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Effects of Implementing the SWIS System in a PBIS School

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Abstract

This action research project was conducted to determine if using the School Wide Information System (SWIS) data management system would affect the number of office discipline referrals (ODR's) students identified as tier 2 students using the PBIS model received. Information from an office referral form was entered into the system and data was gathered from reports generated from that system to determine if the number of ODR's decreased after implementing the SWIS system. After analyzing the data, it was determined that simply inputting information did not decrease ODR's, however, putting this information in the hands of educators on a regular basis may be more beneficial.

The Effects of Implementing the SWIS System in a PBIS School

Preventing behavior problems and reinforcing wanted behaviors are the main goals of a school that uses Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). For years, schools have recognized the need for a school-wide behavior system. These supports should prevent the development or worsening of problem behaviors and it should encourage teaching and reinforcement of social expectations and behaviors across all environments for all students and by all staff (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). Instead of adopting a get tough or zero tolerance policy, which has proven to have little impact on student behavior, many schools are turning to a more positive approach. Unlike typical school practices which wait for a student to fail before providing support, PBIS begins with a three-tier approach of support before the unwanted behaviors begin. The first tier addresses behavior needs of all students. The goal is to be proactive and prevent any social, and therefore, academic failure. Students who may fall in the second tier will require additional behavior support to experience success. These students may not have responded to the primary interventions, but the behaviors do not pose a serious risk to themselves or others. The focus will be on preventing these problem behaviors from becoming chronic. The third tier is designed to support individual students whose behaviors are serious enough to require more immediate and intensive support. These supports will be highly individualized.

To begin, a PBIS school must create positively stated schoolwide rules that teach social skills. The school must also develop a schoolwide reinforcement system that is implemented with fidelity by all staff. When implemented effectively and accurately, schools can expect 89% (elementary), 74% (middle school), and 71% (high school) of all students to respond to the

primary intervention (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). Even with effective interventions in place, 11% of elementary, 26% of middle school, and 29% of high school students will not respond to the primary intervention and will require the tier two level of interventions, mentioned earlier (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008). Through collection of data such as office discipline referrals, attendance records, and other measures of appropriate behavior, a PBIS team will be able to study the data collected and be able to help staff provide the supports needed for individual students (Simonsen, Sugai, & Negron, 2008).

To study this data, teams can use a program called School-Wide Information System (SWIS) Suite. This is a web-based information system to collect, summarize, and use student behavior data for decision-making. Through SWIS, staff is able to enter office discipline referrals online. The data can then be summarized to provide information about individual students, groups of students, or the entire student body. There are five main reports that can answer five questions: How often do referrals occur? What problem behaviors occur most frequently in our building? Where are problem behaviors most likely to occur? When are problem behaviors most likely to occur? Which student are involved in referrals? Eight other reports will allow the team to dive into the data to define behavior patterns in detail (SWIS Suite).

Literature Review

Safran and Oswals (2003) state, “The increase in aggressive and delinquent behaviors in schools throughout the country has reached critical proportions. Alarmed parents, students, and lawmakers expect educators to respond more effectively” (p. 367). Safran and Oswals (2003) suggest, that interventions within the PBS umbrella are built on the foundations of

applied behavior analysis (ABA) and repackaged in a more positive, collaborative, and holistic framework. PBS interventions are designed to be proactive, to prevent problem behavior by altering a situation before problems escalate, and to concurrently teach appropriate alternatives (Safran & Oswals, 2003). School-based teams for interventions can also identify non-classroom, specific setting such as hallways, playgrounds, and cafeterias for intervention (Safran & Oswals, 2003). Accounting for about 50% of all problem behaviors, these locations frequently lack established routines and often lack clear behavioral expectations, which may lead to office referrals. Software packages such as the School Wide Information System (SWIS) can assist schools with keeping track of this information (Safran & Oswals, 2003). This web-based computer system cannot only help school administration and staff keep an accurate account of office discipline referrals, but also requires and effective schoolwide management plan (Safran & Oswals, 2003). It can also enable school personnel to monitor behaviors of individuals or groups of students and help determine when and where behaviors most frequently occur. The convenient and efficient manner in which computer applications such as SWIS operate can aid school in making decisions regarding the implementation or evaluation of PBIS (Safran & Oswals, 2003). These studies reflect how quantifiable data can assist the team decision-making process for large numbers of students (Safran & Oswals, 2003).

Eber, Sugai, Smith, and Scott (2002) state the students who display severe emotional and behavior problems in our schools represent a relatively small proportion of the school's total student enrollment: however, it requires significant amounts of expertise, time, and resources. These effective behavior supports require active and efficient involvement of more than just school personnel do in particular; it requires the family to involved (Eber et al., 2002).

