

PRINCIPAL SENSEMAKING IN IMPLEMENTATION: HOW PERSPECTIVES
INFLUENCE OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

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The increasing rate of punitive school discipline, especially for students of color, that remove students from the classroom through suspension or expulsion are a serious concern for educators, school leaders, and policy designers. Students who are removed from the classroom as a result of punitive disciplinary practices lose valuable learning time; they exhibit social deficiencies, and suffer from overall declines in academic abilities. Due to the negative outcomes of punitive school discipline practices for the students, the implementation of innovative practices to address the growing rate of discipline is considerably important. This study of the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (CRPBIS) in the Bald Mountain School District provides an important lens into how principal sensemaking effects implementation. This study also provides an important lens into how an innovative practice can be introduced within a school system. Understanding how principals interpret and make sense of policy introduction and implementation is critical when thinking about how innovative practices evolve from the design stage to the implementation stage.

An important finding of this study is the identification of principal sensemaking in implementation. Previous literature points out that principals are important for teacher sensemaking, but there is an existing gap in the literature that identifies how principal sensemaking of an innovative practice or program can impact the overall implementation

process. This study closes that gap slightly by identifying certain factors the effect principal sensemaking and how that sensemaking, as seen in this study, can alter the overall success of implementation. Furthermore, this study highlights how program sensemaking can affect the velocity, the completeness, and the inclusion of stakeholders in the implementation of CRPBIS and that those outcomes of interest are in some manner predicated on principal sensemaking.

This dissertation argues that principal sensemaking mediates implementation and that the velocity and vigor with which a program is introduced to the school is a factor of the individual principal's interpretation of the program's need and benefits. This study analyzes how three principals in one school district interpret and act upon district policy initiatives to introduce CRPBIS in all schools across the district. While the implementation was designed to be similar across all schools, program variation did occur. The variation in implementation is a product of how school leaders introduced, interpreted, and ultimately led implementation.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Jodi, and my two sons, Drew and Lee.
Without your love and support, none of this would be possible.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

BMSD	Bald Mountain School District
CR	Culturally Responsive
CRPBIS	Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
GRD	Gore Range District
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
PD	Professional Development
SAP	Student Assistance Provider

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

During the 2015 – 2016 academic year, the Bald Mountain School District (BMSD), a school district that is located in an urban location in a mid-size city in America's Midwest, began the process to implement a new approach to school discipline that required principals in the district to interpret the language and impact of a new policy. This new policy originated at the district's central offices and was introduced in each of the school buildings by the principal. It was the task of the principals to implement the new policy and through their action the policy came to life in the buildings. The principals are central actors in this new policy and their interpretation of the policy and the policy goals are influential in the successful transition from the traditional way of addressing student misbehavior to the new approach to school discipline envisioned by the designers of the policy.

BMSD is attempting to implement a new approach to school discipline protocols in an attempt to address the growing concerns about the incidence and severity of discipline within the school district. School discipline has grown to become a national discussion in the recent years and this district is not immune to the growing commentary that school discipline is growing at a very fast rate. There are many reasons to address the issue of school discipline sooner than later. A significant factor within the conversations taking place regarding school discipline is the rate of discipline for non-majority students and the overall incidence rate of punitive discipline for these students. It has been pointed out by Bal (2016) that “regardless of the schools they attended, non-dominant youth were disproportionality removed from the classroom due to behavior incidents” (p. 415). The increase in the awareness of the disproportional rates of discipline for non-majority

students throughout the United States has led to many school districts to examine their own discipline protocols and procedures. As one of these schools, BMSD is in the process of a multi-year implementation of a relatively new approach to school discipline that marries the practices and historical successes of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to a culturally responsive (CR) approach to improve the overall climate and culture in schools. This innovative form of discipline policy is known as Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (CRPBIS). According to Bal (2015) the program of “CRPBIS strives to increase equity within PBIS by educating practitioners and opening up decision-making and problem-solving processes to previously excluded families” (p. 8). By including families and other stakeholders, CRPBIS leverages the involvement, input, and contribution of stakeholders and attempts to bring the school and the home closer to one another when implementing a program such as CRPBIS. This new program is designed to take into account the culture of the students and the community in the development of new approaches to school discipline at the local (individual school buildings and classrooms) level. Ideally, CRPBIS is a system that is a “locally situated, ground-up systemic transformational model led and owned by – not for – local stakeholders” (Bal, 2015, p. 11). The CRPBIS system allows for individuals external to the central district offices to have ownership of the implementation and use local expertise to introduce CRPBIS in a way that best fits the local need. While this dissertation will look into the implementation of CRPBIS, the effort in this study is not to look at the effectiveness of CRPBIS in reducing disciplinary action taken by school leaders, this study is an attempt to better understand how principals and their interpretation of the policy influences the overall implementation of

policy at the local setting. Principals are in a unique position to act as gatekeepers and advocates (or resisters) of policy that is designed at the highest levels of the school system. It is this positionality that requires considerable investigation and this study seeks to address how principals can influence the implementation of policy. In this case, CRPBIS is the vehicle by which the influence of principals in the implementation of policy is explored.

The early implementation efforts and the experiences of those directly responsible for the implementation of CRPBIS by the BMSD are the focus of this study. This study will investigate the first two years of a five-year plan to introduce the new program. Interviews with implementation leaders are utilized to understand and investigate the way that individuals, at multiple levels of the educational system, perceive the need for CRPBIS. Interviews will also explore how the outcomes envisioned by the policy designers at the school district's central offices occur at the local level. The data from the interviewees will present an opportunity to explore how objectives and goals are achieved at the local level, especially at the elementary school level.

Elementary schools are the focus of this study because of the increasing rate of discipline referrals at this particular level of schools within BMSD. Using frame analysis and sensemaking, this dissertation will seek to investigate the way in which individuals make sense of and then act upon the implementation goals and policies of an recently introduced program. Overall, this dissertation will seek to create clarity and understanding into how local actors act as champions and facilitators in the implementation and what fuels that action. This dissertation seeks to better understand

the implementation of CRPBIS across multiple buildings and how individuals influence the local outcomes as a result of their interpretations and actions.

Bald Mountain School District

The BMSD school district is attempting to address a significant problem, the increasing incidence of discipline referrals within the schools. The introduction of a culturally responsive program is designed to reduce the growing problem of school discipline within the district through a culturally responsive approach to the climate and culture of the school building. This proactive step is being taken to address the overall number of referrals for violations to the student code of conduct and the increasing incidence of discipline that, unlike other grade levels, is on the increase over time and has considerable affects upon students at the elementary level.

