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Archival evaluation of a proactive school wide discipline plan

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Archival Evaluation of a Proactive School-Wide Discipline Plan

by

Beth Rutz-Beynart

A thesis defense submitted in partial fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis
College of Graduate School
University of South Florida

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Keywords: elementary school, incident reports, behavioral program, teacher training,
outcomes

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ABSTRACT

The study conducted was an archival review of school detailed incident discipline records and description of the school-wide proactive discipline plan developed at an elementary school. The study examined the effects of sequential changes in a proactive school-wide discipline plan. Initially, the baseline data consisted of a full year of school without a proactive school-wide discipline plan. This allowed an assessment of the variation in referrals that occurred across a school year. Subsequent years were assessed in relation to this baseline, and the effects from year to year compared to other years. After the baseline year, substantial changes were made by implementing a school-wide proactive program. In later years, variations were made in the school-wide proactive plan that improved its delivery efficiency. The changes were not major changes but were variations of the original intervention program. Thus, this was a program evaluation on a school-wide basis, incorporating multiple nonconcurrent time series essentially forming an A – B design with maintenance of improvements under conditions which varied slightly from year to year.

The data revealed a higher rate of incidents among ESE and Pre ESE students (students who were later staffed into an ESE program) students than their basic education peers in the primary grades. The data revealed that while the support decreased over time

the school-wide mean of incidents increased. The data did not show any decreases in behaviors which would be described of low impact, and there was not a decrease in incidents which would be described as high impact over the course of the evaluation

This study showed that continued behavioral support for teachers may be needed for decreases in incidents over time as well as a possible need to increase attention to students who are at risk behaviorally in order to intervene prior to an ESE placement.

Introduction

This study investigated whether the creation and implementation of a natural sequence of program changes would result in a decrease in school-wide referrals.

In 1975, Public Law 94-142 was enacted. This law promised “access to a free, quality education” (Public Law 94-142 [S.6], 1975) within the least restrictive environment. Congress reauthorized this law in 1997, and it became known as The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. With the advent of IDEA (IDEA 97), “parents and educators had to re-think how to best teach students with disabilities” (National Education Association, 2002c). While special educators and administrators were establishing goals for IDEA, a new act was established. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 established goals with high standards of accountability for all, and the belief that “all children can learn, regardless of their background or ability” (National Education Association, 2002b). With political stakes high regarding the education of Florida’s children, it has become increasingly more important for teachers to document educational gains through the use of standardized tests. “States have increasingly relied on standardized test scores as the most important and in some cases only measure of whether or not schools are meeting expectations” (National Education Association, 2002a). The No Child Left Behind Act created criteria for schools to measure adequate annual growth. The yearly growth of the school measures whether “each group of students meets or exceeds statewide annual objectives and of each group, 95% of students enrolled participate in the assessments on which annual yearly growth is based” (NCLB Accountability and Adequate Yearly Progress, 2002). A school improvement timeline has been created for Title 1 schools, which do not demonstrate annual yearly growth. The

timeline includes plans for improvement, which over several years may lead to the total re-structuring of the school including the replacement of administration and faculty.

To say political stakes are high would be to state the obvious. This is a new world of education. Within the turbulent political structure, teachers are called upon to teach. Yet, some seem to neglect the fact that today's teachers are faced with more than just the education of the child. Today's teachers are responsible not only for the education of those in their care but also for their social and emotional well-being. The teachers of today are accountable to teach to each child's individual needs. They are responsible to create individual education plans, academic improvement plans, and behavior improvement plans for children who are at risk. They are responsible for educating all children within the least restrictive environment. They are the educators to all, the nurturers to those who are in need, as well as the physical and emotional support givers to those who are at risk behaviorally and academically.

Today's educator must be able to accommodate students with significant learning and behavioral problems, teach in communities that are unable to support the school, and to work under conditions that are counterproductive to teaching and learning (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Early History of Discipline Practices

While there is a need for teachers to gain control of their classroom environment, historically teachers have found it difficult to find a method of control which is not punitive in nature. Corporal punishment according to Poole, Ushkow, Nader, Bradford, Asbury, Worthington, Sanabria, & Carruth, (1991) is a purposeful infliction of bodily pain or discomfort by an official in the educational system upon a student as a penalty for

unacceptable behavior. The infliction of pain is not limited to spanking, but includes any action that produces excessive physical discomfort. Historically, punishments within school were of the corporal nature.

The First documented case of the use of corporal punishment in the school is dated in the early 1700's in a Welsh village, *Bygone Punishments* (Andrews, 1899). The use of corporal punishment in American school systems has its origins in Europe. The use of a finger pillory (also know as stone stocks) was documented from a Welsh Village, but apparently it had been used in other areas of Europe as well. Andrews (1997) wrote:

in order to preserve as much as possible the degree of decorum that was necessary, there were frequently introduced a diminutive pair of stone stocks of about eighteen inches in length, for confining within them the fingers of the unruly (p. 34).

When the pillory was used in this fashion the children were to wear it regardless of their behavior. Possibly, the contingency in place for the students was to recite the lesson quickly and correctly in order to escape the pillory. They were under the constant threat of such punishment during the daily ritual of school.

The historical roots of punishment in the school apparently followed the school system as it left Europe and settled in the Colonies. Punishment was used for lack of academic knowledge as well as what the teacher deemed as inappropriate behavior. There were several teachers, (Brooks, 1997) noted for the use of corporal punishment in Colonial times:

We knew a teacher whose delight, apparently, was pounding and beating little boys... This man every morning took the Bible in one hand and his rattan in the other and walked backward and forward on the floor in front of the desks while the boys read aloud, each boy reading two or three verses; and woe be to any boy who made a mistake, such as mispronouncing a word! Although he may never have been instructed its pronunciation, he was pounded on the head or rapped over the knuckles. (p. 6)

In the middle colonies, the teacher was fined for not providing students specific skills. The law of 1683 stated that “anyone having charge of children must make sure they can read and write by age of twelve. All children should be taught a useful trade. Five pound fine for every child that does not meet these standards” (Schooling, Education and Literacy in Colonial America, 1683).

When considered from the modern perspective of contingencies in behavior analysis (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Miltenberger, 2003), the possible contingency related to the use of corporal punishment for incorrect reading was the teachers’ threat of being fined. The students needed to read in order for the teacher to escape paying a fine. The students would escape a hit from the rattan by reading correctly. This is the operation of the contingency of negative reinforcement:

Another teacher kept for use as a punishment a common walnut, which when occasion required he first put into the mouth of a colored boy, and after it had remained there for five minutes or so, it was taken out and put into the mouth of a white boy, who was

thus to be punished by holding it in his mouth for a certain length of time (Brooks, 1997, p.12).

In this case not only is a primary student punished for some academic or behavioral reason, also there is another child involved in the situation who is instructed to First place the walnut in his mouth.

There was also a teacher who apparently enjoyed having a tidy classroom. This teacher punished her students for bringing mud into the newly swept classroom floor. When a child was “too small to take off and put on their own boots they were punished by being blindfolded and stood upon a cricket in the middle of the floor” (Brooks, 1997). As the teacher was responsible as part of her duties to keep a clean classroom, it seemed apparent that a tidy room was of greater importance then the responsibility of a group of students learning their daily lessons.