Together the wraparound process can increase the likelihood that appropriate supports and interventions are adopted, implemented and sustained, thereby leading to improved behavior functioning (Eber et al., 2002) for students with or at risk of developing severe problem behaviors. According to Eber et al. (2002), PBIS augments wraparound by giving educators, family members, students, and community agency staff members, access to research validated practices and processes for changing behavior across the range of student life domains. Originally, the wraparound process was initiated for those students with the most chronic and intensive emotional and behavioral needs (Eber et al., 2002). However, many schools and communities also have begun integrating this approach with students whose school have recognized them as being at risk for chronic problems (Eber et al., 2002). This includes students who may not have come to the attention of mental health, juvenile justice, or other community agencies but for whom the school and /or family have recognized that such attention is likely if effective interventions are not provided (Eber et al., 2002). Although primarily initiated through mental health or child welfare systems, the direct application of wraparound in schools has led to reports of improved outcomes for student with emotional behavior disorders in a variety of educational settings, including the general education classrooms (Eber et al., 2002). Wraparound is not a service or a set of services. It is a planning process, which consists of careful monitoring of implementation and outcomes (Eber et al., 2002). The wraparound process brings teachers, families, and community representatives together to commit unconditionally to a way of conducting problem solving and planning that gives equal importance and support to the child and his or her family, teachers, and other caregivers (Eber et al., 2002).

Yeung, Craven, Mooney, Tracey, Barker, Power, and Lewis (2016) define sustainability as durable, long-term implementation of a practice at a level of fidelity that continues to produce valued outcomes. Viewed as a process, sustainability is not simply about the length of implementation, but it also involves quality, integrity and contextual factors of that implementation (Yeung et al., 2016). Researchers observed that the number of office discipline referrals and suspensions decreased significantly during the first year of implementation, but rose to a level that even exceeded baseline data during the second and third years. There were 428 schools investigated in Illinois and found that even though there was a reduction in office referrals, suspension did not decrease over seven years of implementation of PBIS (Yeung et al., 2016). The authors speculated that long-term programs might experience diluted intensity and focus. Yeung et al. (2002) also found that administrator support, communication, and databased decision-making were the main contributing factors for sustainability (Yeung et al., 2016). Teaching behavior expectations, establishing a reward system and a system of monitoring and decision –making are critical features of programs sustained for at least five years. Other factors influencing sustainability include coaching, training, staff buy-in, teaming, resources, ad turnover (Yeung et al., 2016).

Method

Participants

This action research project was conducted in an elementary school consisting of grades two through five. There are 11 focus participants that have been identified as the Tier 2 students in the building, who participate in the Check-in-Check-Out (CICO) system. The students all happen to be boys. There are two third graders, five fourth graders, and four fifth graders. There are also comparisons made to the whole school, which consists of 408 students in grades K-5.

Data Collection

The focus of this project is to determine if using the SWIS system will help lower the number of office referrals of students, particularly labeled tier 2 students. After training on the SWIS program, the administration decided to make a few minor changes to the office referral form (See Figures 1 and 2). When writing a student up for an office referral, the adult will now give more precise information (See Figure 2) that will be entered into the SWIS program. This data can be used to generate multiple reports that show the type of problem behavior, location of the problem areas, time of day, day of the week, grade level, or can even be broken down by individual student. These reports should then be used by the classroom teacher to help better determine how to encourage the student to control their behavior and by the school counselor/administration who is in charge of supporting tier 2 students involved in the CICO system.

Lakeview Office Discipline Referral Form

Name: _____ Date: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

Referring Person: _____ Time: _____

Other student(s) involved: None Peers Staff Teacher Substitute Other

Issue of Concern Location	Problem Behavior
Restroom	Destruction of Property
Lunchroom	Harassment of Staff/Student
Classroom	Incomplete schoolwork
Playground	Noncompliance
Hallway	Overt Disrespect
Arrival/Dismissal	Physical Aggression
Bus	Disruption of Instruction
	Work Completion
	Theft
	Abusive Language/Profanity