Table 1.1

BMSD: Elementary School Suspensions

	Kindergarten	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade
2010-2011	72	118	101	196	131
2011-2012	30	27	32	88	437
2012-2013	184	137	137	189	437
2013-2014	102	226	226	267	539
2014-2015	115	223	223	230	497

Note. Data for BMSD suspensions achieved from publically available End of Year Discipline Report, August 6th, 2015

The district is assisted in the implementation effort by a local support organization that provides support for district schools within the same geographic region in which BMSD is located. This organization is known as the Gore Range District (GRD). The objective in partnering with GRD is to leverage the external specialists from GRD in a manner that can help facilitate the smooth transition to CRPBIS with professional

development opportunities and individualized support at each of the district's 27 schools. The implementation of CRPBIS is a district priority and is a district-led initiative, but it is the GRD support that will allow BMSD to implement the program with guidance and professional development in an on-going manner. The intended outcomes of the implementation are to reduce school disciplinary action, discover new pathways to help keep students in the classroom, and increase the learning time for the students. With these objectives in mind, the overarching goal of this program is to reduce discipline for all students, but also to increase the cultural responsiveness of BMSD.

School Principals

Within each of the school buildings that are part of this study, there is a principal that is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school building. Their responsibilities are broad and encompass many aspects of the school's operations. Each of these principals has an individual history that can be influential in the overall operations of the schools and the implementation of new policies. When looking at each of the principals, their own personal histories and experiences seem to influence the velocity in which the policy of CRPBIS is implemented. For example, Principal Stenmark, principal of Teocalli Elementary School, was a relatively new principal. Principal Stenmark, as an African American male, oversaw a school in transition and composed of a diverse (ethnically and economically) group of students. The transition of this school included the academic focus and the behavioral expectations. As a relatively new principal in the BMSD system, Principal Stenmark was able to introduce new policy initiatives without the baggage of history that could slow the overall implementation of policy. Second, as a newer principal, Principal Stenmark also was able to look at school

data without the influence of historical knowledge guiding action. In this example, it is important to note the Principal Stenmark was desirous of making a positive impact on the school, but was also empowered to act as an agent of change without the entanglements of historical policy actions.

In a second school, Bo Buck Elementary, the most senior principal of the school district oversaw the introduction and implementation of this new policy, CRPBIS. Principal Mahre worked along with the school team to ensure a complete understanding of the policy through a detailed analysis of the material, meaning, and overall impact of the new policy. As such, Principal Mahre relied on historical knowledge and experience to guide the overall implementation of CRPBIS in the school. This reliance on historical knowledge and experience may have slowed the velocity with which the policy was implemented, but it did not detract from the effort to ensure that the policy, as implemented, would meet the expectations of the district and provide the benefits of the policy as envisioned by the policy designers.

In the third school, Monument Elementary School, the principal of the school (who was a former teacher in BMSD) acted in a different manner. A manner that ran askew of the main goals of the school system. In this school, the principal had been part of a long-standing effort to introduce another program that addresses student behavior and this involvement led to, in the words of the principal, a much similar approach but not specifically the approach mandated by CRPBIS. Due to this, Principal Madsen acted in a way that privileged the alternative program as opposed to CRPBIS. While this is not the desired action from the perspective of the district, Principal Madsen believed that the best path forward for the school was to continue that school's trajectory in the

implementation and continuation of the alternative behavioral program. This was based upon the assertion, by the principal that the best programming comes from the classrooms and not central offices. The school building had a long-standing approach to discipline led to the slower implementation of CRPBIS, but did not detract from the effort to address student behavior. Overall, this particular principal did have strong feelings about the implementation of CRPBIS, but these feelings did not take away from the effort to improve the overall climate and culture of the school. The approach taken by the school attempted to leverage historical practice as the method through which student behavior was addressed.

Overall, the three principals of this study bring to the implementation effort a wide variety of experiences and beliefs. This variety of personal backgrounds and perspectives do have influence on the way in which the district policy was implemented in the early years of the implementation of CRPBIS. Policy, as envisioned by the designers, is subject to multiple perspectives and interpretations. In this study, the perspectives and interpretations of the principals of the school district influenced the implementation of the new behavioral policy.

Objective

The objective of this dissertation is to explore and investigate the implementation of the CRPBIS program to address student behavior. This dissertation will examine the implementation of the program by exploring how implementers frame the need for CRPBIS and the individual sensemaking that occurs during implementation of CRPBIS. An attempt will be made to comprehend how sensemaking and understanding affects individuals' understanding and the actions of the principals in the implementation of

CRPBIS. To better understand how sensemaking and frames impact implementation, I will explore the framing and frames used by school district and local school leadership teams in the implementation of CRPBIS within a singular school district. Semi-structured interviews at multiple levels will be conducted to better ascertain how individuals perceive the implementation goals and principle objectives of introducing CRPBIS to the entirety of the school district.

CRPBIS builds upon the framework created by Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), which is already in place in many schools throughout the nation, including many schools in BMSD. PBIS is a system designed to encourage positive behaviors through a system of rewards and frameworks that help students reach the overall achievement of behavioral expectations within the schools. The culturally responsive piece to this framework is relatively new and in the formative stages of implementation in schools across the United States. A good working definition of culturally responsive efforts is presented by Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) who posit that culturally responsive efforts are seen as an ability to be aware of one's own assumptions, be able to understand the worldviews of a culturally different subgroup within the dominant population, and the ability to develop appropriate intervention strategies.

The implementation of CRPBIS is a result of a decision by the school district in this study to introduce a policy that is designed to address existing overuse of punitive disciplinary action upon students who violate the school districts' code of conduct. Prior to implementation of CRPBIS, violations of the code of conduct in the schools resulted in disciplinary action that include a variety of sanctions that ranged from warnings to lunch

detentions, from suspensions and ultimately to expulsion. The stated intention of the district in the implementation of CRPBIS is to introduce an approach to disciplinary action that reduces the incidence of suspensions and expulsions for the students through greater cultural understanding.

Prior to the implementation of CRPBIS, the school district in this study did not actively engage with local the community (principals, teachers, and other school stakeholders) in the design and deployment of the school district's discipline policy. Discipline policy, historically, was designed within the central district offices rather than inside the schools. The school administrators, in reaction to the violations of the school district's umbrella code of conduct, applied the discipline policies set forth by the central office of the school district. This separation between designers and actors in the school discipline policy arena (both adults and students) produced a top-down approach in discipline policy for the student population within BMSD.

