creative ideas and solutions to problems that develop during this end-of-the-year period likely become less clear when resurrected following months away from the work environment.

Thus, an enormous challenge to the continued success of Positive Behavior Supports in this high school involves the management of ever-increasing task and activity demands and insufficient time to address issues related to successful integration of the initiative.

The Challenge of Collaboration

An important finding revealed by the data is that staff recognized that effective collaboration is necessary for the success of the Positive Behavior Supports initiative; however, they harbored concerns about the likelihood that this collaboration would occur. Even if the significant threats to the successful implementation of Positive Behavior Supports – threats like excessive schedule demands, lack of funding, and insufficient training opportunities – are successfully parried, there is some concern about whether or not staff can come together as a team to make the reform work. Indeed, there seems to be some element of distrust among the staff regarding what actually occurs when teachers close their classroom doors: “Different individuals aren’t following through on what we have agreed on,” remarked one staff member. Another staff member also mentioned this concern about peer cooperation: “[One difficulty is the] teacher that bucks the system and doesn’t follow along with the rest of the team.” In any organization there will certainly never be perpetual harmony among staff members; however, in order to effectively move the reform initiative forward, it will be necessary for the staff to not only put aside mistrust, but also to be able to listen to criticism and dissenting ideas. As Senge et al. (1999) note:

On the surface, getting people to collaborate in ways that generate new ideas and add real value to the enterprise seems straightforward. In reality, it is difficult to

sustain. Many collaborative efforts fall prey to divisive, competitive behaviors and falter before they produce any results. Rather than learning from their differences, groups often settle for superficial agreement, or polarize into different camps, reinforcing existing preconceptions and approaches. (p. 532-533)

The lack of confidence in their peers that a few staff members expressed suggests that “divisive behaviors” might indeed threaten effective collaboration and, subsequently, the effective implementation of the Positive Behavior Supports initiative. However, it was also apparent in the data that other staff members feel that the collective adoption of the initiative has actually worked to unite the staff. This comment is typical of others: “We all try, but I don’t believe we are all on the same page. We are getting better . . .”

Implications and Recommended Actions

Although this study looked at a specific reform initiative in one particular school, a number of important observations emerged that have implications for school leaders attempting to implement change regardless of the specific reform. Certainly the data revealed considerable information that would be helpful for school leaders attempting to implement Positive Behavior Supports, but what the researcher discovered was that challenges to successfully implementing reform have less to do with the reform than they have to do with the planning, resource allocation, and the structures of the organization. The following sections will discuss the implications of this research and suggest actions that educational leaders might want to consider when attempting to implement reform initiatives.

Understand the Reform, Focus on the Culture

The most surprising finding uncovered in this research was that the school staff generally accepted and became readily comfortable with the principles and strategies of the reform initiative. When this study was initiated, the researcher fully expected to find that Positive Behavior Supports was beginning to falter largely because staff could not accept the fundamental tenets of the initiative since they appeared to run counter to many of the ingrained values regarding student discipline that typify the school's culture. This was a mistake, and the researcher's misguided assumptions provide a useful metaphor for what might be a common error in the implementation of school reform: the myopic focus on the reform initiative itself.

The allure of the "silver bullet" reform initiative that will solve whatever problem is being addressed is ironically the most significant threat to the actual success of the initiative. Certainly on a rational level, school leaders understand that the perfect reform initiative does not exist; however, the excitement surrounding initial implementation and the fascination with the reform itself is often difficult to resist. The danger here is that the focus on the reform distracts the educational leader from focusing on the school culture and the elements of that culture that must be understood and nurtured in order for the reform to succeed. When the reform itself is allowed to be the focus of attention, the almost guaranteed failure is blamed squarely on the initiative, and staff shrug it off as yet another failed program, while they move predictably toward the next reform which will also likely fail. It is as if the gardener plants a seed on a cement slab, and then when nothing happens, assumes that the seed is somehow defective.

The implementation strategy for Positive Behavior Supports was typical of implementation strategies for other reform initiatives that the researcher has encountered in that the focus was almost exclusively on helping staff understand the logic of the reform and the technical requirements of the reform. At no point, however, were training sessions geared toward the potential obstacles inherent in the school organization's assimilated assumptions that define the culture and provide guidance to its members. The emphasis was on learning something new, not "unlearning" something that might inhibit acceptance of the reform. As Schein (2004) points out, however:

Transformative change implies that the person or group that is the target of change must unlearn something as well as learn something new. Transformative change will therefore almost always involve culture change to some degree. Most of the difficulties of such change have to do with the unlearning, because what we have learned has become embedded in various routines and may have become part of our personal and group identity. (p. 321)

The inability to "unlearn" responses and behaviors clearly presents a threat to successful implementation of the initiative, particularly when situations become tense; as one staff member noted: "I think everyone wants to be on board; they want to be able to implement it well. But because we are still learning there are some who go back to comfortable behaviors, especially when under stress."