What happened? _____

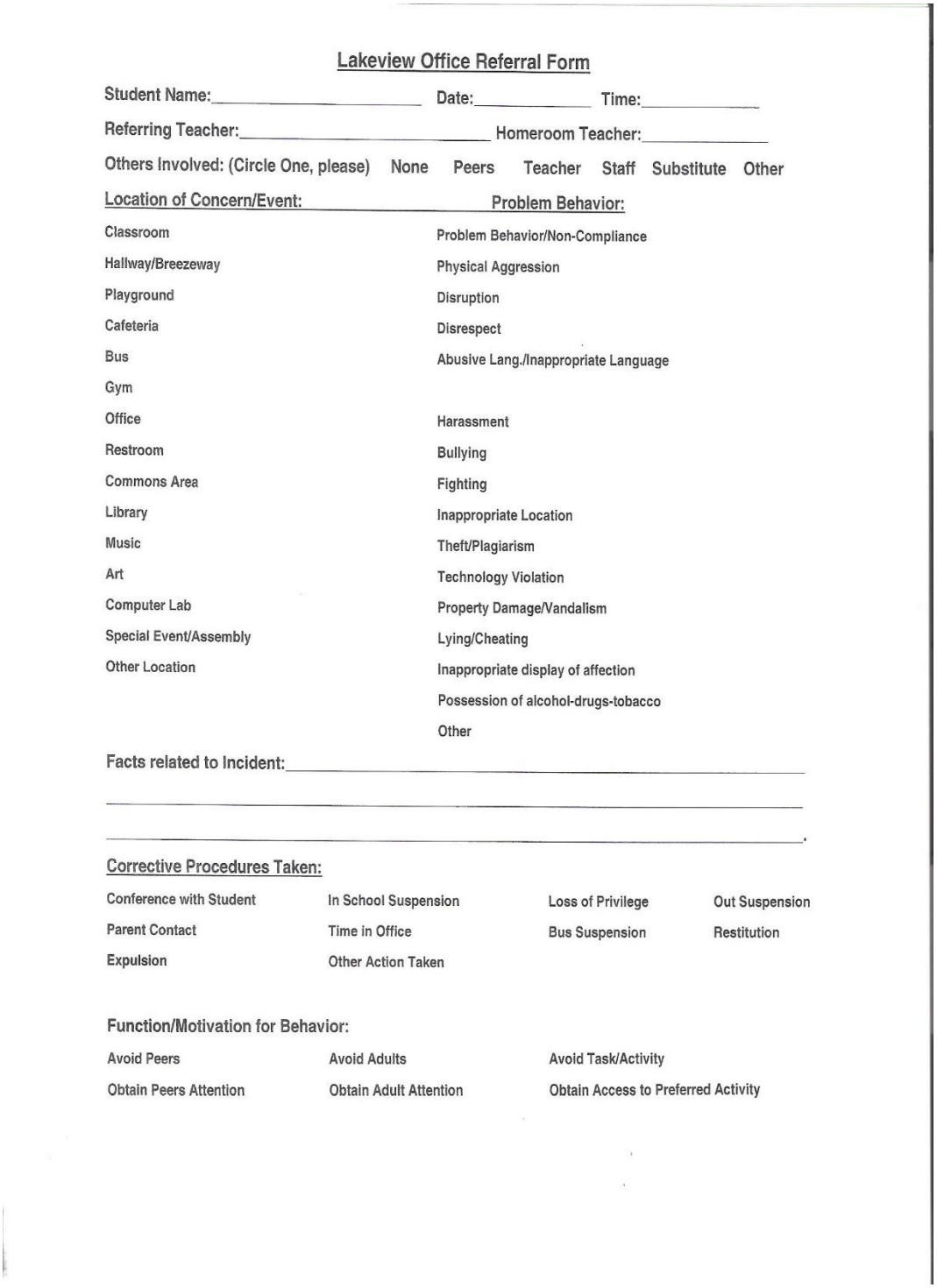
_____

_____

Consequences

Verbal reprimand	Loss of privilege_____	Time out
Home contact	In-school suspension	No action taken
Follow up agreement	Expulsion	Out of school suspension
Teaching interaction	Detention	Restitution/apology

Figure 1. Old version of the office referral form used prior to implementing SWIS.



Lakeview Office Referral Form

Student Name:_____ Date:_____ Time:_____

Referring Teacher:_____ Homeroom Teacher:_____

Others Involved: (Circle One, please) None Peers Teacher Staff Substitute Other

Location of Concern/Event: Problem Behavior:

Location of Concern/Event:	Problem Behavior:
Classroom	Problem Behavior/Non-Compliance
Hallway/Breezeway	Physical Aggression
Playground	Disruption
Cafeteria	Disrespect
Bus	Abusive Lang./Inappropriate Language
Gym	
Office	Harassment
Restroom	Bullying
Commons Area	Fighting
Library	Inappropriate Location
Music	Theft/Plagiarism
Art	Technology Violation
Computer Lab	Property Damage/Vandalism
Special Event/Assembly	Lying/Cheating
Other Location	Inappropriate display of affection
	Possession of alcohol-drugs-tobacco
	Other

Facts related to Incident:_____

_____

_____.

Corrective Procedures Taken:

Conference with Student	In School Suspension	Loss of Privilege	Out Suspension
Parent Contact	Time in Office	Bus Suspension	Restitution
Expulsion	Other Action Taken		

Function/Motivation for Behavior:

Avoid Peers	Avoid Adults	Avoid Task/Activity
Obtain Peers Attention	Obtain Adult Attention	Obtain Access to Preferred Activity

Figure 2. New version of the office referral form after implementing SWIS. It now has a place for teachers to include the student's motivation for their behavior as well as more options for location and problem behavior.