Due to the traditional top-down nature of school discipline in BMSD, central theme of this dissertation will be an investigation into the interpretation of the frames and the sensemaking of the school officials that shape CRPBIS implementation by school leadership teams. Goffman (1974) describes frames as a theoretical construct "that is seen as rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful" (p. 21). Thus, it is important include the individual framing of CRPBIS at the forefront of the study of the current implementation. Building upon the conception that frames are used as a way in which individuals assign importance to particular events, I will utilize Spillane's (1996, 1999, 2000) cognitive framework in an effort to understand the intent, purpose, and interpretation of policy goals and messaging

from district leadership in the implementation of a culturally responsive behavioral management system. In addition to utilizing Spillane's cognitive framework, I will draw upon Coburn's (2001, 2005) conception that individual and group sensemaking by teachers and school leaders is vitally important to the overall success or failure for the introduction of a new policy mandate within a school system. Through the use of cognitive frames and the application of sensemaking, it will be possible to explore how the individual interpretation of a district policy by school building leadership influences and shapes the implementation of a particular policy. As McLaughlin (1987) points out, "policy at best can enable outcomes, but in the final analysis it cannot mandate what matters" (p. 173). As such, it is of critical importance in the investigation of the implementation of CRPBIS to explore how individuals at the local level frame the CRPBIS policy and then proceed to implement the objectives of the policy of school district leadership.

Understanding how individuals, at multiple levels, perceive the need for and potential outcomes for the implementation of a culturally responsive approach to school discipline will help to better conceptualize how local actors implement policy in a local school setting. The collaborative efforts by school district officials, local school leaders, and the facilitators from GRD in this implementation are critical to the implementation of CRPBIS and will be investigated to determine the success and challenges associated with implementation of CRPBIS. Ultimately, this study will look into how individuals interpret the need for culturally responsive discipline practices and the impact that a culturally responsive approach can have in reducing school discipline referrals.

School Discipline

School discipline, particularly in the form of suspensions and expulsion, is on the rise across American schools. The number of students affected by suspension or expulsion nearly doubled from 3.7 percent of the student population in 1974 to 7.1 percent of the students in 2006 (Brownstein, 2010). Reports by the Office For Civil Rights (2000, 2004, 2006, 2009-2010, and 2011-2012) indicate an increase in the use of school suspensions over time. As shown in the table below, it is clear that the overall number of suspensions, and the raw calculation of suspensions per student, is on the rise, including an increase of over one million more incidents in a two year period from 2009 – 2010 to 2011 – 2012, over the twelve-year period that is covered by the data that is collected provided by the Office for Civil Rights.

Table 1.2

National Suspensions for All Students

	2000	2004	2006	2009-2010	2011-2012
Suspensions	3,053,449	3,279,745	3,328,754	4,335,145	4,111,348
Student Population	46,306,355	48,139,804	48,497,767	48,273,920	49,605,534
Suspensions per student	.066	.068	.069	.090	.083

Note. Data for this table is adapted from the National and State Estimates for each of the above data cycles. I calculate the suspensions per student metric by dividing the total number of suspensions by the total student count

It is also interesting to note that over the same period of time, research has shown that school discipline has been found to affect minority students more regularly, and more severely, than students of the non-minority population in America. Using longitudinal data from the Office for Civil Rights, it is clear that this trend of disproportionate impact

is continuing for African American males for the 2011-2012 school year; showing that African American males are subject to suspension more frequently than their White counterparts per capita. This differential pattern of discipline is “widely documented and a well-known reality of the U.S. public school system” (Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, & Swain-Bradway, 2011). The trend clearly shows that across many years, the risk of punitive discipline for students who are not African American is clearly higher than for those that are white.

Table 1.3

National Suspensions for African American and White Males

National Suspensions for African American Males					
	2000	2004	2006	2009-2010	2011-2012
Suspensions	692,426	784,917	788,343	614,252	595,388
Student Population	3,989,384	4,128,695	4,222,890	4,114,188	4,029,005
Suspensions per student	.175	.190	.189	.149	.148
National Suspensions for White Male					
	2000	2004	2006	2009-2010	2011-2012
Suspensions	1,085,085	988,669	939,843	666,087	582,668
Student Population	14,694,085	14,502,371	14,107,371	13,760,109	13,235,780
Suspensions per student	.074	.068	.067	.048	.044

Note. Data for this table is adapted from the National and State Estimates for each of the above data cycles. I calculate the suspensions per student metric by dividing the total number of suspensions by the total student count.

In the district to be studied, according to district published data, in opposition to the national data, the raw number of suspensions issued to students has decreased over the last five years (Bald Mountain School District, 2015).

Table 1.4

BMSD: Students, Suspensions, and Suspensions Per Student

	Total number of students	Total number of students	Suspensions per student
2010-2011	13399	7178	0.54
2011-2012	13183	6768	0.51
2012-2013	12463	6265	0.50
2013-2014	12189	5011	0.41
2014-2015	11695	4565	0.39

Note. Data for suspensions achieved through the End of Year Discipline Report, August 6th, 2015 & other publically available data. I calculate the suspensions per student metric by dividing the total number of suspensions by the total student count

At the same time that suspensions for all students are on the downward trend (it is important to also note the loss of student population during the same time period, which continued into the 2015-2016 school year to 11,155 students in the district) within this district, the same cannot be said for African American students. For example, African American students are being suspended, per capita, at a greater rate than White students within the district (Lansing School District, 2015), which is more in line with the national data trends. The chart below identifies an almost 1:1 ratio between students and

suspension for African American males, but considerably smaller ratios for White students in the BMSD.

Table 1.5

BMSD: African American and White Student Suspensions

	African American Male				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Suspensions	3096	2855	2626	2023	1839
Total Students	3132	2859	2631	2575	2418
Suspensions/student	.989	.998	.998	.786	.761

	White Males				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Suspensions	925	925	810	239	636
Total Students	2207	2089	1906	1843	1674
Suspensions/student	.419	.443	.425	.130	.380

Note. Data for suspensions achieved through the End of Year Discipline Report, August 6th, 2015

Some scholars argue that the rise in suspension and expulsion being experienced, nationally, by minority students in the 2000s is the by-product of a growing cultural mismatch between the leadership in the school (e.g., teachers, disciplinary officials, and school administration) and the students. Bal (2015) argues that, “students and families bring complex experiences, skills, and goals to this task [education] that may or may not fit the expectations, dispositions, and disciplined knowledge schemas they encounter in schools” (p. 4). Noguera (1995) and Bal (2015) further argue that stereotypes of the

student population, in the eyes of administrators and teachers, are the product of an unfamiliarity with the lives that students live outside the school. As such, it is important to be cognizant of the ultimate goal and purpose for the implementation of CRPBIS in BMSD, which is to infuse and integrate cultural awareness into the design of the school code of conduct.