The educational leader must understand that this process of "unlearning" is not going to happen spontaneously as the result of unbridled enthusiasm for the reform initiative: it must be intentionally guided by the leader as he or she attempts to implement planned cultural change. Schein (2004) points out that it is critical that leaders understand

that embedding beliefs, values, and assumptions within a culture is a process, and he offers a number of specific suggestions as to how this process can be systematically implemented, including such activities as “deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching” (p. 246).

Another important implication of this research is that even if cultural change occurs, there must be mechanisms in place to transmit that change to new members of the organization. There are a variety of ways that members become socialized into a culture, and it is often the veteran members of that culture who orchestrate this process. Yet it is often these veteran teachers who present a particular challenge to successful implementation because of their deeply-embedded patterns of behavior. As one staff member noted:

I feel a strong correlation between how many years a teacher has been in the classroom and how their style is more regimented and traditional. [It is] harder for them to make the transition [to PBS] than a younger, less experienced teacher.

Younger teachers seem to buy in more quickly.

Therefore, for effective organizational socialization to include any new assumptions inherent in a reform initiative, it is important that veteran members of the organization have fully understood and accepted these assumptions. However, this necessity is often overlooked when school leaders implement school reform, and as a result, there is a tendency to emphasize the training of new staff members at the expense of reinforcing assumptions inherent in the initiative among the veteran staff members who serve as the initiators of “serial socialization” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 248).

Thus school leaders hoping to implement a change initiative must understand the school culture into which the initiative is to become embedded and must also understand how they can influence that school culture to make it more receptive to the process of change. School leaders must not allow themselves to become enamored of the specific reform initiative to the point that they are distracted from attention to the organization's culture, a culture that will ultimately determine whether the initiative succeeds or fails. Additionally, it is important that the school leader recognize the importance of perpetuating the new "assumptions" inherent in the reform initiative that have become integrated into the school's culture. In particular, it is important to make sure that veteran staff members have a solid understanding of and confidence in the innovation so that they can effectively socialize new members into the culture.

Use Multiple Frames to Understand and Lead the Organizational Change

Initially the researcher was skeptical about employing multiple theoretical frameworks in an attempt to answer the research question. He believed that the answers could be revealed simply through the application of Bolman and Deal's (2003) symbolic frame with some additional supporting observations gleaned from Schein's theories on organizational culture. Had only these two frames been employed in this study, the findings would likely have been deceptively narrowed. Straining to view the problem of reform implementation through a number of theoretical frameworks flushed information to the surface that otherwise might have remained obscured. For example, the juxtaposition of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) with the human resource frame led to the observation that additional training was necessary not only for better

understanding but also for “empowerment,” an important characteristic of wholly engaged employees (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

This study helped the researcher understand the value of looking at problems through multiple frames, and the successful school leader could benefit from this lesson as well. Collins (2001) speaks of “conducting autopsies, without blame” (p. 88). An important implication of the analysis in this study is that it demonstrates that multiple theoretical frameworks give school leaders useful tools with which to actively engage in “exploratory surgery” in the attempt to make an eventual autopsy unnecessary: accessing issues with multiple frameworks allows leaders to become more proactive problem solvers. Multiple frameworks, then, can help leaders manage problems, not merely analyze them. Bolman and Deal (2003) state that “organizational life is full of events that can be interpreted in a number of ways . . . [and that] any event can be framed in several ways and serve multiple purposes” (p. 305). For example, even simple organizational events such as staff meetings can have multiple interpretations, depending on through which theoretical lens they are viewed. Through the structural frame, meetings become “formal occasions for making decisions”; through the human resource frame, they are “informal occasions for involvement, [and] sharing feelings”; through the political frame they can be seen as “competitive occasions to win points”; and through the symbolic frame, they are “sacred occasions to celebrate and transform the culture” (p. 309).