After training was done on the SWIS system with administration in December 2017, it went in to use in January 2018. Office referrals from the beginning of the year were gathered and entered into the SWIS program. Reports were then created showing the whole school's data by number of referrals in a month, day of the week, location, behavior problem, and time of day. Other reports generated were for a group of 11 students identified as tier 2 students through PBIS. These included monthly reports on the tier 2 students' location and day of the week. The data from the months prior to implementation of the SWIS program were then compared to data post implementation to decide if less referrals were given.

Table 1

Student Summary of ODR's before and after implementing the SWIS system.

Student	Preliminary	Post	Point Difference	% of Change
A	0	3	+3	+300%
B	4	2	-2	-50%
C	1	1	0	0%
D	4	1	-3	-75%
E	3	0	-3	-100%
F	1	1	0	0%
G	6	5	-1	-116.66%
H	0	3	+3	+300%
I	4	2	-2	-50%
J	0	1	+1	+100%

K	3	2	-1	-33.3%

Data was collected from the months of August through February; however, the months of October through November (pre-SWIS) and January through February (post-SWIS) were compared in this analysis because of the similar number of school days. Reports were compiled for two groups. The first group is made up of eleven tier 2 students. These eleven students consisting of two third graders, five fourth graders, and four fifth graders are also shown individually. Of the eleven students reported on, six were able to decrease their number of ODR's from the pre-intervention time period to the post-intervention time period, while two remained the same, and three actually increased the number of ODR's.

Figure 3 shows the number of ODR's received by the tier 2 group during the month of October. There were 20 ODR's given in October, with 12 of those being from the classroom.

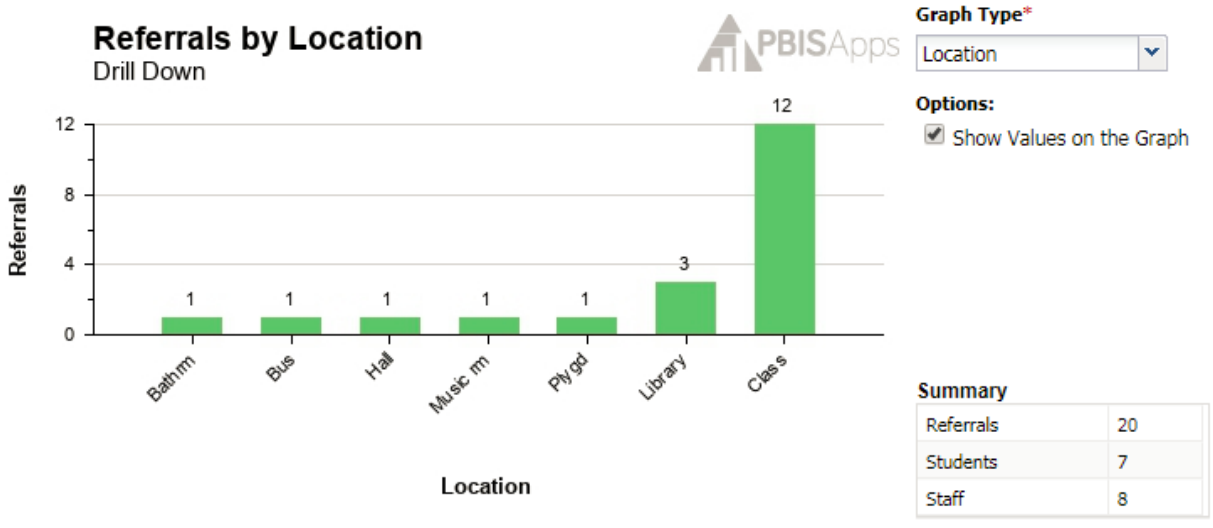


Figure 3. Tier 2 students' ODR's-October

Figure 4 shows the number of ODR's for the tier 2 students during the month of November. There were only 6 given out with 5 of those coming from the classroom.