As is exhibited in the data above, in recent years within the BMSD, there is a stark difference in the suspension rates locally for African American students when compared to White students. The BMSD has determined that addressing the differences in discipline between subgroup populations is a priority for the district. The manner in which this district is choosing to address the disproportionate differences in school discipline is through the implementation of CRPBIS. According to the school district, “there is reason to be optimistic that this trend [decreasing suspensions] will continue with the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies” (Lansing School District, 2015).

At the national and local level, the growing incidence of suspensions and expulsions for minority students, in particular African American students, is of considerable concern for school districts and local communities. Studies have documented that there are differences in the rates of suspension for African American students when compared to Whites. One such study by Bal (2016) found that in Wisconsin, African American students were seven times more likely to be suspended compared to white students over a five year period, from 2006 - 2007 to 2011 – 2012 (p.414). Using data from the United States Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, the national gap in suspension between African American and White students in

the year 2000 was eight percent higher for African Americans and in 2006 that gap was ten percent higher compared to White students (United States Department of Education: Office for Civil Rights, 2000, 2006). For male students, the gap in suspension for African Americans in 2000 was eight percent higher compared to White students and in 2006 the discipline gap had increased to ten percent (United States Department of Education: Office for Civil Rights, 2000, 2006). The differential discipline results for African American students in schools are of great concern for policy makers and school leaders. This has fueled the increase in actions by school districts to address disproportional discipline in schools, for example the implementation of CRPBIS.

CRPBIS

The evolution of CRPBIS from PBIS is rooted in the need to acknowledge the cultural differences that exist within the schools. From teachers to students and students to other students, the cultural diversity in schools is an ever-increasing challenge for schools to address. Bal (2015) argues that “the CRPBIS framework lays out *how* (italics in original) culture matters” in the educational sphere. CRPBIS is a system of school level supports and protocols that relies on acknowledging the diversity of the school building, the need for individual cultural self-awareness, the increase of cross-cultural interactions, and the development of interventions that reflect a greater understanding of cultural diversity (Utley, Kozleski, Smith, & Draper, 2002). Vincent et al. (2011) argue that in-classroom discourse is a factor in the development of a culturally responsive approach to school discipline. As Vincent et al. (2011) point out, a simple request by a teacher for the students sit quietly and do the work assigned can introduce a social order that is ascribed to by the school adults, but may not be representative of the students’

lives outside of school. Asking students to act in a way that helps the class run efficiently may seem to be culturally neutral, but is also, “implies the intention of maintaining the school’s institutionalized order, establishing the teacher’s authority over her students” (Vincent et al., 2011, p. 221). This establishment of order over understanding is a primary concern for those who are interested in how marginalization occurs and, related to this study, how the district can address the disciplinary structure that currently exists through the implementation of CRPBIS.

By introducing a system of behavioral management that provides educational benefits (e.g., increasing classroom attendance, reducing office referrals, and increasing student engagement), it is believed that CRPBIS will enable teachers and schools to build and maintain a disciplinary system and framework that could potentially lead to the improvement of individual achievement levels and led to classrooms with fewer behavioral interruptions.

Any effort to combat the impact of cultural misunderstandings between the teachers and the students requires that schools adopt new forms of interventions for student misbehavior. A growing theory among schools and researchers is to apply the tenets of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to a culturally relevant model of intervention. CRPBIS is a program of behavioral management and professional development that has evolved from the PBIS model to “acknowledge the presence of culturally and linguistic different (CLD) students and the need for them to find relevant connections among themselves and with the behavioral goal and objectives that schools ask them to perform” (Banks & Obiakor, 2015, p. 85). CRPBIS, as an extension of the foundation built by the PBIS program, seeks to introduce alternative methods to changing

student behavior. CRPBIS is designed to develop the school community's ability to examine and build upon the social strengths of the community to design approaches for sustaining positive behavioral skills (Banks & Obiakor, 2015). A key aspect of CRPBIS is the incorporation of community stakeholders in the design, structure, and objectives in the creation and implementation of school behavioral expectations. These stakeholders include school building leaders, school district leadership, and members of the community. The adaptation of traditional PBIS systems to address cultural differences between students and teachers is an important step in the attempt to reduce the disparities in discipline for minority students. As such, it is vital to investigate the implementation of CRPBIS to determine the influence of cultural awareness in schools as it relates to the improvement of classroom climate and ultimately the impact of disciplinary action upon minority populations.

Research Questions

As the development and implementation of the CRPBIS model for behavior intervention proceeds within BMSD, there will be three central research questions that will be investigated:

1. *In what ways do stakeholders responsible for implementation frame the need for and potential benefits of CRPBIS as a form of behavioral interventions?*
 - a. *What differences exist in the framing of CRPBIS across central office and elementary school personnel?*
 - b. *In what ways do these individual framings change as a result of professional development, training, and oversight in the implementation of CRPBIS?*

2. *What variations and similarities exist in CRPBIS implementation across elementary schools?*
 - a. *To what degree do stakeholders attribute the variations in implementation to differences in their framing of the problem*
 - b. *To what degree do stakeholders attribute variation in the implementation of CRPBIS to localized challenges to implementation?*
3. *To what degree does individual sensemaking about CRPBIS explain implementation variation at both the central office and school levels?*