There is an old axiom that states “if the only tool you have is a hammer, then you tend to look at every problem as a nail.” Perhaps the reason that school reform initiatives have such a dismal rate of success is that school leaders do not effectively employ all the tools at their disposal, instead falling back on the one or two with which they are most

comfortable. When the reform measure begins to falter, which it undoubtedly will, the skilled leader will attempt to look at the problem through multiple perspectives and implement the varying solutions these perspectives suggest. This implication is profoundly simple yet profoundly powerful. Had the researcher not engaged in the multiple frame approach, the stumbling of the reform initiative in this school would simply have been attributed to the inability of staff to disengage from stereotypical beliefs regarding how classroom management should be conducted (symbolic frame perspective). Likewise, frustrated staff members would have undoubtedly latched on to a perspective with which they were most comfortable, and the reform initiative would begin its inevitable decline. The successful education leader, then, should make an attempt to look at the problems of school reform through multiple frameworks, and he or she should also help employees gain multiple perspective understanding.

Implementation Takes Time and Periodic Adjustments Will Be Necessary

Reform initiative implementation will, in most cases, take years. The effective school leader needs to plan accordingly. This suggestion is simplistic and obvious, but the failure to acknowledge the time necessary to successfully implement a reform appears to be a significant reason that so many reform initiatives struggle following their initial implementation year. When considering a school reform, school leaders should perhaps be less concerned about the challenges of first-year implementation and more concerned about what the third, fourth, and fifth year might look like. How, for example, will staff be trained during year three? What is the plan for funding supplies in year two? An important reason that the Positive Behavior Supports initiative discussed in this study has not fully evolved is that the implementation plan was focused on initiation, not on

sustainability: when staff became uncertain about how to evolve the innovation during the second year, support and resources had dwindled.

It seems reasonable to assume that no worthwhile school improvement initiative can be implemented without periodic adjustment and reevaluation. This needs to be acknowledged from the beginning. An honest assessment of the challenges that discouraged others who have attempted the reform would make for a worthwhile conversation. We correct our trajectory from negative feedback, not from positive feedback, and as Collins (2001) stresses, we must be willing to “confront the brutal facts” (p. 65). The effective school leader must not only understand the inevitability of setbacks but should also have a plan in place to deal with them. And perhaps more importantly, he or she should communicate to stakeholders that there will, on occasion, be confusion and frustration, but that these experiences are important and necessary for improvement. Frank and open discussion of the negatives as well as the positives surrounding a school improvement initiative should be a regular feature of staff meetings as well as less formal interactions.

Regain Control of the Organization

Schools are convenient scapegoats for many of society’s frustrations. As societal pressure to solve the litany of problems has intensified, the demands made upon teachers and school leaders have increased exponentially. In Michigan there are weeks of state-mandated testing every year, a state-mandated curriculum that has become the source of frustration and confusion for teachers, rigid requirements for the maintenance of teacher certification, and a seemingly never-ending wave of school improvement initiatives, from site-based decision-making to on-line learning programs. And these demands have arisen

against a backdrop of decreased opportunities for professional development and rapidly eroding financial support.

School leaders need to regain control of the school organization if worthwhile change is to take place. The need for reflection and collaboration accompanies every reform initiative, but the time necessary for these activities to occur exists in finite amounts and is often usurped by external environmental demands over which the school leader has little control. To be sure, there are undoubtedly inefficiencies to address that might allow leaders to leverage some additional time; however, it seems unlikely that sufficient time resources can be derived from simply working harder and delegating. School leaders need to speak up about the need for more autonomy and flexibility if meaningful reform is to take place. The data collected in this study were very clear concerning the confusion and stress created by placing excessive task and activity demands on school staff. Attempting school reform in this environment is a challenging endeavor indeed. Clearly, there are no easy solutions to this problem; however, it makes no sense for school leaders to merely continue to go through the motions of implementing school reform when the basic resources of time and money are simply non-existent. To do so just feeds the cycle of cynicism that begets the aphorism, "This too shall pass."

Recommendations for Future Research

A number of issues have emerged as the result of this study that suggest the need for additional research. The following are suggested areas for inquiry that might yield important information to assist school leaders who are attempting to implement Positive Behavior Supports in particular and school reform initiatives in general.

Investigate Positive Behavior Supports implementation in a traditional high school. This study was conducted in an alternative high school where the need to effectively control nonproductive student behaviors likely exceeds the norm. When this high school began implementing PBS, only a few traditional Michigan high schools were experimenting with the reform, and they were doing so on a limited basis by including only a portion of the school's population.