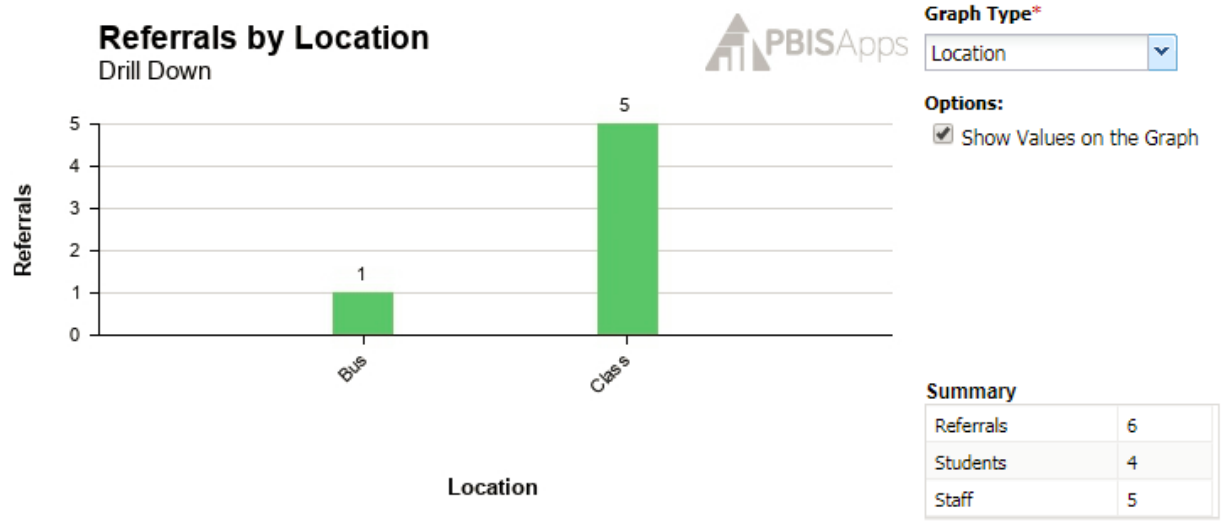


Figure 4. Tier 2 students' ODR's-November

Figure 5 shows the number of ODR's received by the tier 2 group during the month of January. There were 8 given with 5 of those coming from the classroom.

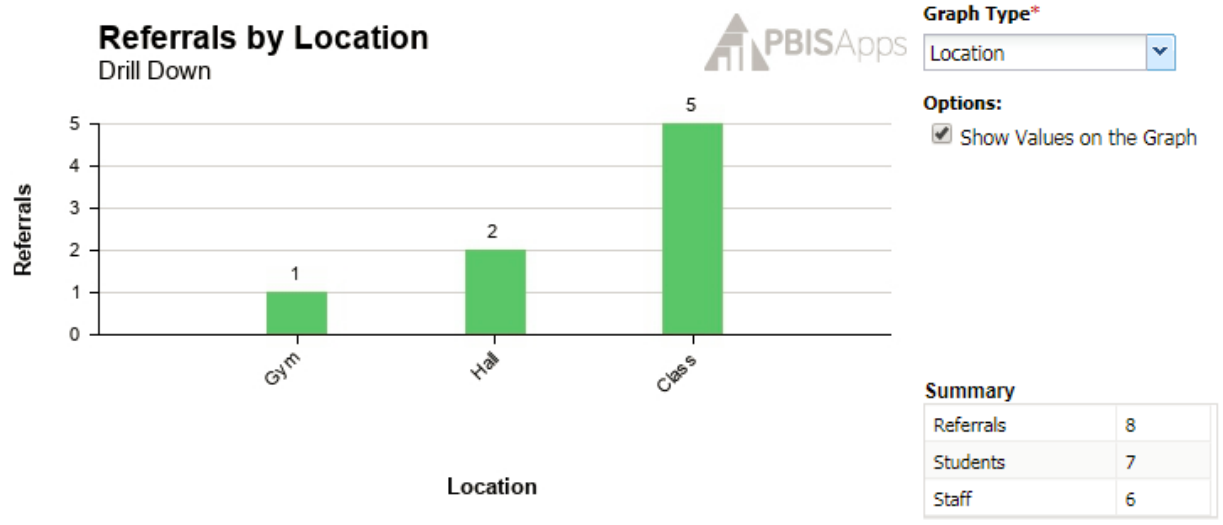


Figure 5. Tier 2 students' ODR's-January

Figure 6 shows the number of ODR's for the tier 2 students during the month of February. There were 11 given, while 9 of those occurred in the classroom.