During these early years teachers did not yet have the technology of the science of human behavior (Skinner, 1953). When the technology became available, teachers did not apply it. Teachers did not appropriately apply knowledge about positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement. Teachers did not apply knowledge about avoidance and pursuit. Teachers did not understand that punishment would not be successful in the long run, or how to teach replacement behaviors. Teachers continued to use negative reinforcement contingencies. Teachers continued to use punishment strategies including corporal punishment techniques. According to Hill, Horner, Sugai, Bullis, Sparague, Bricker, and Kaufman (1996) schools often reflect societal trends. We see the spillover of interpersonal violence and conflict into daily lives of students and staff in school settings.

History of Behavior Management in Modern Times

The use of corporal punishment in the school system has a long history, coming from Europe, primarily from England, to the colonies. This practice followed educators as well as their students through the 1970's, and it continues in many states to date. The contingencies in place appear to be the teachers' desire to quickly discontinue an unwanted behavior or to quickly discontinue an inaccurate response.

Corporal punishment was the mainstay of school until the 1970's. Students avoided punishment, and they were rewarded with grades and passing each class. Eventually they were rewarded with some sort of graduation or end of school celebration, and they eventually took their place in the workforce. New Jersey was the first state to ban corporal punishment in 1867. While it may have been banned, the use has continued in New Jersey and elsewhere until its banning was recommended in 1974. According to Hyman, McDowell, and Rains (1997)

The American Psychological Association passed a formal resolution banning corporal punishment in schools established the Task Force on Children's Rights. A National Education Association report was published during this decade which denounced corporal punishment in schools and officially recommended that it be abolished.

This 1974 ruling began to bring about change. Many states no longer used corporal punishment. The teachers, as well as some parents, were then at a loss of what to do. They did not have the tools to engage the children in studies. The writings of Skinner were not very well understood within the educational field, and he was rather

controversial. The removal of corporal punishment in the schools continues to be debated on television shows, editorial pieces, and newspaper articles. They point to the lack of teacher control due to the removal of corporal punishment. The removal of corporal punishment without a suitable effective replacement technique in place continues.

Behavior analysis began to come into practice mostly in the area of special education. Special educators were trained in various methods of maintaining control without the use of physical punishment. Token economy systems were set up in many special education classrooms. This system reinforces desired behavior by tokens administered for its performance (Kazdin, 1977). This system was used primarily within institutionalized system. Eventually secluded special education classrooms as well began to use a token economy system. Students began to earn tokens for behaviors teachers wanted to see exhibited more often. While students in some special education classrooms were earning tokens for desired behavior, response cost came into the basic education classroom. Response cost enabled the teacher to remove a privilege from a student due to misbehavior. Notes were frequently sent home with children who misbehaved, and the parents were the ones in charge of the contingencies in place in the home setting due to behavior within the school setting. The contingencies in place were ones, which included the child behaving in such a fashion as to not be punished by a parent or teacher and as to not lose a privilege. It had not come to pass that the child behaved in such a fashion to earn a reward of some sort. It continues to be an avoidance contingency.

Skillstreaming was eventually introduced to the school system in the late 1980's. This was a method, which would teach the students through modeling what the best "choice" of behavior would be, given the consequences that would follow. This was a

school-wide technique in which students would learn which behaviors would have a probability of certain consequences from teachers and peers. This was an interesting step in teaching teachers as well as basic education and special education students contingency management to attend to the cause and effect of behaviors. Its intent was to:

Address the social needs of students who display aggression, immaturity, withdrawal or other problem behaviors. It is designed to help youngsters develop competence in dealing with interpersonal conflicts, learn self-control, and contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere (McGuinnis & Goldstein, 1984).

The difficult task with skillstreaming was the upkeep. Teachers were introduced to this program through lessons from the school psychologists and guidance counselors. The approach included modeling, role playing, and performance feedback, as well as homework. There were lessons conducted to teach the teachers how to run the lessons, and the school-wide approach was adopted for a short period of time. While schools used this approach through the assistance of the school psychologist, skillstreaming was still typically used within classrooms or small group settings. Many schools discontinued its school-wide usage due to the lack of continued support and correct application.

School personnel have a long history of applying simple general solutions to complex student behavior problems and of expressing understandable disappointment when these attempts do not work as expected (Walker, Horner, Sugai, Bullis, Sprague, Bricker, & Kaufman 1996). While the use of corporal punishment has been on the decrease in some states, the use of suspensions is used widely as a form of punishment. Behavior plans which allow for a child to be removed from the classroom or to lose a

privilege are reactive in nature. The teacher reacts to misbehavior with a removal of a privilege or the removal of the student. The use of reactive behavior management plans, which result in temporary student removal from the educational environment, has possibly served the purpose of the teacher being negatively reinforced. In fact, the disciplinary procedures of leaving the classroom and going to the office may be providing attention or a way to avoid schoolwork that may be reinforcing the problem behavior (Copper, Heron, & Heward 1987; Gunter & Coutinho 1997; Stage, 1997; Wolery, Bailey, & Sugai 1988). Removals or suspensions from the classroom can last for several minutes (removal) or for several days (suspension). This use has recently come under fire. "Suspension may discriminate against racial minorities, to remove from school those students who most need to be in school, and actually reward some by giving them a holiday" (Gushee & Matt, 1994). Teachers have had the opportunity to document misbehavior through the use of discipline referrals. School discipline referrals vary by county and by state. Referrals contain information as to what behavior occurred, who was involved, where and when the behavior occurred, as well as conference information for student/administration and parent follow up. Continued misbehavior leading to referrals increases the possibility of the child being removed from the classroom on a permanent basis. It has been easier in the past for educators to punish students. Although punishment consequences are effective in the short term, there is no long-term effect. "This is consistent with the principle of punishment - a response occurs less frequently if an aversive condition or an increase in an aversive condition has immediately followed it" (Malott, 2001 p. 57).

It has also been found that punishment based interventions for students with serious antisocial and violent behaviors usually result in an increase in the problem behavior (Mayer & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1990; Skinner, 1961). Schools have begun issuing discipline referrals as a means of reactively correcting behaviors. By their very nature, schools are reactive organizations because of their structure and the myriad and often conflicting pressures to which they must respond (Walker, Horner, Sugai, Bullis, Sprague, Bricker, & Kaufman, 1996). In addition, the teachers within the system have not received the consultation needed to increase appropriate social behaviors, because they are under pressure to “leave no child behind”. When the teachers are given a child who does not attend to their lessons, they are at a loss of what to do and resort to reactive measures. The principals within the same school setting are under the same academic pressures, and they must make ethically correct choices. There are not adequate behavioral resources available to assist administration in encouraging teachers to be proactive in their behavioral techniques. The principal at times may choose to have a child removed from a least restrictive setting in order for that child to be within an environment which will care for him in an appropriate behavioral manner. “Non-consequentialisms grant that it is often legitimate to maximize the good, maximizing the good should not be the primary consideration if it entails using individuals as mere means to the welfare of others” (Howe & Miramontes, 1992, p. 16).

The Present Study

Recent literature establishes that high rates of antisocial behavior in schools are associated with punitive disciplinary strategies, lack of clarity about rules, expectations, and consequences, lack of staff support, and failure to consider and accommodate

individual differences (Mayer, 1995). Given the history of punishment, as well as the lack of replacement behaviors afforded teachers, a school-wide behavior plan, which incorporates the skills teachers need to successfully teach appropriate social behaviors is long overdue. The need to take an expanded look at school-wide discipline issues that affect both general and special education teachers and students has been underscored by many educators (Mayer 1995, 1999, 2002; Shellady & Stichter, 1999). Teachers as well as administrators are under political pressure to increase academic skills. They do not feel supported within a system which is constantly under societal scrutiny.

