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### School-Wide Classroom Management

Katlyn Attebery, Jaime Coyne and Karla Eidson  
Sam Houston State University

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*An effective classroom management model is essential for creating a positive culture within a school and classroom environment. There are numerous models and programs, such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL) models, and other classroom management models. In this study, research was conducted to determine the impact of the implementation of a school-wide classroom management model on the school culture, specifically referrals, teacher retention, student attendance, parent, and teacher perspectives. The data collected includes student attendance, student behavioral referrals, and teacher retention a year prior to the implementation and the two years after the implementation, along with parent and teacher surveys. The findings indicate that although there was little impact on teacher retention and attendance, the culture and climate after two years did have a positive impact shown by significant decreases in behavior referrals and positive teacher and parent feedback.*

*Keywords:* classroom management, PBIS, SEL, culture, elementary school

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### School-Wide Classroom Management

Educators constantly seek classroom management skills and strategies that can be implemented to fit the needs of their students. Every individual student has needs that vary among their peers and educators must adapt to meet those needs. Effective classroom management is critical for the success of students in the classroom. It can take years to build and gain strong classroom management skills. When educators implement effective systems of management, it can create a positive environment and culture that caters to students' social, emotional, and cognitive needs that ensure student success. In recent years, there has been an introduction to new innovative programs that implement a classroom management structure that is school-wide, such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, Capturing Kid's Hearts, and other similar programs. These programs create a school environment that establishes expectations, behavior interventions, consequences, and processes that are the same throughout the entire school in all grade levels. Programs such as these are thought to establish a strong school culture that becomes a framework that follows students each year as they advance, creating ownership and familiarity.

To more closely examine the effectiveness of school-wide programs, this study was conducted in a Texas suburban school using referral data, attendance, and teacher retention data a year prior to the school-wide implementation of the program through the two years following. The school is comprised of approximately 400- 500 students and 30-35 teachers during the three

*Correspondence concerning this article should be sent to K. Attebery  
Email: [kattebery@splendoraisd.org](mailto:kattebery@splendoraisd.org)*

years studied. The school-wide program included practices, such as greeting at the door, social contracts, good things, behavior intervention processes, and family time that were established in kindergarten through fifth grade with extensive professional development training.

The purpose of this study is to determine if school-wide classroom management programs (in this case Capturing Kids' Hearts) impact the culture of an elementary school setting. The effects of culture were measured looking at teacher retention, student attendance, office referrals as well as parent and teacher surveys. There is an essential need in the education field to find a framework that creates a structured and well-managed classroom with high expectations while fostering a positive environment and student relationships that are essential in the growth of students' social, emotional, and academic success. This action research study was designed to examine the effectiveness of school-wide classroom management programs. In addition, we hope this encourages schools and educators to reexamine their practices, to ensure they are creating positive environments and management processes that allow students to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

### **Literature Review**

There has been great interest in research and studies looking at school-wide management programs in recent years. With the various programs available to schools, studies have looked at many of these innovative programs that have been implemented in schools across the nation. There are many well-known programs such as PBIS, SEL, and Capturing Kid's Hearts that are all different programs but are similar in that they are implemented school-wide and are a framework for positive classroom management. These programs have been studied thoroughly to examine their effectiveness in a variety of fields.

Positive Behavior Support Intervention (PBIS) is defined as a school-wide system that is "designed to enhance all students' prosocial behavior and academic outcomes while promoting a positive school climate" (Noltemeyer et al., 2019, p. 81). It focuses on an approach that encourages positive behavior and prevention of negative behavior, compared to the reaction of problem behavior. This is becoming a trend due to the finding that punitive approaches increase problem behavior (Oliver, Lambert & Mason, 2019).

There are numerous studies that have examined the impact and effectiveness of PBIS. One study conducted by Wienen et al. (2018) examined three years of implementation of a PBIS program and using the first year as a baseline to compare data of behavior changes in scales of total problems, conduct problems, emotional problems, hyperactivity problems, peer problems, and prosocial problems. The results of this study indicated that there was a small effect on the improvement of prosocial behavior and peer behavior (Wienen et al., 2018). In addition, they found that PBIS practices were much more effective for girls compared to boys in a school setting (Wienen et al., 2018). Lastly, although there was only a small effect indicated in this study completed by Wienen et al. (2018), it was stated that the small effect can differ greatly based on individual students, teachers, and schools. Another study, completed by Oliver et al. (2019) concluded that the success of PBIS programs was apparent, but there was little to no evidence that indicates teachers are effectively using the practices and features in the classroom.