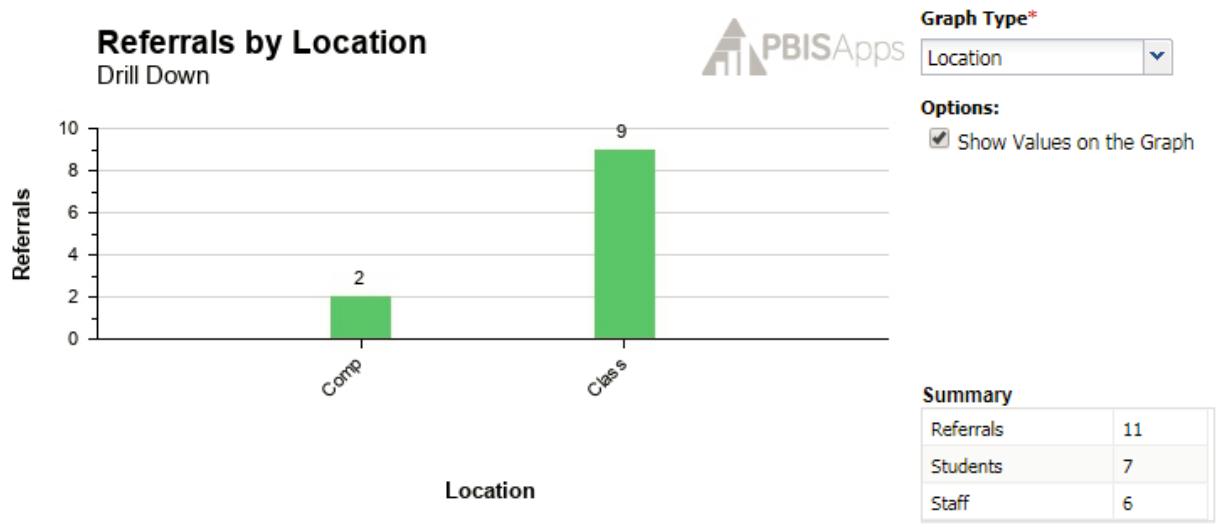


Figure 6. Tier 2 students' ODR's-February

These reports showed that from October to November office referrals (ODR's) decreased from 20 to 6, while they increased from January to February going from 8 to 11 for the tier 2 students. Overall, these numbers show a decrease from October to February, however, they show an increase again from January to February. The number of ODR's given for each month for the tier 2 students during these months was 12, 5, 5, and 9 respectively. Overall, the location where most ODR's were given was the general education classroom for all four of these months. Even while looking at the whole school year, the largest concern with ODR's is still the general education classroom. For the tier 2 students during the months of August through February, there were 54 referral from 11 students given by 13 staff members. Of the 54 referrals, 39 of them were given in the classroom, which leaves 15 ODR's given

between eight different locations. This is a huge red flag and that trend continued through the whole school data.

Figure 7 shows the total number of ODR's for tier 2 students during the months of August through February. There were a total of 54 referrals, while 39 were given in the classroom.

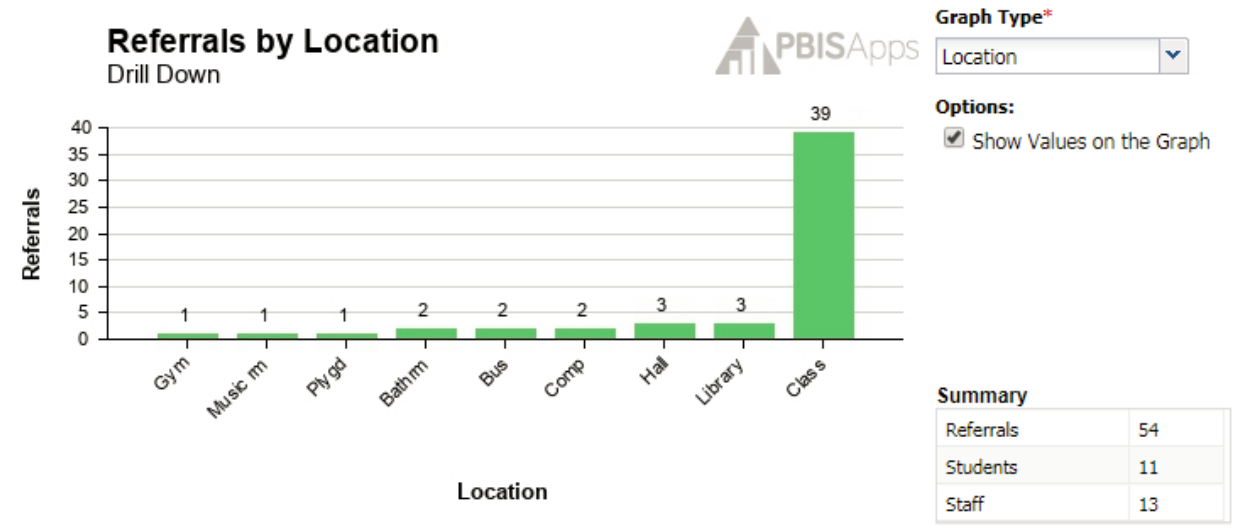


Figure 7. Tier 2 students' ODR's location-August through February

Figure 8 shows the number of ODR's for the whole school during the months of October through February. There were a total of 206 ODR's received by the whole school. Forty-six percent of the total number of these ODR's were given in the classroom.