What appears to be continually missing is a systematic school-wide positive behavior plan, with strong administrative, staff, parent, and student support. “Many of today’s students need more than just sound and consistent discipline policies they also need positive behavioral instruction” (Fitzsimmons, 1998). Students entering the school system do not necessarily know the rules. Not all children have structure in their homes or in previous preschool settings. Students need to be taught what the expected behaviors are through out the day. These children need to be attended to for following the rules. The use of systematic praise contingent upon compliance to the daily rigor of the school is needed. This study evaluated the effects of the process of creating a school-wide proactive behavioral plan.

Method

Participants

There were approximately 500 students grades Kindergarten through Fifth, per year at the school in which this study took place. The school served 521 students (during the 1999-2000 school year, year one of implementation). Ninety-eight percent of the students received free or reduced lunch. The majority of those children receiving lunch allowances qualified for free lunches. In other words, most of the students' families were at poverty level. The state average for free/reduced lunch was 53%, and the district level at that time was at 51%. Many of the children at this school were also limited English proficient. During the First year of the discipline plan implementation, 27% of the schools students were limited English proficient. The district level was 4%, and the state level was 10%.

An archival review of all referrals initiated by 36 school teachers and administrators was conducted through the use of detailed incident reports. The school employed 34 primary and intermediate teachers, one principal, and one assistant principal.

Dependent Variables

The first dependent variable was the daily mean of incidents for each month of each school year. As reviewed through the detailed incident reports, a referral is defined as a written reprimand contingent upon a student not following the school-wide proactive plan. The second dependent variable was the incidents reported per month.

The reports were scored in the following way: The report was first scanned for the location of the incident. If the location of the incident was an inclusive location, as in a

classroom, bathroom, or hallway the scanning continued to the name of the person who reported the incident. If the person who reported the incident was classified as an inclusive person, as in a full time teacher or administration, the scanning continued to the grade level. If the grade was inclusive, as in K- Fifth grade the scanning then moved to the margin where a N, E, or P was placed signifying the student as being Non- ESE, ESE or Pre-ESE. A tally was then placed for the date, ESE, Pre ESE, and Non- ESE. Grade levels as well as severity of each incident were tallied in the same manner.

Independent Variable

The independent variable was each month of the school year throughout each of the school years the program was evaluated.

Design

The study was conducted by an archival review of school detailed incident discipline records and description of the school-wide proactive discipline plan developed at an elementary school. The present study examined the effects of sequential changes in a proactive school-wide discipline plan. Initially, the baseline data consisted of a full year of school without a proactive school-wide discipline plan. This allowed an assessment of the variation in referrals that occurred across a school year. Subsequent years were assessed in relation to this baseline, and the effects from year to year compared to other years. After the baseline year, substantial changes were made by implementing a school-wide proactive program. In later years, variations were made in the school-wide proactive plan that improved its delivery efficiency. The changes were not major changes but were variations of the original intervention program. Thus, we had a program evaluation on a school-wide basis, incorporating multiple nonconcurrent time series essentially forming

an A – B design with maintenance of improvements under conditions which varied slightly from year to year.

Discipline referrals from which the data were collected were created by the staff member who observed the behavior. The individual completed the referral paper work and presented it to the principal or assistant principal. It was then the responsibility of administration to meet with the student and/or parent if further consequences are in order. The paperwork was given to the data entry clerk who entered the information into the school computer. This information could be accessed by the local school district office. At the end of each school year, the data entry clerk prints a computer printout of all the referrals written throughout the year. This printout was placed into a binder, which was secured in a box and labeled. The box was then stored in a locked room at the school for ten years. The detailed incident reports were generated from the referrals sent through the computer to the Pasco County School Board district office. The research and evaluation services department at the Pasco County School Board forwarded the detailed incident reports to this principle investigator following school board policy of completion and approval through their procedures for application to conduct research and the proposal was then reviewed and approved by the USF Institutional Review Board.

For the purposes of this study incidents included in the data were incidents reported by teachers and administrators. Paraprofessionals as well as other personnel such as maintenance and bus drivers were excluded from the data. Those included were those who participated in training throughout the running of the program. Those who were excluded were those who did not participate within the training throughout the running of the program. The inclusive locations noted on the detailed reports and used for this study

included the classroom, bathrooms, and hallways. The areas excluded for this study were the playground, cafeteria, walkways, car area, bus area, media center, and the computer lab. These areas were excluded due to the number of non trained staff members who were responsible for the charge of the students.

Reliability

The reliability of original referral or data entry could not be determined, therefore the reliability related to aggregation of individual data from the detailed incident reports. Reliability was scored with the assistance of the school psychologist, who was trained and experienced in the data collection process. The school psychologist was given a list of inclusive as well as non inclusive staff and locations. Detailed incident reports were reviewed. The eighty-seven percent reliability was scored by examining 25% of each month's data days randomly selected. The primary data source was the detailed incident reports. Rodney B. Cox Elementary School Proactive School-Wide Behavior Plan.

Vision Statement

The staff and invested shareholders of Rodney B. Cox Elementary School will join forces to provide a safe learning environment that is conducive to preparing our students to become responsible citizens.

School-wide rules.

1. Keep your hands, feet, and materials in area.
2. Use polite words and respectful tone of voice to peers and adults.
3. Raise your hand to answer questions, participate in group, and ask questions.
4. Listen and follow directions.

Teachers and grade levels may rephrase these to fit the needs of their students provided that the understanding of the rules is the same.

School-wide supportive strategies.

1. Each teacher will use a high rate of specific praise contingent upon following the above rules. The student will earn a slip of paper or a smiley face (primary) or a lack of a check mark (intermediate) for each period in which they have followed the rules. The students symbol will be moved up a motivational poster each day he/she has earned his/her goal of 80% on task (following the rules 80% in the groups) Students earning a minimum of four out of five moves on the motivational poster will earn the school-wide weekly celebration..
2. Staff development strategies for preventing, supporting, and correcting student behaviors will be presented at faculty meetings.
3. School level programs designed to encourage and recognize positive student behavior include:
 - (A) Student of the week recognition (class level teacher discretion)
 - (B) Student of the month (per class)
 - (C) Administrators certificates and stamps (based upon teacher referral for good behavior)
 - (D) Student Council
 - (E) Guidance Classes
 - (F) Counseling (as needed).
 - (G) Specific Needs Groups(as needed)

(H) Pupil Assistance Team

(I) Individual Behavior Change Plans (as needed)

School-wide corrective strategies.

1. Faculty and staff will praise the student in proximity who is following the rule the target student has broken.
2. Faculty and staff will praise the student in proximity to the target student and redirect the target student.
3. If the target student continues to break a rule, a verbal warning will be issued.
4. If the behavior continues, the student will serve a time out in that classroom. The timeout can be no longer, in minutes, than the age of the child. The offense is stated to the target student, and he/she does not earn a ticket/smile (primary) or a mark is indicated in the target student's folder (intermediate) that cites the rule that was broken.
5. If the behavior continues, the target student will be sent to another classroom or area to serve the age equivalent minutes for a time out. The parents will be called and made aware of the concern.
6. After school detention will be assigned at the discretion of the administration.
For extreme cases:
7. Severe clause is any aggression or attempting to cause harm to another student, self, or adult, which is witnessed by an adult. The student is to be escorted to the office.
8. Other continued offenses (following the classroom plan) are to be written up and the referral goes to the office. The child remains in the class until called.