The popularity of these programs have increased as school find more effective classroom management practices that promote positive school culture and climate (Bear, Yang, Mantz, & Harris, 2017). In a study completed by Bear et al. (2017), concluded through student questionnaires, students "viewed their school's climate more favorably when they perceive greater use of praise and rewards for good behavior, less use of punitive consequences, and greater teaching of social and emotional competencies" (p. 382). Similarly, another study by

Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers, and Weissberg (2016) also looked at SEL and identified the benefits of SEL for teachers through empirical and theoretical considerations. Oberle et al. (2016) stated that when SEL is implemented effectively “teachers need to spend less time on classroom management” (p. 5) which leads to “less disruptions and more positive classroom climate” (p. 6).

These studies all indicate there are various positive behavior programs that can be implemented school-wide. In addition, all these programs have a common theme: a positive and consistent classroom management program that has numerous effects on the culture and climate of a school. These are measured by behavior referral data, student, and teacher perspectives in a variety of studies and settings.

### **Methodology**

This action research included both qualitative and quantitative data from a single elementary school in grade levels kindergarten through fifth grade. The qualitative data was collected through teacher and parent surveys. The quantitative data was collected based upon office referrals, student attendance, and teacher retention in the school year of 2017-2018 to the implementation of a school-wide classroom management model and two years after in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. At this particular school, there are 458 students with 35 teachers. In regards to the student demographics, 7% are African American, 22.7% are Hispanic, 74% are White, 7% are American Indian, 4% are Asian and 1.5% are Two or more races. Also, 57% are Economically Disadvantaged, 5.7% are English Learners and 10.9% qualify for Special Education services.

### **Participation Selection**

This study has three types of participants included in the data, including parents, teachers, and students. The participants included all grade levels kindergarten through fifth grade in a suburban Texas elementary school. To look at the impact of the implementation of the school-wide classroom management model, the entire student, parent, and teacher population was used in the data collection. The parent and teacher survey participants were a pool of random participants in all kindergarten through fifth-grade levels. Due to COVID-19, there was a limited amount of willingness to participate due to demands of online learning. The 10 participants surveyed were from a larger group that was surveyed that were interested in participating. Though a low sample number, the grade levels were all represented allowing for accurate representation.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this study was collected through surveys, referral, attendance, and teacher retention data. The qualitative data was collected through surveys to assess parent and teacher perspectives on the implementation of the school-wide program. The survey posed two questions asking parents and teachers to give their perspective on the positive and negative implications of the program. The reason for the only providing two questions was to give parents and teachers alike an open-ended way to share their viewpoint of the positive and negative aspects of the program. The quantitative data was obtained through a school-wide database that collected the data and percentages ensuring accuracy for the academic years including 2017- 2018, 2018-2019, and 2019- 2020.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were examined and compared to determine if there were significant changes in each section from when there was no program in place in 2017-2018 and during 2018- 2019 and 2019- 2020 when it was in place. These sections included referrals, teacher

retention, and student attendance percentages. Qualitative data were categorized by positive and negative perceptions of teachers and parents, in order to use a comparative method in the data analysis of this section.

### Results

Through the data collection and analysis, it was apparent that there was comparative data that could be directly correlated with a program, such as a school-wide classroom management program. Examining each section, there were several outcomes and insights. This section will discuss each data category that was compared through the academic years.

#### Student attendance

This section looks at the attendance rates the academic year of 2017- 2018 (which was prior to implementation school-wide classroom management program) and 2018- 2019 and 2019- 2020, which were two years during the implementation for the entire school population each year, as shown in Table 1. The percentages show the average student attendance throughout each academic year. The results of the analysis of attendance rates prior to the implementation and two years after showed no significant change. There was less than one percentage change in student attendance in the two years, still ranging between 95% and 96% and there was no pattern in the change that correlated directly to the implementation (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Student Attendance Percentages: Kindergarten through Fifth Grade*

	2017-2018	2018- 2019	2019-2020
<b>Student Attendance Percentage</b>	<b>95.36%</b>	<b>95.75%</b>	<b>95.17%</b>

#### Student Referrals

This section looks at the student referral numbers annually the year prior to the implementation and two years into the implementation. This data is based on the entire school population, kindergarten through fifth grade. The data is the number of disciplinary office referrals each year, as seen in Table 2. The results of the comparative analysis show a major decrease in disciplinary referrals immediately after the implementation of the program. There was a decrease of 48.38% after the first year of implementation. Due to a worldwide pandemic, school closures resulted in referral collection in 2019-2020 to be completed in mid-March at 67 referrals. To predict the end of year referral data, the referral rate was averaged by the number of months to project 84 referrals at the end of the year. This projected change in referrals from the second year of implementation to the end of the third year resulted in a 73.75% decrease.