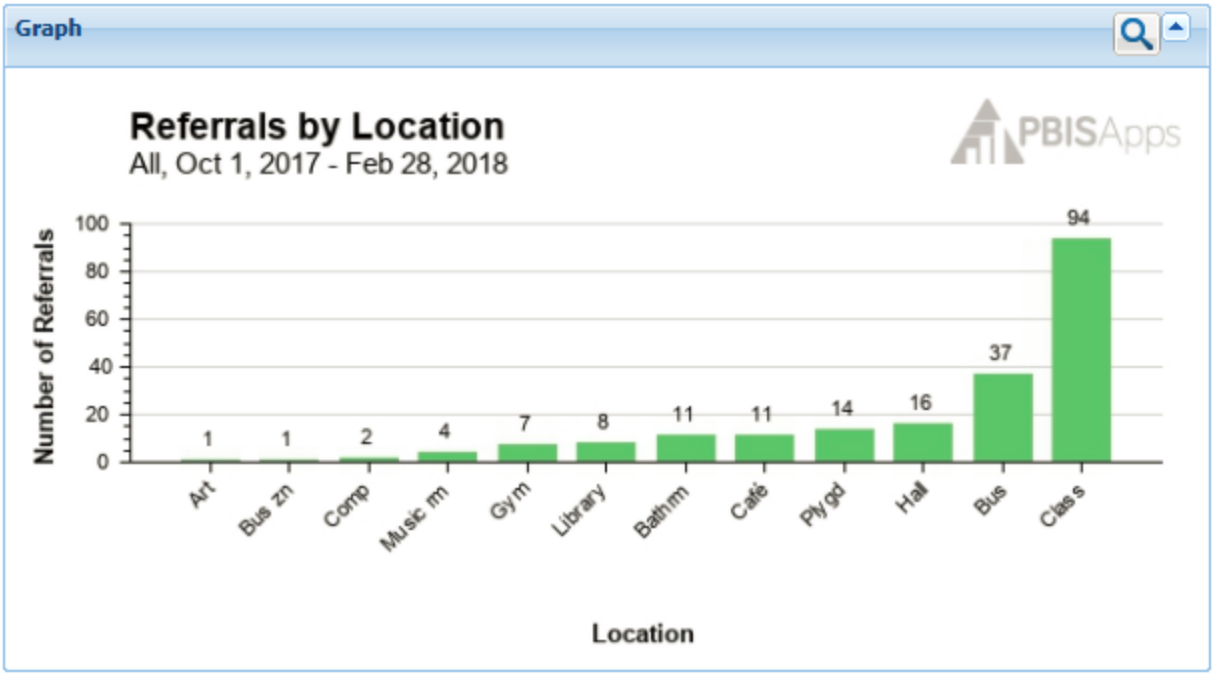


Figure 8. Whole school ODR's by location- October through February

Figure 9 describes the problem behaviors for which the ODR's were given to the whole school during the months of October through February.

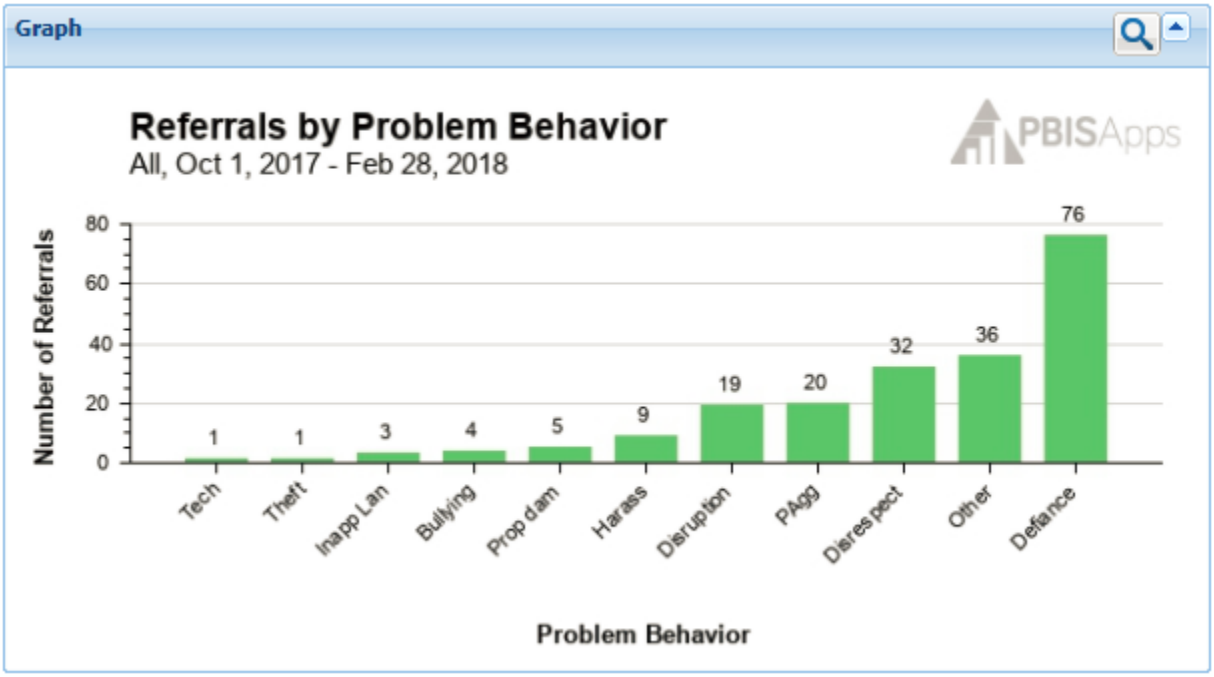
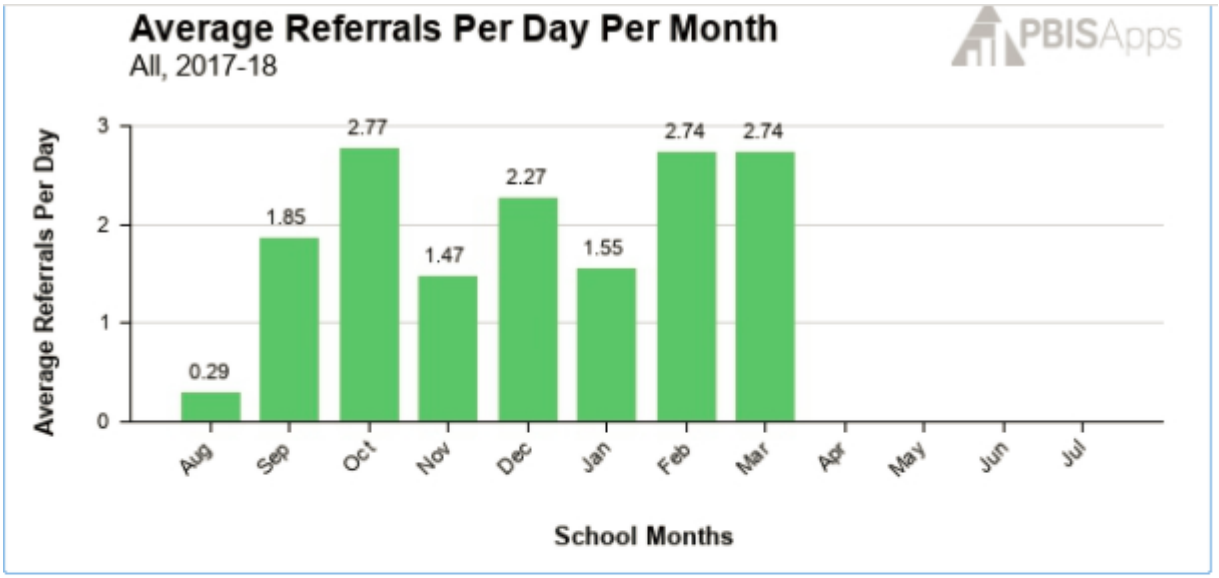