9. Continued disruptions to the class, making learning for the other students impossible (and if you have followed the school-wide plan) the teacher is to call the assistant principal. The assistant principal will remove the student from the classroom.

Training

It has been recommended that training programs should focus on ways to improve instruction teachers and other staff members provide for students about classroom rules and school policies (Taylor-Greene, Brown, Nelson, Longton, Gassman, Cohen, Swartz, Horner, Sugai , & Hall 1997; Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Sprague, in press) and increase staff use of reminders and praise for appropriate student behavior (Sugai, 1990). In addition, efforts should be made to increase acknowledgment for those students who do not receive any discipline referrals, and to maintain aspects of the schoolwide program that support a positive school climate

Through in-services and meetings, the teachers and staff at R. B. Cox Elementary School were instructed to observe for and verbally acknowledge appropriate social skills. The plan included the posting of rules worded in a positive manner, the use of attention contingent upon appropriate behavior, planned ignoring, and the use of tickets/smiles. The plan also consisted of weekly rewards contingent upon 80% of appropriate behavior for four out of five school days. The plan was revised yearly.

Year One. During year one school-wide weekly rewards consisted of outings at the school with visitors such as the high school basketball team and middle school cheerleader teams, and quarterly rewards, such as roller skating trips, pep rallies, and

Lightning team mascot visits were provided to students contingent upon earning seven out of the nine weekly parties offered.

Year Two. During year two, the school-wide celebrations were planned by team grade/level. Each team/ grade was responsible for the planning and implementation of Friday activities for the entire school. This revision allowed for school teams to generate the motivators for the students. Giving the teachers control of the rewards was used in order to help increase the teachers' input and ownership of the reward system. The teams rotated the weekly rewards for the school, such as field days and ice cream parties.

Year Three. During year three, each team/ grade was responsible for the planning and implementation of the weekly celebrations for their own team. This revision occurred due to the teachers' not being able to provide rewards for the entire school. Allowing teams to create rewards for members of their own team decreased the responsibility of providing for many students while giving ownership to the rewards to their own students. At the beginning of the school year, teachers were notified that they would receive a reward for following the school-wide plan. During this year, teachers were also rewarded. Those teachers who did not write any referrals were offered a large prize. The prize consisted of a round trip airline ticket to Key West courtesy of Seacoast Airlines.

Results

The result was a program evaluation on a school-wide basis, incorporating multiple nonconcurrent time series essentially forming an A – B design with maintenance of improvements under conditions which varied slightly from year to year.

Baseline

An archival review of the school-wide baseline data from the 1998-1999 school year was conducted. The mean of detailed reports was calculated each month by dividing the number of school days within that school month by the number of detailed incidents that occurred. The baseline data revealed (Figure 1) that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.14. There were zero reports for the months of August (Month 1), January (Month 6) and June (Month 11). The highest mean month was the month of April (Month 9) followed by the months of May (Month 10) and October ((Month 3). From the months of January through April the trend of incidents increased, although June (month 11) was at zero reports.

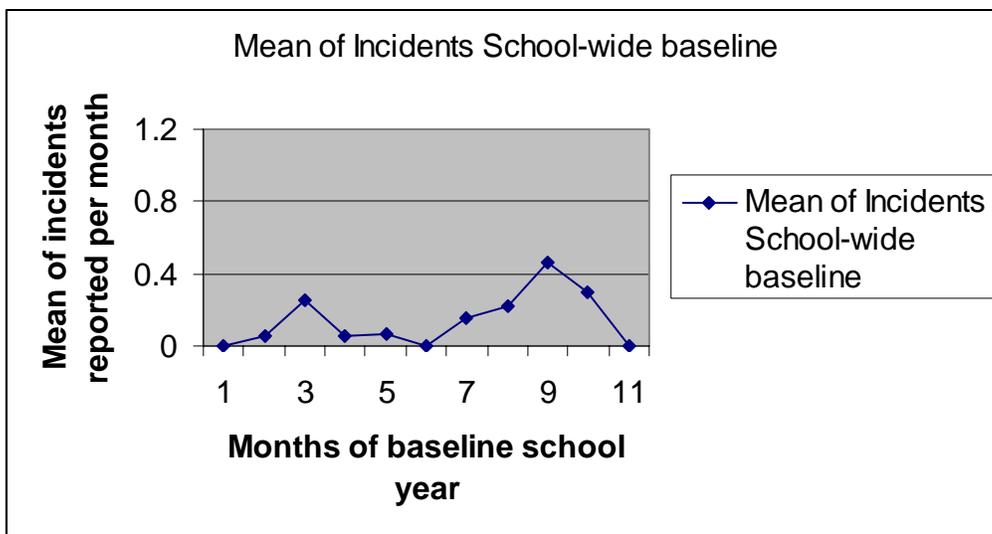


Figure 1. Mean of incidents school-wide baseline.

Year One

An archival review of the school-wide year one data 1999- 2000 school year was conducted. The mean of detailed reports was calculated each month by dividing the number of days within that school month by the number of detailed incidents that occurred. Year one data revealed (Figure 2) that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.25. There were zero reports for the months of August (Month 1) and June (Month11). The highest mean month was the month of April (Month 9) followed by the month of May (Month10). From the months of October (Month 3) through March (Month 8) the trend of incidents increased and then spiked at 0.84 in the month of April (Month 9).

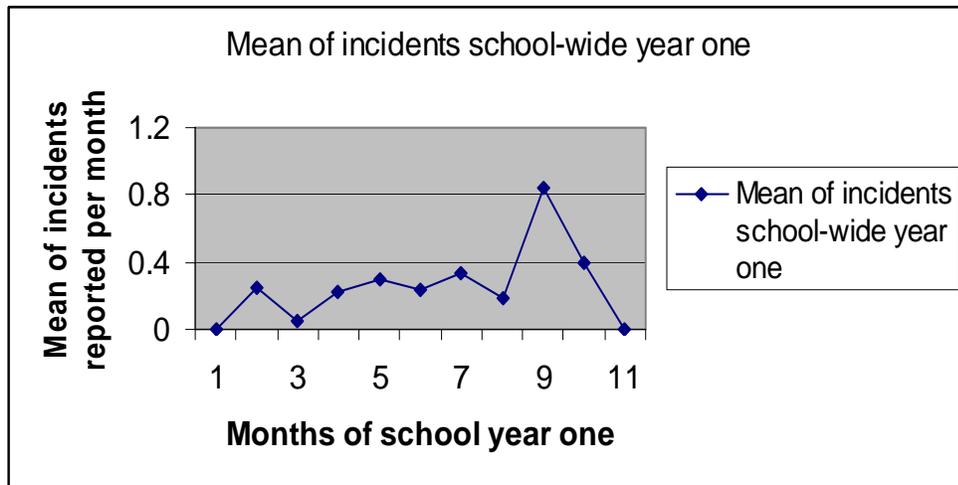


Figure 2. Mean of incidents school-wide year one.

Year Two

The archival review of year two school-wide data 2000- 2001 school year was conducted. The mean of detailed reports was calculated each month by dividing the number of days within that school month by the number of detailed incidents that occurred. Year two data revealed (Figure 3) that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.47. There were detailed reports for each month of the school year. The highest mean month was the month of November (Month 4) followed by the month of February (Month 7). From the months of August (Month 1) through November (Month 4) the trend of incidents increased to a mean 0.85 and then decreased to a mean of 0.2 in December (Month 5) followed by another increased trend through February (at 0.84) until a decreased trend toward the month of April (Month9). In The last month of the school year, May (Month 10), an increase occurred.