Investigate a district-wide Positive Behavior Supports implementation. The PBS reform, at least in Michigan, has been largely confined to elementary and middle school populations. It would be useful to look at how students responded to a district-wide PBS initiative, so that it was essentially the way they understood school from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Investigate strategies for integrating reform initiatives. It was apparent in this study that staff tended to view each initiative or innovation to which they had been exposed as distinct programs that were for the most part mutually exclusive. If seemingly divergent reform initiatives could be even partially integrated into a set of umbrella strategies, school staff would very likely reap substantial benefit.

Investigate the most effective cycle for training and retraining staff in a school reform initiative. It would be very beneficial to know how best to allocate resources in terms of staff training and retraining. Also, it would be worthwhile to further investigate the effectiveness of various training protocols.

Investigate creative solutions to time restraints inherent in the school calendar. If any school reform initiative is to be successful, it is absolutely necessary to provide school staff with adequate time for training, collaboration, and reflection.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings that emerged from this single case study of the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports in one alternative high school in southwestern Michigan. The chapter included an overview that discussed the research methods and the theoretical frameworks employed to help make sense of the data. The findings revealed that the staff generally had confidence in the PBS reform but that they were experiencing difficulty in evolving the innovation within the school organization. Several significant challenges facing the staff attempting to implement this reform initiative were also discussed: the challenge of additional training, the challenge of diminishing financial resources to support the initiative, the challenge of limited time and competing initiatives and activities, and the challenge of collaboration. Implications of the findings as well as recommended actions for school leaders were also discussed. The chapter concluded with recommendations for future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

SoCQ PHS2009

Instructions for Completing the**Stages of Concern Questionnaire**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what people who are using or thinking about using various programs are concerned about at various times during the program adoption. The program this questionnaire addresses is Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). The questionnaire refers to PBS as the innovation. When a question asks about the innovation, it is asking about PBS.

These items were developed from typical responses of school and college teachers who ranged from no knowledge at all about various programs to many years experience in using them. Therefore, **a good portion of the items on this questionnaire may appear to be of little relevance or irrelevant to you at this time.** For the completely irrelevant items, please circle "0" on the scale. Other items will represent those concerns you do have, in varying degrees of intensity, and should be marked higher on the scale.

For example:

- | | |
|---|--|
| This statement is very true of me at this time. | 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 <input checked="" type="radio"/> 7 |
| This statement is somewhat true of me now. | 0 1 2 3 <input checked="" type="radio"/> 4 5 6 7 |
| This statement is not at all true of me at this time. | 0 <input checked="" type="radio"/> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| This statement seems irrelevant to me. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

Please respond to the items in terms of your present concerns, or how you feel about your involvement or potential involvement with **this innovation (PBS)**. We do not hold to any one definition of this program, so please think of it in terms of **your own perceptions** of what it involves. Remember to respond to each item in terms of your **present concerns** about your involvement or potential involvement with the above named innovation.

Thank you for taking time to complete this task.

Appendix B

Invitation to Participate and Informed Consent

Dear Potential Participant,

I am inviting you to participate in a research project which examines how a school improvement initiative (Positive Behavior Supports) is being implemented in your school. This research project is part of my doctoral work at Eastern Michigan University. If you agree to be interviewed, the interview will be conducted by a third-party researcher who will ask you a series of questions related to the implementation of PBS at this school. If you agree to complete a survey, the survey will be administered by a third-party researcher. The interview should take about 20-30 minutes to complete, the SoCQ (survey) should take about 10-15 minutes to complete, and the Staff Survey should also take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The results of this project will be used in my doctoral dissertation which examines the implementation of PBS in this school setting. Through your participation I hope to understand to what degree PBS has become part of the culture of this school, as well as some of the implementation concerns you might have. You may not directly benefit from your participation. I hope to share my results with you by publishing them in my dissertation as well as sharing the resulting data in aggregate form so that you and your peers (as well as staff members in other schools who are considering implementing Positive Behavior Supports) can benefit from what we have learned. Additionally, the results of this study will be used in presentations that focus on effective implementation of school improvement initiatives. Confidentiality will be protected in all forms of dissemination of data.

I do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this study. All comments you make during the interview will be confidential, and I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally. The confidentiality of records will be maintained by keeping them secured in a locked file cabinet at KRESA. Third party researchers will conduct and transcribe the interview. The interview will be tape-recorded to enhance accuracy. Later, when the interview is transcribed, the recording will be destroyed. Transcripts will be forwarded to me without any identifying comments or characteristics. Likewise, surveys will be administered by a third-party researcher and will be forwarded to me anonymously. This informed consent form, with your real name, will not be matched with the data, and your participation will be kept confidential.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and there is no penalty if you do not participate. Regardless of whether you choose to participate or not, please let me know if you would like a summary of my findings. To receive a summary, e-mail me at cross@portageps.org. I hope to have the study completed by the end of 2009.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, you may contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Ron Williamson at rwilliams1@emich.edu or me at cross@portageps.org.