The three research questions that will drive this dissertation seek to understand the critical components of policy implementation. The first question will seek to identify and track the changes in how individuals think about the CRPBIS program as a form of behavioral intervention over time. In response to how individuals think about CRPBIS, the second question will seek to explore how implementation evolves in the schools and how stakeholder (school building leaders, district leaders, and ISD leaders) action influences the implementation of CRPBIS. The third, and most critical aspect to this study, question will seek to identify and make sense of the way in which various actors, at multiple levels, make sense of and interpret the implementation of CRPBIS and then act upon those notions in their efforts to implement CRPBIS. Understanding how sensemaking leads to variation in implementation is of great interest.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding how frames and framing are central actors in the attempt to utilize CRPBIS as a form of behavioral intervention will give shape to this study. The utilization

of the role of frames is to compartmentalize the interview data, which will enable the appraisal of individual notions of how behavioral problems are understood. Frames will provide a lens to understand how individuals interpret and enact the trainings and professional development related to the implementation of CRPBIS and the potential variation of individual frames over time. Frames, as defined by Goffman (1974) are a system of constructs that place meaning and structure to everyday occurrences, and will be important in the investigation of how stakeholders interpret and make sense of CRPBIS. Goffman (1974) asserts that frames and frameworks are a form of interpretation and allow individuals to “locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of occurrences” (p. 21) into individually significant spaces. Benford and Snow (2000) further articulate Goffman’s (1974) conception of frames by positing that frames are a “schemata of interpretation” (p. 614) and that frames “help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action” (p. 614). As such, frames, as defined by Goffman (1974) and Benford and Snow (2000) are the pathways through which individuals make sense of events. Frames, as created by individuals, based upon their experiences and beliefs about a particular concept, function to create understanding for individuals. Subsequently, and building upon the basic conception of frames, Benford and Snow (2000) identify two specific categories of frames, diagnostic and prognostic (p. 615). Diagnostic and prognostic frames provide a structure for framing that allows for the allocation of perceptions and understandings into coherent buckets for further analysis.

Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames. Diagnostic frames are those that enable problem identification and attributions of particular issues (Benford and Snow, 2000).

Prognostic frames are those mindsets or worldviews of individuals that allow for the “the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 616). Prognostic frames are the way in which individuals the future impact of an innovation. By leveraging these two overarching types of frames, diagnostic and prognostic, it will be possible to categorize the beliefs and actions of participants in the implementation of CRPBIS into smaller frames of reference and understanding that are situated within these two larger constructs that will be the central investigation of this dissertation.

Cognitive Frameworks. Further developing upon the concept of frames, I will rely on the work of Spillane (1996, 1999, 2000) to develop an understanding of the cognitive frameworks that are in place among school leaders. This will allow for the investigation into how individuals interpret and act upon the policy goals as stated by district leadership and allows for the investigation into the interpretation of the goals and objectives by implementers through the worldviews and sensemaking activities (Coburn, 2001, 2005; Coburn, Toure, & Yamashita, 2009) of those responsible for the implementation of the CRPBIS policy goals. By merging the theoretical frameworks of program implementation and the personal action of sensemaking it will be possible to analyze how individuals make sense of, interpret inputs, and implement the goals of policy makers who seek to improve the behavioral environment of the classroom over time.

Messaging. Messaging and dialogue between the BMSD and the individual schools is considerably important. How the BMSD leadership and the support specialists from GRD announce and support the implementation of CRPBIS within the schools is

important to the implementation and how school leaders understand the purpose and importance of the introduction of CRPBIS. Spillane (1999) argues that, “language is key in this process because it is the chief medium that policymakers have for representing their ideas” (p. 155) to those who will be responsible for implementing the policy at the local level. The new culturally responsive approach to classroom management and disciplinary actions represents a cognitive shift, in comparison to traditional methods of behavioral management, in the district. As such, the cognitive process, or working knowledge (Coburn et al., 2009) of implementers provides clues to how the signals and messages put forth by the district leadership are interpreted by individuals. A key factor in this language or messaging of goals and outcomes is the manner in which the CRPBIS policy is couched in familiar terms and approaches to classroom management that provides a level of comfort for implementers (Spillane, 2000).

Worldviews. Second, the investigation of the implementation of CRPBIS will provide a vantage point to identify how specific cognitive views (e.g., the definition of culture, the interpretation of the purpose of discipline, and the impact of discipline upon frequently suspended students) influence the implementation of CRPBIS to promote the benefits of a culturally responsive approach to classroom management. As such, a particular effort in this study will be to investigate the primary objectives (or overarching agenda) of the stakeholders as viewed through individual interviews. The discrete objectives, and the ensuing focal points for implementation, will help to identify the root cause, intended goals, and the desired outcomes of introducing CRPBIS within the schools. Using these cognitive interpretations as a focus of investigation will provide the pivotal data points to understand how teachers and building leaders begin to pursue a

deeper understanding and interpretation of how this policy is implemented within the school district.

The description and perception of how to effectively reduce the level of disciplinary action in the classroom is essential to understanding how the policy goals of the district will be implemented by those most responsible for its success, the building leadership. The use of frames will provide the initial framework and structure for investigation to the design, delivery, and application of CRPBIS in the schools.

Localism. Last, because the implementation of the CRPBIS policy is predicated on the localized understanding of the discrete objectives of the district leadership, identification of individual sensemaking patterns will assist in the investigation of how the educational leadership of the school community use external and environmental cues (Coburn et al., 2009) to frame the development of a CRPBIS system that provides educational and social benefits to the students in the classrooms. Coburn et al. (2009) argue that the act of framing a particularly vexing problem (in this case, classroom misbehavior) by individuals helps to “render complexity meaningful” (p. 1119). By focusing on the role of culture and cultural awareness in this implementation, this dissertation will explore how the CRPBIS policy is understood by the implementers at various levels to assess the alignment of objectives. As Spillane (2000) posits, “a cognitive perspective enhances our understanding of the implementation process, pressing us to unpack a component of the process that has remained largely implicit in previous work” (p. 168-169). It is critical, then, in the investigation into the implementation of a CRPBIS program to understand how local culture affects overall implementation and fidelity to overarching goals. In doing so, this dissertation will seek

to provide knowledge and comprehension to patterns of thought and subsequent action in the development of a behavioral system that honors and includes the wisdom of the local community in the schooling experience for students.

CRPBIS is a system of supports that relies on diversity, cultural self-assessment, cross-cultural interactions, and the development of interventions that reflect an understanding of cultural diversity (Utley et al., 2002). By introducing a system of behavioral management that provides educational benefits (e.g., potentially increasing classroom attendance, possibly reducing office referrals, and perhaps increase student engagement), it is believed that CRPBIS will enable school leaders to increase the individual achievement levels and that classrooms will have fewer behavioral interruptions. As such, this dissertation will seek to understand how the district understands the policy goal of implementing a culturally responsive approach (research question #1) to classroom management. The dissertation will also seek to understand how variation occurs in the implementation of CRPBIS through the objectives and processes (research question #2) by individuals in leadership positions within schools. Combined, these two questions will help to identify and explicate the successes and challenges faced in the development and implementation of a CRPBIS system within BMSD. The final research question explores how the interpretations of the CRPBIS policy effect the overall implementation of policy at the local level and how the implementation is mediated by the interpretations of the school leaders.