Table 2

*Student Referrals: Kindergarten through Fifth Grade*

	2017-2018	2018- 2019	2019-2020
Student Office Referrals	620	320	67 (August 2019- March 2020  Projected to be 84

*\*Due to COVID-19 school closures affected the duration of the school year for 2019-2020.*

### Teacher Retention

This section looks at the teacher retention rates annually the year before the implementation and two years into the implementation. The percentages show the teacher retention rates through the last three academic school years, as seen in Table 3. The results show that there was a huge decrease in teacher retention in 2018-2020, but there was no apparent significant change that was correlated directly with the implementation of the program (See Table 3).

Table 3

*Teacher Retention: Kindergarten through Fifth Grade Teachers*

	2017-2018	2018- 2019	2019-2020
<b>Teacher Retention Rates</b>	<b>80.7%</b>	<b>29.9 %</b>	<b>91%</b>

### Teacher Perspectives

This qualitative data was collected in April 2020 based on the perspectives of teachers and staff after approximately two years of implementation. The survey asked teachers to list the positive and negative implications of positive school-wide management programs. The table below outlines some of the main categories of feedback collected in two sections. (See table 4). The collection of survey data resulted in the result that teacher positive feedback outweighed the negative 6:4.

Table 4

*Teacher Perspectives: Kindergarten through Fifth Grade*

Positive Implications	Negatives Implications
Builds a great culture	One size does not fit all
Provides expectations in the classroom	Implementation varies among staff members
Students feel valued	Hard to implement
Kids are happier	Teachers are forced to “buy-in”
Relationship builder	
Addresses positive and negative behavior	

### Parent Perspectives

This qualitative data was collected in April 2020 based on the perspectives of parents after approximately two years of implementation. The survey asked parents to list the positive and negative implications of positive school-wide management programs from the parental point of view. The table below outlines some of the main categories of feedback collected. (See table 5). The data showed that positive parent perspectives and feedback tremendously outweighed the negative 4:0.

Table 5

*Parent Perspectives: Kindergarten through Fifth Grade*

Positive Implications	Negative Implications
Students feel valued	

Students love going to school	
Use practices at home	

### **Discussion and Results**

The data collected did not have a summative conclusion. There were some areas of the elementary school's culture and the climate that was directly impacted within the two years of implementation. These areas included the perspectives of teachers and parents as well as office referrals due to behavior.

Parent surveys revealed solely positive perspectives and feedback regarding the impact of the school-wide program implementation. Their feedback concluded that parents felt that their children felt valued and enjoyed being at school more. Teacher surveys differed in that there were both negative and positive after the program's implementation. Teachers felt that the program allowed for structure and expectations. One of the biggest downfalls teachers felt was an issue was the difference in classroom implementation, which allowed for varying results. Although teachers did find negative aspects of the school-wide program, the positive feedback outweighed all the negative. All in all, the perspectives of parents and teachers concluded that the implementation of the school-wide program after two years had a positive impact on the culture and climate of the school in all grade levels.

The collection of data that included office referrals the year prior and the two years following showed a great decrease just one year after the implementation and continued to decrease the following year. This decrease in office referral due to behavioral issues seems to be a direct result of the school-wide classroom management program implementation. One implication could be the influx of new teachers that first year of implementation, but the following year's decrease solidifies that it could be a direct relation to the structure and expectations that a school-wide management program creates. Also, training and professional development allow teachers to receive skills and strategies that help to promote and encourage a strong classroom management skillset.

The other data collected, such as teacher retention and student attendance did not have any significant increases or decreases directly correlated to the year of implementation and the two years following but warrants continued collection and observation.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Due to the limitations partly because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I would like to continue this research to see if there are similar results. I would also like to increase my sample size for participants which would provide a richer study. This study could also be replicated or extended in other schools such as the middle school or high school level to see if the intervention has sustaining effect on the students' behavior.

### **Conclusion**

In this study, it was concluded that a school-wide classroom management program can have a positive impact on an elementary school's culture and climate in as little as two years. Programs such as these, instill positive behavior management that can greatly encourage environments that foster students' social, emotional, and academic needs. With this information, educators and administrators can rethink and reexamine their classroom management practices finding more effective programs that focus on student needs and positive behavior prevention and intervention.

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