This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from July 15, 2009 to July 15, 2010. If you have any questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski-Smith (734.487.002, Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-chair of UHSRC, human.subjects@emich.edu).

Informed Consent

A Case Study of the Implementation of Positive Behavior Supports

I have read the invitation to participate, and I understand that the purpose of this study is to better understand the experiences of the staff at this high school in implementing a school improvement initiative, Positive Behavior Supports.

I understand that all information I provide will be held in strict confidence and that my responses will be kept separate from this consent form,. I also understand that my name will not be matched with the data, and that my participation will be kept confidential.

I confirm that my participation is voluntary and that no coercion of any kind has been used to obtain my cooperation. I also understand that I may withdraw my consent and end my participation at any time during the study. I further confirm that I have been informed of the procedures that will be used in the study. The procedures and requirements have been explained to me, and I understand them. I freely and voluntarily consent to be a participant. For my records, I have been provided a copy of this consent form.

I now wish to participate voluntarily in this research project.

 Signature

Date

 Name (Print of Type)

Telephone Number

 Position

E-mail Address

 Address

City

State

Zip Code

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. What organizational changes have been made at Pleasantville High School that have functioned to make PBS more successful?
2. What is there about the way Pleasantville High School works that makes it easy or difficult to execute the strategies of PBS?
3. How has the implementation of PBS changed the working environment at Pleasantville High School?
4. In what ways has the implementation of PBS made Pleasantville High School a better place to work? In what ways has the implementation of PBS made it a more challenging place to work?
5. What impact, if any, has the implementation of PBS had on staff morale?
6. What values do you feel have been communicated to students through the implementation of PBS at Pleasantville High School?
7. What values do you feel have been communicated to staff as the result of the implementation of PBS at Pleasantville High School?
8. Are the values embedded in PBS consistent with your own values?
9. Are the values embedded in PBS consistent with your perception of the values of the larger Pleasantville community?
10. In what ways has the implementation of PBS changed your relationship with students?
11. How do you believe Pleasantville High School is viewed by the staff of the other two high schools in the district?
12. What role (if any) has the implementation of PBS played in the perception of Pleasantville High School by the staff of the other two district high schools?
13. What role (if any) has the implementation of PBS played in the perception of Pleasantville High School by Central Administration?
14. What role (if any) has the implementation of PBS played in the perception of Pleasantville High School by others in the community (individual community members as well as community organizations such as Community Mental Health)?
15. Were previous (pre-PBS) approaches to addressing student behavior problems generally accepted by most staff members as appropriate and effective?
16. Do you think that most staff members have accepted the PBS approach to addressing student behavior issues, or do you think that some are more confident and comfortable using pre-PBS, or non-PBS strategies?
17. This is the second year that Pleasantville High School has used the PBS system for addressing student behavior issues. To what extent do you think that staff faithfully implemented PBS strategies during the first implementation year? To what extent do you think that staff faithfully implemented PBS strategies during the second implementation year? To what do you attribute any differences?
18. How successfully has PBS been communicated to new staff members?

19. How successful was the process of introducing PBS to the entire staff at Pleasantville High School?
20. What recommendations do you have for improving this process?
21. Do you think there is more acceptance of PBS by some staff members than by others? What, in your opinion, accounts for this difference (if any)?
22. How do new staff members learn about PBS? Is the process formal or informal or both? Please describe both the formal and informal components of the process.

Appendix D

Matrix indicating correlation between Theoretical Area and **Staff Interview Questions**:

Theoretical Area	Question #
1. Organizational Structure	1, 2
2. Human Resource Frame	3, 4, 5
3. Political Frame	6, 7, 8, 9, 10
4. Symbolic Frame	11, 12, 13, 14
5. Organizational Culture	15, 16, 17, 18
6. Organizational Socialization	19, 20, 21, 22

Matrix indicating correlation between Theoretical Area and **Staff Survey Questions**:

Theoretical Area	Question #
1. Organizational Structure	1, 2, 3
2. Human Resource Frame	4, 5, 6, 7, 8
3. Political Frame	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
4. Symbolic Frame	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
5. Organizational Culture	21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29
6. Organizational Socialization	30, 31, 32, 33, 34