The following chapters in this dissertation will explore the literature (Chapter two) that informs a greater understanding of implementation and the challenges that are present in the implementation process, the conception of frames and sensemaking, and

finally school discipline. Chapter three of this dissertation will provide insight into the setting of the CRPBIS implementation, the data that have been collected through interviews for this dissertation. Chapter four is where the interpretation of implementation will be explored using the interview data to explain how school leaders interpreted and acted upon the concepts and theories of CRPBIS. Chapter five explore the findings related to this implementation and recommendations for future implementations will be found. Together, these chapters will present the reader a chance to explore and investigate the implementation experiences of one school district in their attempt to address the pernicious growth of school discipline and how to seek remedies that produce positive results for students in the classroom.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will explore empirical understandings about implementation theory, frame analysis, sensemaking, and the landscape of discipline in schools. Taken together these four factors help to establish a framework that will provide an understanding of the complex challenges that can be experienced in implementation. Having an understanding of the empirical knowledge regarding policy implementation can help foster an implementation that achieves the envisioned outcomes for the organization that is attempting to implement a new policy. Beginning with a review of sensemaking, the literature review will look at how individual use their own experiences and personal beliefs to filter messaging and policy goals and the implications that this has for policy implementation. After exploring the role of sensemaking in implementation, the literature review explores the empirical knowledge regarding implementation and the challenges that are inherent in implementing any new policy into a large system. As part of the implementation exploration, investigating frames and frame analysis will enable the reader to better understand how an individual's or group's view or perspective can influence the eventual outcome of a particular implementation. Last, by providing a broad understanding of the effects of the current discipline environment in schools across America it will be possible to envision why this implementation is vital to the school system, and others, that are part of this study.

Overall, this literature review will help to inform the overall study and better understand why it is important that implementation of this program be studied in finer detail. Understanding why and how implementation occurs is critical to the overall success of any future initiative. Knowing why a policy is being implemented and how the

policy objectives will be achieved is the crucial link between the envisioned program and the actualized outcome. Overall, understanding the manner in which individuals, especially school principals make sense of policy that is introduced will aid in the interpretation of the implementation of the new initiative.

Sensemaking

A key process in the interpretation of the meaning of policy is the sensemaking that takes place by those who are implementing. The process of sensemaking takes place as individuals come into contact with new ideas or initiatives and are unfamiliar with the content and meaning of the information. Sensemaking, as Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) argue is a way for individuals “to connect the abstract with the concrete” (p. 412). Once a concrete understanding is established in the policy actor, sensemaking enables implementation actors to interpret the language of policy and turn it into action. Cunliffe and Coupland (2011) further the analysis of action and sensemaking by pointing out that sensemaking “is an interpretive process in which we judge our experience, actions and sense of identity in relationship to specific and generalized others” (p. 66). It is the establishment of a relationship, or comparison of the unknown to something that is known that completes the sensemaking cycle. An additional understanding of sensemaking can be made between the accounts of the experiences and how those experiences produce an understanding, “where embodied and felt experiences are integral to creating plausible accounts of our experience” (p. 83). It is the creation of plausible accounts that turn perceptions into realities. In this sense, sensemaking is the transmission of interpretation into understanding.

School Leaders. Sensemaking, at the school leader level, can also be viewed as the process by which school leaders facilitate the understanding for others within the institution, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, but an important understanding is that leaders are influential in how others interpret policy. As Coburn (2005) argues “school leaders played an influential, although at times indirect, role in shaping what and how teachers learned about these shifting policy ideas” (p. 484). The conception being made by Coburn (2005) is that as leaders of the institution, school leaders are gatekeepers in the overall understanding of policy, but because of this gatekeeper role, it is important to better understand how these leaders interpret policy in their own minds. Understanding how leaders interpret and make sense policy is predicated on the conception proposed by Spillane, Reiser, and Gomez (2006) that “what a policy comes to mean for implementing agents depends to a great extent on their repertoire of existing knowledge and experience” (p. 393). It is the existing knowledge and experience of the school leader, in this case, those foregrounds an individual’s sensemaking process and is a key aspect to understanding how school leaders will implement an innovative program into a school setting.

Challenge to Sensemaking. One challenge with sensemaking is the potential for individuals to privilege their own perspectives when interpreted something new rather than an open mind. As Spillane et al. (2006) argue “what we see is what we expect to see” (395). Because sensemaking “involves accessing relevant structures in memories and applying them to make sense of what is presented” (Spillane, et al., 2006, p. 398) the individual histories of those who are tasked with interpreting the policy that is being implemented have considerable influence on how individuals make sense of new

information. For example, the expected outcomes, for some individuals, can create a false understanding of a new idea or initiative because rather than be open to new ideas the individuals are reliant upon their own personal interpretations and histories. Spillane, et al. (2006) further argue the impact of one's own experience in the sensemaking process and point out that one's "own experiences are more heavily counted in reasoning about debates than those of external experts" (p. 402).

Sensemaking, according to Coburn (2005), can be seen as the way in which individuals construct and draw upon personal understandings to better understand new information. Coburn (2005) when writing about reading instruction said that, "school leaders drew on their knowledge of reading instruction to construct understandings of policy ideas" (p. 495). Extrapolating from the lessons of reading instruction, and applying it to school leaders, the argument can be made that the individuals who are responsible for implementation are also effected by existing knowledge and experiences to understand and create meaning of policy initiatives introduced to the school system.

This sensemaking is critically important to understanding how school leaders, principals in particular, act as gatekeepers for new policies. Their understandings of the policy objectives, goals, and impact of implementation are quite influential to manner in which any new initiative is introduced. As a result of better understanding sensemaking and its role, it is possible to better understand how implementation can be effected by individuals at all levels, but most importantly at the school leader position.

Implementation

Implementation is the manner in which innovative practices or policies are adopted by organizations. Implementation is believed to be a decidedly complex

endeavor (Fixen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005), it is an endeavor that is fraught with challenges that can vex those who are responsible for full program implementation. At the same time, implementation is as a long and tedious process that requires patience by those implementing and the intentional inclusion of many stakeholders to ensure that the goals of the implementation are achieved. The implementation efforts, including the previously described sensemaking of policy implementers can lead to collaborative decisions and experiences that, ultimately, culminate in the realization of the goals and objectives of program design and introduction. The fact that implementation is considered to be a process and not an outcome (May, 2013) is the result of much research and experience. Successful implementation is the product of many individuals working collaboratively to interpret policy objectives and enact a new way of thinking within the educational system. There is complexity in investigating and interpreting how implementation because implementation and understanding sensemaking, as May (2013) points out is a “complex bundle – or better, an ‘ensemble’ – of material and cognitive practices” (p. 2). It is this complex bundle of practices and priorities that create the challenges for those who are responsible for implementation.