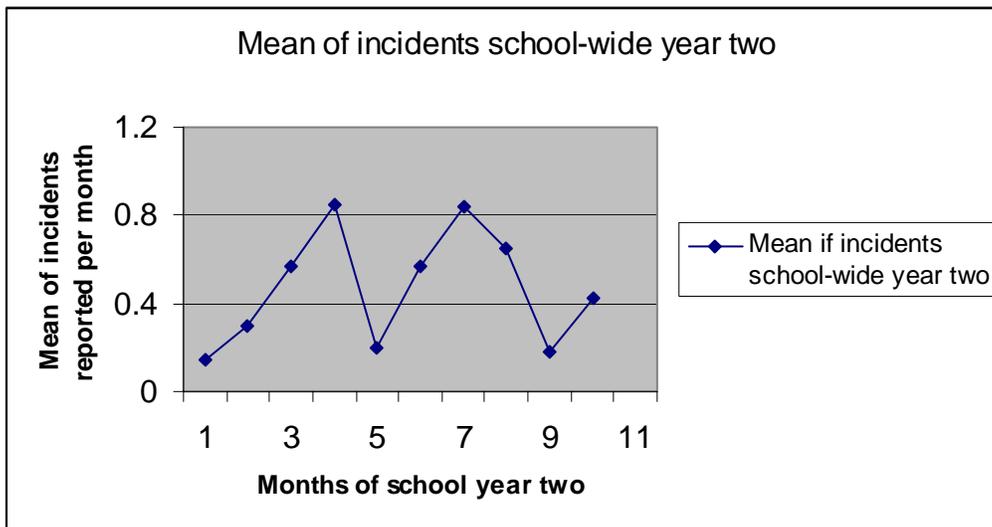


Figure 3. Mean of incidents school-wide year two.

Year Three

The archival review of year three school-wide data 2001- 2002 school year was conducted. The mean of detailed reports were calculated each month by dividing the number of days within that school month by the number of detailed incidents that occurred. Year three data revealed (Figure 4) that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.60. There were zero detailed reports for the month of August. The highest mean month was the month of March (1.07) followed by April (0.95) and February (0.84). From the months of August through November the trend of incidents increased to 0.84 and then decreased to 0.36 in January followed by another increased trend through March (at 1.07)) until a decrease in May.

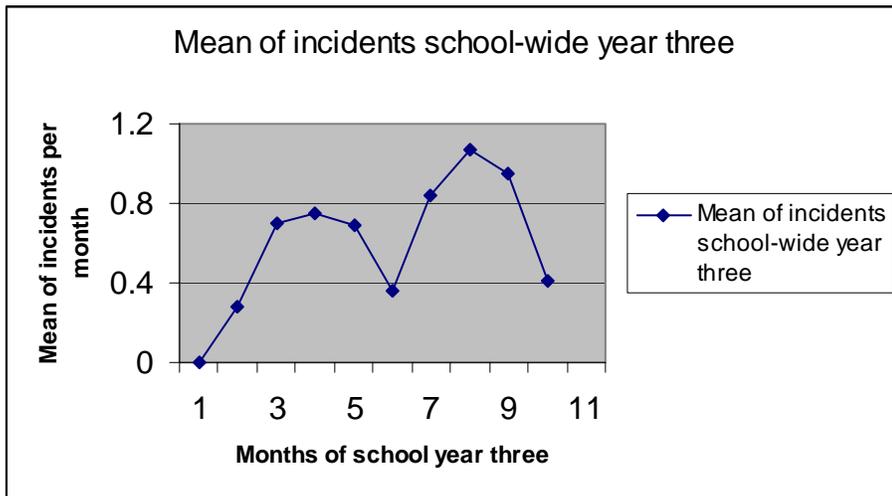


Figure 4. Mean of incidents school-wide year three.

Comparison of ESE, Non-ESE, and Pre-ESE

The archival review also investigated the data per grade level from baseline through year three of the programs implementation. The data were interpreted to observe for variations between basic education students (NON), Exceptional Education Students (ESE), as well as those students who were not classified as Exceptional Education Students at the time of the detailed incidents but who were later evaluated and classified as ESE students For the purpose of this study, these students were categorized as (PRE) ESE.

Kindergarten results baseline through the years of the program evaluated. During baseline through the length of this study the Kindergarten students had a total of 47 incidents reported. The basic education students in Kindergarten had a total of 18 incidents reported. The Pre ESE group had a total of 20 incidents reported, and the ESE group had a total of 9 incidents reported. The data revealed (Figure 5) that the basic education students and the pre-ESE populations peaked at three incidents within one month, and the ESE students peaked at two incidents in one month. The Pre ESE students had the most incidents followed by the basic education students. The ESE students had the least amount of incidents reported.

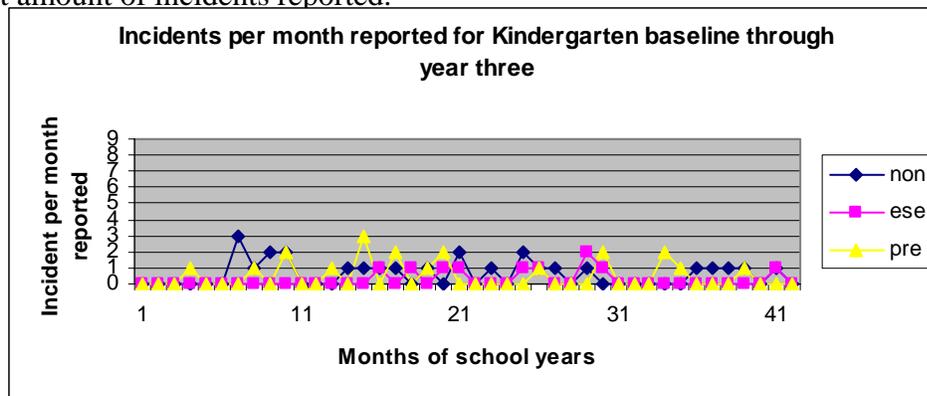


Figure 5. Incidents per month reported for Kindergarten baseline through year three.

First Grade results baseline through the years of the program evaluated. During baseline through the length of this study the First Grade students had a total of 69 incidents reported. The basic education students in First Grade had a total of 24 incidents reported. The Pre ESE group had a total of 14 incidents reported, and the ESE group had a total of 31 incidents reported. The data revealed (Figure 6) that the basic education students peaked at the four incidents within one month, the Pre ESE group peaked at two incidents in one month, and the ESE students peaked at five incidents in one month. The ESE population had the highest incidents reported followed by the basic education students. The pre ESE students had the least amount of incidents reported.

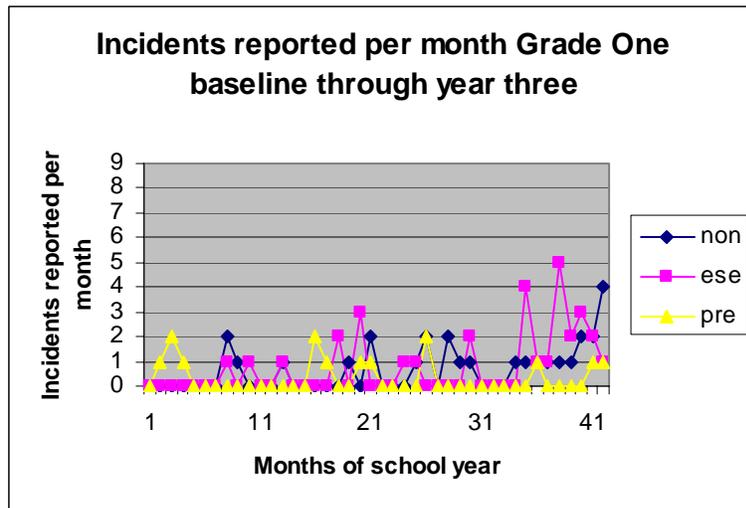


Figure 6. Incidents reported per month Grade One baseline through year three.