Appendix E

Staff Survey

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Don't Know	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Agree			Strongly Agree	

1. Organizational changes have been made in this school which have allowed PBS to be more successful.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The organizational structure of this high school makes it easy to execute the strategies of PBS.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. There are organizational features of this high school that makes it very difficult to implement PBS.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. The implementation of PBS has changed the working environment of this high school.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The implementation of PBS has made this high school a better place to work.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The implementation of PBS has made this high school a more challenging place to work.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. PBS has had a positive effect on staff morale.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. PBS has had a negative effect on staff morale.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. The implementation of PBS has helped to communicate appropriate values to students.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. The implementation of PBS has helped to communicate appropriate values to staff.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
Don't Know	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Agree			Strongly Agree								
11.	The values embedded in PBS are consistent with my own values.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	The values embedded in PBS are consistent with the values of the larger community.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	The use of PBS in this school has improved my relationship with students.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	The use of PBS in this school has eroded my relationship with students.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	The staff at the other two district high schools have a positive view of this high school.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	The staff at the other two district high schools have a negative view this high school.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	The staff at the other two district high schools have a more positive view of this high school than they have had in the past.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	The use of PBS has improved the perception of this high school among the staff of the other two district high schools.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	The implementation of PBS has improved the perception of this high school among Central Office administrators.						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	The implementation of PBS has improved the perception of this high school among others in the community (ex: individual community members, Community Mental Health).						0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Don't Know	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Agree			Strongly Agree	
21. PBS is a very different way of addressing student behavior issues as opposed to the traditional way of addressing student behavior issues.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
22. The staff at this high school has readily accepted PBS as an appropriate and effective way to address student behavior issues.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
23. Some staff members are quite uncomfortable with PBS and would prefer more traditional approaches to dealing with student behavior issues.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
24. Generally, staff faithfully implemented PBS strategies during the first year of implementation (2007-2008 school year).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
25. Generally, staff faithfully implemented PBS strategies during the second year of implementation (2008-2009 school year).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
26. PBS strategies and expectations have been effectively communicated to newer staff members.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
27. PBS strategies and expectations have been accepted by newer staff members.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
28. PBS will be in use at this high school five years from now?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
29. It is important for staff at this high school to accept the underlying theory and principles of PBS.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Don't Know	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Agree			Strongly Agree	
30. The way that PBS was introduced to staff at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year was effective.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
31. A formal process is in place to educate new staff members about PBS and help them implement PBS strategies.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
32. New staff members have to learn about PBS on their own or by "trial and error."	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
33. A formal structure exists for reinforcing and re-teaching PBS strategies to all staff.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
34. Staff has been provided with the tools and opportunities to adequately understand and successfully implement PBS at this high school.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Appendix F

Individual Stages of Concern Raw and Percentile Scores

ID	Years	Level	SoCQ Scale Scores							SoCQ Percentiles						
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
SoCQ-1	2	INT	6	3	9	14	24	19	17	22	19	39	52	48	44	52
SoCQ-2	2	INT	11	14	19	10	18	16	12	61	54	70	34	24	31	30
SoCQ-3	2	INT	16	22	23	19	27	28	26	91	80	80	73	63	80	87
SoCQ-4	3	P-U	12	11	14	7	28	32	9	69	45	55	23	66	93	20
SoCQ-5	1	NOV	7	17	18	19	16	16	7	31	63	67	73	19	31	14
SoCQ-6	1	NOV	11	24	24	20	24	25	15	61	88	83	77	48	68	12
SoCQ-7	3	O-H	19	15	19	18	25	28	20	97	57	70	69	54	80	65
SoCQ-8	3	O-H	8	3	4	11	23	20	11	40	19	21	39	43	48	26
SoCQ-9	3	INT	6	22	17	7	25	21	11	22	80	63	23	54	52	26
SoCQ-10	2	INT	13	8	8	13	13	12	7	75	37	35	47	11	19	14
SoCQ-11	2	INT	6	15	17	13	26	24	16	22	57	63	47	59	64	47
SoCQ-12	1	INT	9	4	9	12	9	9	11	48	23	39	43	5	12	26
SoCQ-13	3	P-U	14	25	21	16	28	32	12	81	90	76	60	66	93	30
SoCQ-14	3	INT	12	16	24	9	29	15	9	69	60	83	30	71	28	20
SoCQ-15	3	O-H	19	11	21	18	31	29	14	97	45	76	69	82	84	38
SoCQ-16	3	O-H	18	18	25	11	29	28	23	96	66	85	39	71	80	77
SoCQ-17	2	N-U	8	22	20	13	27	25	9	40	80	72	47	63	68	20
SoCQ-18	1	INT	13	6	8	14	10	13	9	75	30	35	52	7	22	20
Group	All	All	11	14	16	14	22	22	13	61	54	59	52	38	55	34