Figure 9. Whole school ODR's by problem behavior- October through February

Figure 10 breaks the referrals down to show the average number of ODR's per day per month. The data table below the chart shows the number of day's school was in session and the number of referrals given that month. The average number of ODR's per day per month is then represented.



Data Table

Year	Month	Days Count	Referral Count	ODR/School Day
2017	August	7	2	0.29
2017	September	20	37	1.85
2017	October	22	61	2.77
2017	November	19	28	1.47
2017	December	15	34	2.27
2018	January	20	31	1.55
2018	February	19	52	2.74

Figure 10. Whole school average referrals per day per month - August through February

The second group consisted of 408 students, second through fifth grade. From the same months of August through February, the whole school saw 94 ODR's given in the classroom, 37 came from the school bus, 16 from the hallway, 14 from the playground, 11 from the cafeteria, 11 from the restrooms, 8 from the library, 7 from the gym, 4 from Music, 2 from computer lab, 1 from bus zone, and 1 from Art. This leads to the question, "Why are there so many ODR's given in the classroom?" According to the SWIS reports, printed using the data from the new Office Referral Forms, we are now able to see the motivation for these behaviors. The top five reasons students were given ODR's in the months of October through February were as follows: defiance (76 ODR's), other (36 ODR's), disrespect (32 ODR's), physical aggression (20 ODR's), and disruption (19 ODR's). All of these motivations have to do with interpersonal communication, which leads to another question of, "What's next? How do we fix this?"

Discussion

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study would be only using the tier 2 students. Since there are only eleven students in this group, it made it hard to get a good idea of the whole population. Because of that, a new population was also used to compare data. A second limitation was time. To compare two periods that were similar both pre-SWIS program and post-SWIS that were relevant to the study proved difficult.

Further Study

Future studies looking in to the effects of the SWIS system on a PBIS school, may want to gather information from multiple schools with varying demographics to get a wider sense of impact due to use of this program. Future studies may choose to look at individual students or whole grade levels instead of using information from a whole school. Already having established a PBIS atmosphere is important to the study, as a comparison of using the system, not implementing PBIS, should be priority.

Conclusion

Through the gathering of office discipline referrals for tier 2 students and the whole school, the findings accumulated through this study suggest that simply inputting data to the SWIS system is not enough to make a difference in the behaviors of students. Creating the reports and sharing with the teachers or giving every teacher access to the program is a crucial piece to the puzzle. Teachers are the most valuable resource in a school setting. The SWIS system is an ideal tool that can be very useful in assisting in getting answers as to when, where, and why ODR's are being given. Only then, can teachers guide students in the right direction for more positive behavior.

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