Second Grade results baseline through the years of the program evaluated.

During baseline through the length of this study the Second Grade students had a total of 56 incidents reported. The basic education students in Second Grade had a total of 31 incidents reported. The Pre ESE group had a total of 8 incidents reported, and the ESE group had a total of 17 incidents reported. The data revealed (Figure 7) that the basic education students peaked at the seven incidents within one month, the Pre ESE group peaked at three incidents in one month, and the ESE students also peaked at three incidents in one month. The basic education population had the highest incidents reported followed by the ESE population. The pre ESE students had the least amount of incidents reported.

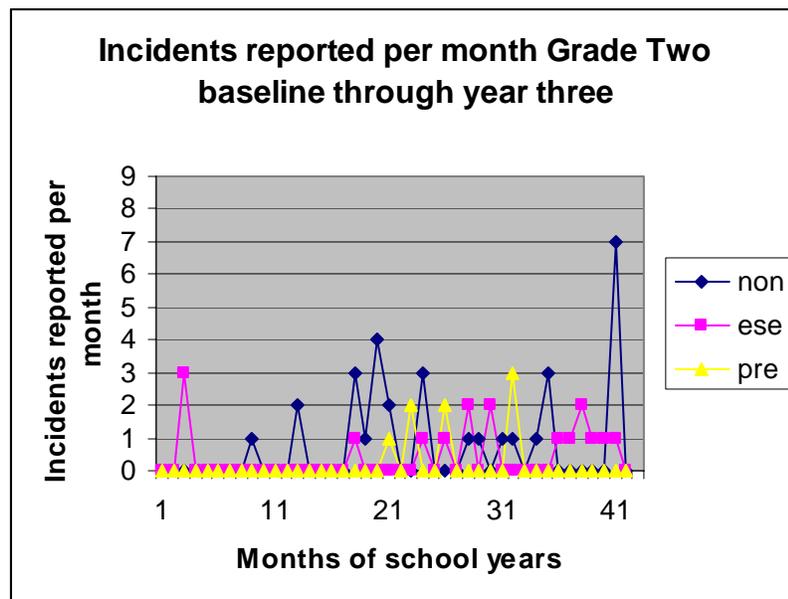


Figure 7. Incidents reported per month Grade Two baseline through year three.

Third Grade results baseline through the years of the program evaluated. During baseline through the length of this study the Third Grade students had a total of 35 incidents reported. The basic education students in Third Grade had a total of 30 incidents reported. The Pre ESE group had a total of 2 incidents reported, and the ESE group had a total of 5 incidents reported. The data revealed (Figure 8) that the basic education students peaked at the nine incidents within one month, the Pre ESE group peaked at one incident in one month (twice), and the ESE students also peaked at two incidents in one month. The basic education population had the highest incidents reported (during months 18-23, end of year one and beginning of year two) followed by the ESE population. The pre ESE students had the least amount of incidents reported.

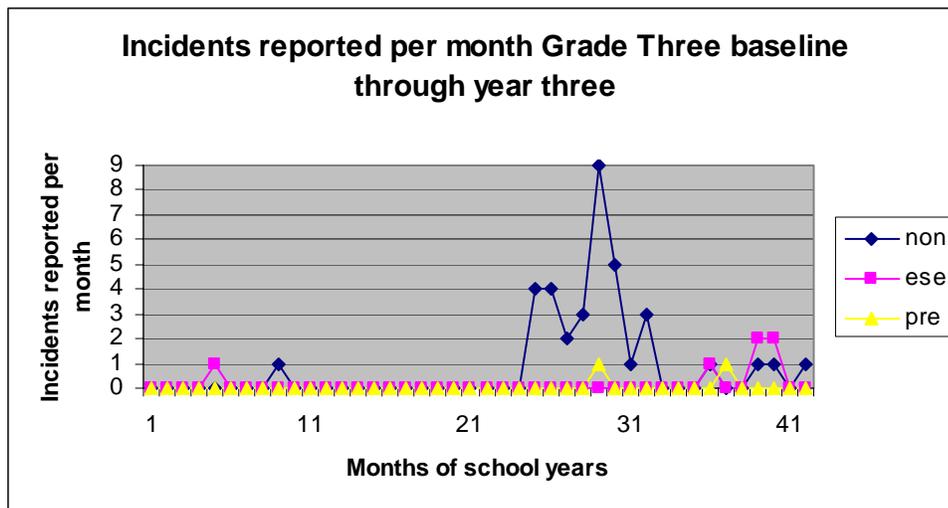


Figure 8. Incidents reported per month Grade Three baseline through year three.

Fourth Grade results baseline through the years of the program evaluated.

During baseline through the length of this study the Fourth Grade students had a total of 44 incidents reported. The basic education students in Fourth Grade had a total of 24 incidents reported. The Pre ESE group had a total of 0 incidents reported, and the ESE group had a total of 20 incidents reported. The data revealed (Figure 9) that the rates of incidents increased overtime and peaked toward the end of this study time frame, the basic education and the ESE students peaked at four incidents within one month. The basic education population had the highest incidents reported (during month 29 Feb. year two) followed by the ESE population. The pre ESE students had no incidents reported.

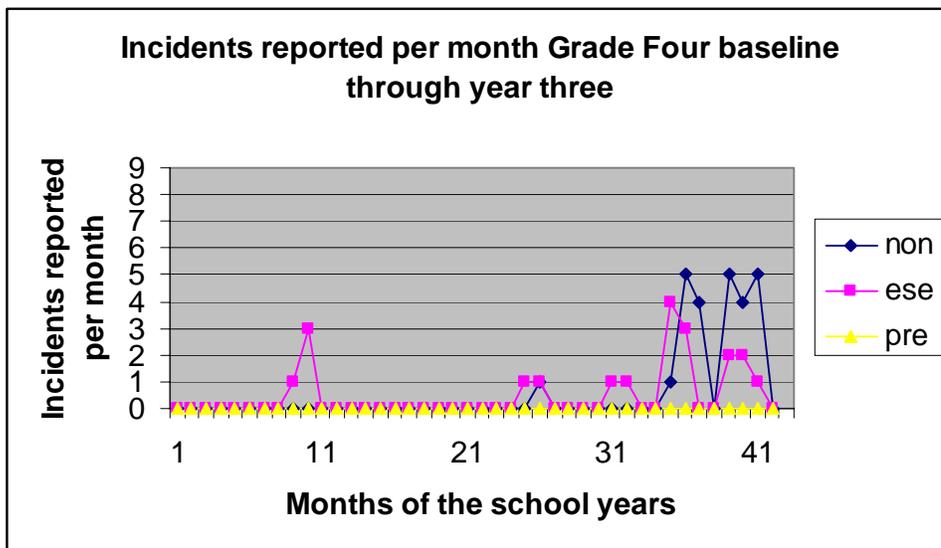


Figure 9. Incidents reported per month Grade Four baseline through year three.