The score matrix for the school staff that is the focus of this study appear in Table 5. This table includes raw scores as well as the converted percentile score. The ID is an arbitrary label assigned to the questionnaires as they were being analyzed: the ID number was assigned sequentially to the questionnaires as they happened to be ordered. The “Years” column reflects the number of years the respondent indicated that he or she had been involved with the innovation (PBS). The “Level” column indicates the respondent’s perception of his or her own use of the innovation: N-U = Non-user, NOV = Novice, INT = Intermediate user, O-H = Old Hand, and P-U = Past-user.

Appendix G

Individual Item Analysis

The developers of the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) suggest that “analyses of individual item responses can sometimes provide valuable insights” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 50). The SoCQ data in this study does yield some useful information when individual item analysis is considered. When considering individual item analysis, the researcher is called upon to consider patterns among an individual’s response to the various questions on the questionnaire that relate to specific stages. According to CBAM developers, the responses can fall into three distinct Q-sort categories, depending on the clarity of consistently high or low responses for the five questions that correspond to each stage. A “Good Q-Sort” would involve responses that are discernibly low for some of the stages and high for others. A “No Clear Q-Sort” contains responses that do not clearly exhibit consistent highs and lows among the stage questions, and a “Extreme Response Tendency” indicates no clear profile in that most items are scored extremely low or extremely high.

The eighteen profiles examined in this study seem to be split equally between Good Q-sorts where some degree of clear patterning in responses was evident, and No Clear Q-sorts where it was difficult to discern clear highs and contrasting lows. There were no Extreme Tendency Responses. The Q-Sort of SoCQ-9 (Table G1) is characteristic of a qualified Good Q-sort in that responses to stages 1 and 4 are generally marked high, while responses to stages 0 and 3 are generally marked low. It is important to note that SoCQ-9 is not a “perfect” example of a Good Q-sort in that some of the stages (Stage 2, for example) does not reflect a clear high or a clear low.

Table G1

Raw Score Q-Sort for SoCQ-9

	Stages						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1	1	1	2	6	7	1
1	6	7	2	5	5	1	1
2	6	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	2	2	1	7	2	2	2
1	7	6	1	6	6	6	6
Totals	6	22	17	7	25	21	11
Percentiles	22	80	63	23	54	52	26

Indeed, none of the respondents in this study exhibited a response to the questionnaire that reflected clear highs and lows in every stage category, and nine of the eighteen respondents (50%) had profiles where no clear Q-sort was evident at all. The responses for SoCQ-12 (Table G2) is an example of a No Clear Q-Sort.

Table G2

Raw Score Q-Sort for SoCQ-12

	Stages						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
0	4	4	0	3	3	6	6
3	0	4	6	2	2	5	5
0	0	0	6	3	0	0	0
3	0	1	0	0	3	0	0
3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Totals	9	4	9	12	9	9	11
Percentiles	48	23	39	43	5	12	26

The most significant information that can be gleaned from the individual item analysis in this case study is that the preponderance of inconsistent sorting (half of the staff respondents indicated no clear Q-sort, and many of the individual stage scores among the

more clearly patterned Q-sorts still contained stages that were not clearly sorted) suggests a general failure to sort items. According the CBAM developers:

This failure to sort the items suggests a lack of differentiation according to the Stages of Concern. Perhaps the respondent cannot differentiate among concerns because of general confusion about what the innovation is; or maybe the innovation is so far removed from the respondent's life that it has little meaning. (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 50)

Such an interpretation implies less than an ideal school-wide embracement of Positive Behavior Supports and suggests that attention should be directed toward clarifying the structure and protocols inherent in the innovation.