Types of Implementation Actors. Durlak (1998) argues that, “good implementation may be dependent on securing the participation of the most eager and committed school administrators and teaching staff” (p. 13). Early adopters of a program can be important in assisting others who are less excited to provide a lens for others to understand the long-term impact and overall value in the implementation of new policy objectives and protocols. Approaching implementation in a manner that honors the

concerns of those who are skeptical about the initiative being implemented and, at the same, leverages the lofty visions of those who seek to be change agents within the organization is a way to effectively manage the ensemble of efforts, effects, and actions. The implementation bundle, or ensemble, is constituted and reflective of the cognitive practices for an individual (or group of individuals) and how those individuals can aid in the overall implementation.

Implementation can also be influenced by the actions of those who wish to derail or ignore the implementation because of negative perspectives of the new program or simply an allegiance to the way the existing system has traditionally operated. Meyer, Miller, and Herman (1993) note that animosity amongst implementers can arise when new systems appear within the school systems that run contrary to existing protocols or programs within the school system. Outsiders, those not from the system where the implementation is occurring, to the school system can also cause animosity towards a new approach within the school system (Meyer et al., 1993). These outside actors can be well meaning, but their actions can be seen as superseding the goals and intentions of local actors and lead to distrust among local implementers.

Cognitive Shifts. Implementing innovative practices will require, for some individuals in the implementation effort, to make a cognitive switch, or significant change in operating behaviors, for those that are implementing a new program in the educational system. Cognitive shifts are the transition from traditionally held notions or understandings about a program or approach to a new perspective. Changing an individual or group's perception can be especially challenging for those who are tasked with ensuring that implementation occurs as the policy designers envision. For the

cognitive shifts to occur and in order to ensure the successful introduction and implementation of a new program, individuals who design and deploy the innovation and the champions of the innovation must work cohesively throughout the process of implementation in order to achieve the stated outcomes of the innovation or initiative. To enable the cognitive shifts to occur require considerable collaboration, at the planning and in the implementation stages, among the individuals at the local level who are the champions of the innovation for effective implementation of a new program. The collaboration among key participants and constituencies is a critical facet in the successful negotiation between individuals and ideas. The various negotiations and agreements that occur among participants in the implementation effort have the potential to assuage concerns and elicit stakeholder participation in a way that can influence the successful implementation of an innovative program.

Organizational Capacity. One of the many components of a successful implementation endeavor is the ability of the innovative process to encourage the development of organizational capacity as a result of an innovation being introduced to the setting. Horner & Sugai (2005) assert that “effective implementation processes build district capacity” (p. 83) and that this organizational capacity can foster the improvement of operations for an organization. Implementation processes that build capacity, according to McLaughlin (1987), depend upon to two factors, capacity and will. Capacity refers to the ability of the organization to marshal the resources needed to implement the innovation and the will of the individuals to see the innovation through implementation. Having either or both the systemic capacity and individual will to implement an

innovative practice are seen as having contributing positive effects in the implementation effort (McLaughlin, 1987).

The successful implementation of a new innovation or initiative requires that all involved stakeholders in the implementation process come together to collaborate and work to achieve the explicit goals set forth by the initiators of the new innovation or practice. McLaughlin (1987) writes that one of the many challenges in the implementation process is that policy makers, or those that seek to introduce and then implement a new initiative, have difficulty managing the implementation because it is a challenge for policy makers to mandate what matters (the explicit outcomes being sought). Equally challenging is that it is also quite possible that what matters may be different for those who design the policy than those that are implementing. Those who are making sense of the policy are the street-level bureaucrats (Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977) who can act as agents of change when policy is implemented. Street level bureaucrats “interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs and have substantial discretion in the execution of their work” (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977, p. 172). It is this discretionary work, especially those who work against the implementation of a new initiative that can pose the greatest of challenges to policy designers. This potential opposition between designers (policy makers) and implementers (street level bureaucrats) can lead to stalled, or even failed, implementation (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). As a result of the inherent challenges that face implementation, overcoming the challenges through planning can facilitate greater implementation over time. This includes the challenges faced by individuals across the many strata involved in the implementation and the challenges faced can lead to less than complete, or even successful, implementation.

Systemic Change. Implementation, as mentioned previously, is the attempt to introduce change into an existing system. The size and overall scope of the change being introduced through the innovation may be large or small. However, regardless of the size of the innovation, the innovation may be a shock to the organizational system. Fixen et al. (2009) argue that an institutional, or systemic, change requires that the processes designed to initiate and assist individuals and organizations in the implementation be purposeful and clearly defined. These processes have the potential to create new realities (McLaughlin, 1987) for those implementing the new initiative. The new realities, and the challenges that a new policy initiative can create, are part and parcel to a new initiative also require significant planning and foresight by those who seek to introduce the new initiative. As part of this planning and foresight, Adelman and Taylor (2003) articulate the four major phases that an organization can engage in to maneuver through the implementation process. First, according to Adelman and Taylor (2003), an organization needs to *create readiness* within the organization to ensure that those who are responsible for the implementation are in a position to effectively implement the new initiative. Second, the *initial implementation* or rollout of the new program is critical to the outcome of the program that is being introduced. Third, the way in which the organization works to *institutionalize* the program through support and dialogue can be a considerable factor in whether or not a program can have lasting effect. Last, it is imperative for the policy makers to show continued support through *ongoing evaluation and creative renewal*. These four factors, as envisioned by Adelman and Taylor (2003), to facilitating organizational change, are essential to the success of the new program being introduced. Among the four, it is the ability of the policy makers to help create

readiness through open dialogue, explicit messaging, and constant interaction amongst those that design the innovative practice and those that implement the practice. It is the creation of organizational readiness, through actionable data, constant analysis, and coherent protocols that support the initial understanding of the initiative and the eventual rollout of the program that can have the most impact on the outcome of interest.