Fifth Grade results baseline through the years of the program evaluated. During baseline through the length of this study the Fifth Grade students had a total of 3 incidents reported. The basic education students in Fifth Grade had a total of 2 incidents reported. The Pre ESE group had a total of 0 incidents reported, and the ESE group had a total of 1 incident reported. The data revealed (Figure 10) that the basic education had the highest incidents reported) followed by the ESE population. The pre ESE students had no incidents reported.

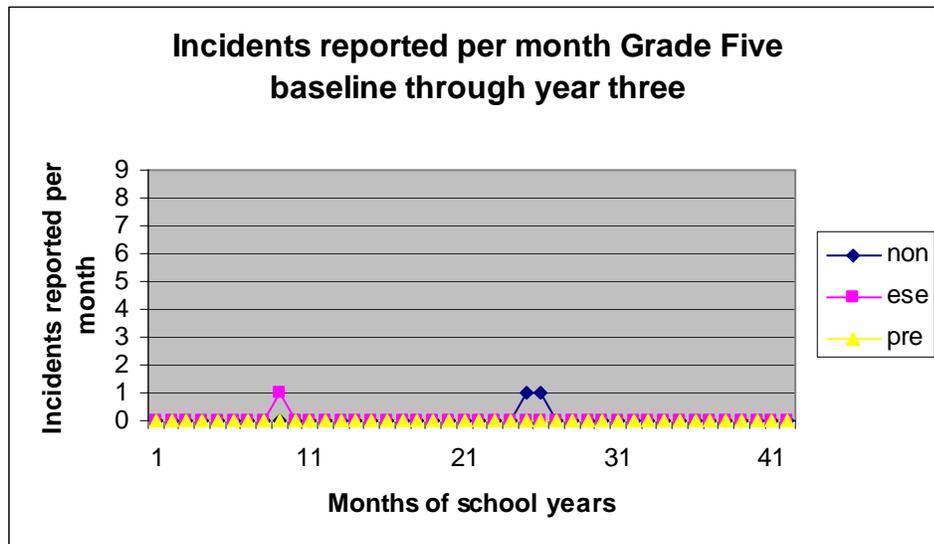


Figure 10. Incidents reported per month Grade Five baseline through year three.

Results following the Kindergarten cohort from baseline through their Third year of school. The review of data also included the longitudinal study of a group of students. The Kindergarten group of students' detailed reports was evaluated over time as they grew through the school system (Figure 11). These students were Kindergarteners during the baseline year, First graders during year one, Second graders during year two, and Third graders during the final year that the incident were reviewed.

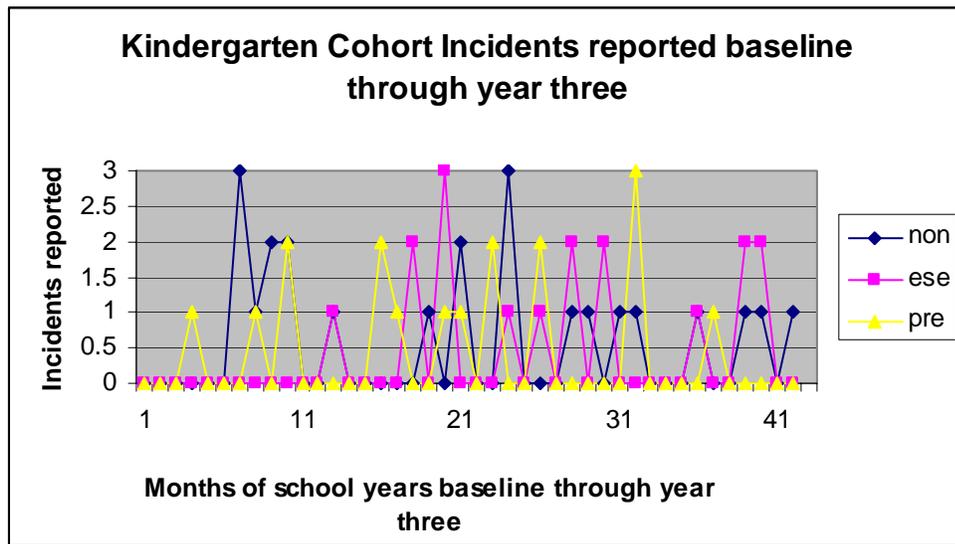


Figure 11. Kindergarten cohort incidents reported baseline through year three.

During the baseline year, while the students were Kindergarteners there were reported a total of 11 incidents were reported. The basic education students had a total of seven incidents, the pre-ESE students had a total of four incidents and the ESE students did not have any incidents reported. During the First year of the program while the students were in First grade, a total of 14 incidents were reported. The basic education students during that year had a total of three incidents reported, the pre-ESE population had a total of five incidents reported and the ESE population had a total of six incidents reported. During the Second year of the program while the students were in Second

grade, a total of 18 incidents were reported. The basic education students during that year had a total of seven incidents reported, the pre-ESE population had a total of five incidents reported and the ESE population had a total of six incidents reported. During the final year of the review while the students were in Third grade, a total of 9 incidents were reported. The basic education students during that year had a total of three incidents reported, the pre-ESE population had a total of one incident reported and the ESE population had a total of five incidents reported.

Evaluating this longitudinal data revealed that over time incidents had dropped to below baseline data. Baseline data showed a total of eleven incidents reported, the final year showed a total of nine incidents reported. The evaluation of this data also revealed that over time the number of incidents for the pre ESE students decreased, the basic education population varied between seven and three incidents through the years. While there were no incidents reported during baseline for the ESE population, that number increased and varied between 5 and 6 incidents per year. The changes between the data through the years specifically year two and year three, in the ESE and pre-ESE population may be due, in part, to the pre-ESE children becoming staffed over time and becoming part of the ESE population.

Results review of the severity of the incident. This study also included a review of the severity of each incident reported. Each incident states the behavior displayed which constituted the referral. The behaviors range in severity from disobeying and classroom disruption to fights and destroying of property.

The data revealed a high rate of fights being reported from baseline (5) through the end of the evaluation time at year three (26). There were no decreases over time

through the life of the program evaluation. The data likewise revealed a high rate of disruptive behavior reported from baseline (8) through the end of the evaluation time (28). There were no decrease over time through the life of the program being evaluated.

Table 1

Severity of Incidents Reported Baseline Through Year Three

Year	Fight	Destroy	Disrupt	Disobey
Baseline	5	1	8	3
Year 1	10	0	11	5
Year 2	12	8	17	11
Year 3	26	4	28	14

Discussion

This study investigated whether the creation and implementation of a natural sequence of program changes would result in a decrease in school-wide referrals.

With political stakes high regarding the education of Florida's children, it has become increasingly more important for teachers to document educational gains through the use of standardized tests. "States have increasingly relied on standardized test scores as the most important and in some cases only measure of whether or not schools are meeting expectations" (National Education Association, 2002a).

Today's educator must be able to accommodate students with significant learning and behavioral problems, teach in communities that are unable to support the school, and to work under conditions that are counterproductive to teaching and learning (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

With the focus strongly based upon testing results, teachers have not had adequate nor consistent training in the area of proactive behavior management. This study, although not experimental in design, focused on the creation and implementation of a school-wide proactive discipline plan.

The archival evaluation process consisted of evaluating four years worth of school-wide referrals. The detailed reports which were generated from the referrals were evaluated through a systematic scanning process. This process included the use of inclusive and exclusive reporters of referrals, locations where the behavior occurred, and grade level.