Appendix H

Response Breakdown of Staff Survey by Question and Framework

Question	Survey Participant					
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
Org Structure						
1	6	5	7	6	6	6
2	6	6	7	5	6	7
3	1	5	0	3	1	1
Human Resource						
4	6	6	7	6	7	7
5	6	6	7	6	7	0
6	1	1	0	1	6	0
7	6	6	7	6	7	5
8	1	1	0	1	1	1
Political Frame						
9	6	6	7	4	7	6
10	6	5	7	5	7	6
11	7	7	7	7	7	7
12	5	6	7	6	4	3
13	7	6	7	6	6	0
14	1	1	0	1	1	1
Symbolic Frame						
15	2	0	0	3	2	2
16	6	4	7	3	4	5
17	7	5	4	6	6	0
18	5	5	4	5	6	0
19	6	5	4	4	7	0
20	5	4	7	5	5	6
Org. Culture						
21	5	3	7	7	7	7
22	6	4	7	5	7	6
23	2	4	4	4	3	5
24	6	5	7	6	5	0
25	6	4	7	5	5	5
26	5	3	7	4	5	5
27	6	0	7	5	5	6
28	6	0	7	7	7	6
29	7	7	7	7	7	6
Org Socialization						
30	5	6	7	7	6	0
31	5	2	5	3	6	5
32	3	3	3	3	4	2
33	5	2	4	5	3	3
34	5	5	7	7	5	6

Appendix I

Human Subjects Review Approval

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY*Education First*

July 1, 2009

Craig Ross
310 Porter
Educational Leadership

Dear Craig Ross:

The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Eastern Michigan University has granted approval to your proposal, "A Case Study of the Implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) at Pleasantville High School."

After careful review of your completion application, the IRB determined that the rights and welfare of the individual subjects involved in this research are carefully guarded. Additionally, the methods used to obtain informed consent are appropriate, and the individuals participating in your study are not at risk.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the IRB of any change in the protocol that might alter your research in any manner that differs from that upon which this approval is based. Approval of this project applies for one year from the date of this letter. If your data collection continues beyond the one-year period, you must apply for a renewal.

On behalf of the Human Subjects Committee, I wish you success in conducting your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature Removed]

Deb de Laski-Smith, Ph.D.
Interim Dean
Graduate School
Administrative Co-Chair
University Human Subjects Review Committee

Note: If project continues beyond the length of **one** year, please submit a continuation request form by **7/1/10**.

Reference # 090605

Appendix J
SEDL Approval



SEDL License Agreement

TO: Craig Ross (Licensee)
 Director of Community Education
 Portage Public Schools
 6766 West YZ Avenue
 Schoolcraft, MI 49087

FROM: Nancy Reynolds, Information Associate
 SEDL Information Resource Center
 4700 Mueller Blvd.
 Austin, TX 78723

SUBJECT: License Agreement to reprint and distribute SEDL materials

DATE: April 16, 2009

Thank you for your interest in using the **Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) (075)** published by SEDL in 2006 as Appendix A, pages 79-82 in *Measuring Implementation in Schools: The Stages of Concern Questionnaire* by Archie A. George, Gene E. Hall, and Suzanne M. Stiegelbauer, as a PDF document on an accompanying CD-ROM, in electronic format as SEDL's *Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) Online* and published on pages 48-49 in the SEDL publication *Taking Charge of Change*, revised ed., published in 2006, 2nd printing, 2008, that was written by Shirley M. Hord, William L. Rutherford, Leslie Huling, and Gene E. Hall.

This instrument will be referred to as the "work" in this License Agreement. SEDL is pleased to grant permission for the Licensee to administer the work and use results in his dissertation entitled *A Case Study of the Implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) at Pleasantville High School* at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI. The following are the terms, conditions, and limitations governing this limited permission to reproduce the work:

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Voice: 800-476-6861

Fax: 512-476-2286

www.sedl.org

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SEDL License Agreement, p. 2

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Thank you, again, for your interest in using the **Stages of Concern Questionnaire**. If you have any questions about SEDL's License Agreement, please contact me at 800-476-6861, ext. 6548 or 512-391-6548, or by e-mail at nancy.reynolds@sedl.org.

Sincerely,

[Signature Removed]

Nancy Reynolds for SEDL

April 23, 2009
Date signed

Agreed and accepted:

Signature: [Signature Removed]

4/19/2009
Date signed

Printed Name: Craig Ross

Appendix K
District Data Approval



Richard Perry, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

8111 S. Westnedge, Portage, MI 49002

Phone: 269-323-5161, Fax: 269-323-5001

Web Site: www.portageps.org

May 20, 2009

University Human Subjects Review Committee
200 Boone Hall
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Human Subjects Review Committee:

Portage Public Schools grants approval for Craig Ross to conduct his dissertation study in the Portage Public School district. The district further gives permission and will provide access to anonymous district student data to Craig Ross for research purposes related to his doctoral dissertation.

Sincerely,

[Signature Removed]

Richard Perry, Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Services

RP/cw

c Craig Ross