Reports which met the criteria for this study generated the data for the mean of school-wide incidents, grade level incidents per ESE, Basic, and Pre ESE from baseline

through year three, a longitudinal study following the Kindergarten cohort through their Third year of school, and an examination of the behaviors reported.

The archival review of the school-wide baseline data from the 1998-1999 revealed that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.14. There were zero reports for the months of August, January, and June. The highest mean month was the month of April followed by the months of May and October. From the months of January through April the trend of incidents increased, although June was at zero reports.

Year one data revealed that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.25. There were zero reports for the months of August and June. The highest mean month was the month of April followed by the month of May. From the months of October through March the trend of incidents increased and then spiked at 0.84 in the month of April.

Year two data revealed that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.47. There were detailed reports for each month of the school year. The highest mean month was the month of November followed by the month of February. From the months of August through November the trend of incidents increased to a mean 0.85 and then decreased to a mean of 0.2 in December followed by another increased trend through February (at 0.84) until a decreased trend toward the month of April. In The last month of the school year, May, an increase occurred.

Year three data revealed that throughout the year students received referrals at a mean of 0.60. There were no detailed reports for the month of August. The highest mean month was the month of March (1.07) followed by April (0.95) and February (0.84). From the months of August through November the trend of incidents increased to 0.84

and then decreased to 0.36 in January followed by another increased trend through March (at 1.07)) until a decrease in May.

In reviewing the mean of incident data it is clear that over time the incidents increased.

Prior to determining if this data reveals an ineffective proactive discipline plan, further discussion into the variables is warranted. Part of the teacher training included training the teachers how to write referrals. Prior to this plan, teachers sent students to the office for misbehavior without creating a referral. The students were removed from the classroom and documentation of the behavior did not occur. This may have accounted for an overall lower baseline mean of referrals. Following the training, the teachers began to document the behaviors through the use of the referral process, which would account for the increase in the mean reported following baseline. During baseline and year one of the program, the high mean months were both April. April also was the month where spring break occurred from baseline through year two. Possible variables may be a combination of the teachers and the students decreasing their diligence toward the school-wide plan both prior to and following spring break. Year Three showed peaks during November and February. A possible variable during November may again have been due to upcoming vacations and decreases in diligence. The high mean in February may be due in part to the possible stress involved with the onset of standardized testing in March. The possible variables due to vacations and testing leading to decreases in consistent behavior management are worth further investigation. Throughout the evaluation increases in the mean were shown over time. One variable to consider was that the last year of this evaluation was also the year that the NCLB Act was created. This perhaps placed more

outside stress on the teachers causing a shift in behavioral management. Another variable to consider was the amount of support offered teachers over time. During year one the teachers were provided with consistent training as well as consultation, rewards for the students were also provided. Therefore, the teachers had the ability to concentrate on academics and the behavior plan. Over time the support decreased and teachers were given more control of the rewards. A variable to be considered and worth investigating is the use of consistent and persistent support over time. This would require a person with the resources within a capacity to devote full time as a behavior specialist or a behavior coach.

Lewis and Sugai (1999) recommend a team member who is vested in making a long-term commitment to establishing and maintaining a school climate that maximizes social and academic learning opportunities for all students.

When comparing the data of basic, ESE, and Pre ESE students for incidents over the evaluation of this study, there were a total of 47 incidents reported by Kindergarten with Pre ESE having the highest number of incidents. In First grade there were a total of 69 incidents with ESE students displaying the highest number of incidents. Second through Fifth grade data all showed basic education students as having the highest number of incidents reported. Second grade had a total of 56 incidents, Third grade had a total of 35 incidents, Fourth grade had 44 incidents, and Fifth grade had 3 incidents. What was remarkable about this incident data by subgroup is that it showed a pattern of identification change over time in regards to the students who were referred.

In Kindergarten there was high rate of pre-ESE students receiving referrals. In First grade ESE produced the highest rate of referrals over time. The variables involved

here may be that the pre-ESE students began the staffing process and were placed into ESE the following year. A closer look at the detailed reports may be warranted to determine if this is a valid variable. Also it should be noted that typically students beginning the school process have not yet learned the school rules. It would be recommended that Kindergarten teachers quickly, proactively, and consistently teach the rules to the students and provide feedback to the students for their behavior. Teachers should give (Lewis & Sugai, 1999) direct instruction, review, and provide corrective feedback to students who make errors in learning how to meet rules or behavioral expectations.

Grades Two and Three showed that pre-ESE students had the least amount of reports. Grades Four and Five showed that there were no Pre-ESE reports. This may also have to do with the staffing process and moving of the Pre-ESE into the ESE category. ESE during these grades may have shown a lower rate of reports due to the ESE behavioral training of these teachers.

Evaluating the longitudinal Kindergarten data revealed that over time incidents had dropped to below baseline data. Baseline data showed a total of eleven incidents reported, the final year showed a total of nine incidents reported, yet the evaluation of this data also revealed that over time the number of incidents for the pre ESE students decreased, while the basic education population varied between seven and three incidents through the years. While there were no incidents reported during baseline for the ESE population, that number increased and varied between 5 and 6 incidents per year. The changes between the data through the years, specifically year two and year three, in the ESE and pre-ESE population may be due, in part, to the pre-ESE children staffed over

time and becoming part of the ESE population. This may also show that the students over time had learned the rules they needed to succeed behaviorally within the school system. This longitudinal data was of great interest. If this evaluation was to be done again, including the data of these students through Fifth grade would be recommended.

The data displaying the behavior reported revealed a high rate of fights from baseline (5) through the end of the evaluation time at year three (26). There were no decreases over time through the life of the program evaluation. The data likewise revealed a high rate of disruptive behavior reported from baseline (8) through the end of the evaluation time (28). There were no decreases over time through the life of the program being evaluated. The lack of decreases may have been due to the teachers being more diligent in their observation of behaviors and perhaps less diligent in the use of praise statements and planned ignoring.

When considering all of the data presented and the possible variables that have caused a lack of decreases in school-wide referrals, it should be mentioned that while the students and teachers over time were rewarded for their behavior, the rewards may not have been of significance. A reinforcement survey was not conducted and future research in this area would be recommended. Another area of research which would be worth pursuing would be the use of detailed reports in the creation of pre-ESE behavior plans. Walker, Horner, Sugai, Bullis, Sprague, Bricker and Kaufman (1996) suggest that 80% of students needs may be met with primary prevention efforts, approximately 15% will need Secondary level assistance, and roughly 5% will require intensive Tertiary support. Primary support would fall into the proactive school-wide discipline plan area. Students needing Secondary level assistance would be students identified as high risk for patterns

of problem behavior. These students could be identified in the early primary grades through the use of the incident reports. Separating data into students who were minimal or non offenders, multiple offenders and high rate offenders was not conducted in this study. Conducting this research through the use of the detailed reports would allow school personnel to determine those at risk as well as focusing on individual students who require intensive behavioral supports or interventions. Perhaps if this research was conducted and the percentage of students needing Secondary and/or Tertiary level prevention proved high enough, the school system could employ a behavior specialist and/or behavior coach much in the same manner as reading specialists and reading coaches are employed to assess and assist those students who are in need of reading interventions.

Another area of future research would be the comparison between this study and a similar study conducted at a school with similar socio-economic students who are making annual yearly gains, as well as comparing data to a similar size school within an advantaged population. Future research within these areas may help to determine whether or not there is a correlation between behavioral success and how this may relate to annual yearly gains.

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