Local Actors. When any policy is conceived of and then implemented, a key focal point is to understand how individuals, especially at the local level where the implementation of a new policy is happening, interact with the new policy that is being introduced. Local implementers, those with the responsibility to enact the actual policy being implemented are critical to the success of the initiative, interpret the initiative through their own individual perspectives that reflect the individual's own personal belief regarding the need for and the manner in which the policy is implemented. These individualized perspectives have been shaped by the previous experiences of those at the local level and these experiences can influence the conceptual understandings of the problem being addressed by the new policy. It is the individual at the ground level, the street level actor, that is required to make the personal decision, based on their own perspectives and experiences, to implement the new initiative or act as a resistor to policy changes. Durlak (1998) argues that when a policy is implemented, it is important for those who are primary to the implementation to be "eager and committed" (p. 13) to the change being introduced to the school setting. The eagerness by those who are tasked with implementing the new policy will help school leaders introduce and move a policy change through initial adoption. Without the support of an eager staff, it is possible that the envisioned improvements created by the policy change may not occur. Added to the

concept of an eager and committed staff, it is argued by Meyer et al. (1993) that the point of view of school staff members whose day-to-day operations are affected by the changes of an introduced policy measure should also be of primary interest. As a direct result of including and seeking the input of those directly affected by the change in programming, policy implementers have the opportunity to increase the personal investment, or individual agency, in the new program. This “increased investment that school staff are likely to feel” (Meyer, Miller, and Herman, 1993, p. 101) is essential to the successful implementation. Throughout the implementation process, the investment of the participants in the process of implementation is vital to the long-term success of the program. One of the ways in which this investment and personal point-of-view can be incorporated into the implementation process is by increasing the interaction during the design and development of the new policy between those who design the policy and those who are responsible for implementing and actively utilizing the new policy within the classroom. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) argue, “there is no substitute for the primacy of personal contact among implementers, and between implementers and planners” (p. 391). It is through intentional personal contact that individuals at all levels of implementation can communicate their expectations and concerns related to the policy being implemented. From this communication, program designers and program implementers can work through various challenges and concerns related to the implementation that is at hand.

A second aspect of the implementation process is to include those who are responsible in the effort to institutionalize the initiative. The institutionalization of an initiative (Adelman & Taylor, 2003) is based upon activities and the continued effort at

developing protocols that serve to make the goals of the implementation an established protocol within the school system. In order to achieve the level of institutionalization of a new policy that produces the intended results, it is essential that the policy makers and the actual implementers develop systemic processes that prioritize the input, reflections, and evaluations for those who are implementing new initiative. Kitson, Harvey, and McCormack (1998) assert that implementation requires an all-in mentality because of the substantial change in operations due to implementation. The outcome of the all-in mentality is that the organization is able to institutionalize the objectives, procedures, and desired outcomes of a new policy.

Throughout the implementation process, this participation of individuals at all levels is vital to the successful implementation of a policy. One of the reasons that individuals, especially those who are on the frontlines of implementation, are critical to implementation success is that these individuals are “essential to how policy unfolds” (Honig, 2006, p. 359). From the eagerness and inclusion of committed individuals responsible for implementation to the inclusion of the implementer’s views and perspectives, it is possible to move forward in the implementation process with the support of those directly involved at the ground level of implementation. As mentioned previously, one of the most substantial effects of the role of participants in the implementation process is the development of regular and in-depth communication, or the feedback loop, between those who design and plan for implementation and those who are directly responsible for implementation that can lead to the best results.

Features of Implementation

There are two main groups in the implementation process that are imperative in successfully implement a new program, facilitators and champions. Facilitators, according to (Kitson et al., 1998) are generally individuals who are experienced in change functions and are able to work with individuals on the front lines of change and help to introduce new programs. Facilitators have influence on the implementation through the “redeployment of resources and the establishment of new ones” and by the ability to “build capacity” (Adelman & Taylor, 2003, p. 5) in the implementation process. Kitson et al. (1998) further argue that it is necessary to have a local champion for a program. A champion is someone who is deeply invested in the program and is an individual that can be the liaison between the facilitators and the implementers. Adelman and Taylor (2003) further support that conception of having local champions for the implementation by arguing that champions are able to help in the “building a cadre of stakeholders who are motivationally ready and able to proceed” (p. 6) and it is that role of the champion to buoy the hopes and bolster the continued efforts of those who are responsible for the implementation of a new program. Between the combined efforts of the champions of the program and the facilitators, it is possible that the implementation can find success over time. These two key cogs in the implementation system assure that the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the implementation are attended to and sought after. As Fixen et al. (2005) argue, “implementation is synonymous with coordinated change of system, organization, program, and practice levels” (p. vi) and as such requires a multifaceted approach.

Factors in Implementation. One of the many important inquiries that must take place when looking into how implementation takes place is in understanding a few key factors to implementation. I single out the four aspects to implementation that are of importance when thinking about a successful implementation. The four key factors that will make up this investigation: (1) individual agency, (2) the setting in which the implementation takes place, (3) the role of conceptual understanding, and (4) the effort of the participants. Together these four factors to implementation will help create a better understanding of the complexity and interconnectedness of factors related to implementation. Due to the fact that implementation is a product of many actors and many perspectives, the complexity of implementation needs to be broken down in order to better understand how implementation occurs. Secondly, there is considerable interconnectedness between actors at many levels within implementation and because of this deciphering how individuals and their settings interact it is possible to further develop an understanding of how implementation evolves and occurs.

Individual Agency. The concept of individual agency is understood as the ability of individuals to act on their own and to be empowered to make effective change. Dutro, Fisk, Koch, Roop, and Wixson (2002) argue that participation in the integration and implementation of new approaches to instruction is important to the assumption of individual leadership in implementation. In their study of the implementation of state mandated literacy practices in the classroom and the overall impact of collaboration, Dutro et al. (2002) argue that the implementation process and the development of individual agency can be greatly benefitted by the inclusion and integration of the individuals who are responsible for implementation. This inclusion can include the

capacity to assist in the development of advocacy for a program and to provide leadership amongst their peers. As Dutro et al. (2002) show, “the support of the superintendent, positioned them [the implementers] to quickly and enthusiastically embrace the philosophies” (p. 16) of the new state policy. Although this policy implementation was targeted as a way to improve the literacy instructional practices of the teachers, the overarching lesson is that by encouraging participation at the individual level, the teachers were able to increase their own capacity to be leaders in the individual buildings where the new policy was being introduced. The increased agency allowed for the implementation to occur with less confusion and greater success. Furthermore, Fullan (1996) points out that “*only when greater clarity and coherence are achieved in the minds of the majority of teachers will we have any chance of success [italics in original]*” (p. 421). What Fullan (1996) is positing here is that in order for individual agency to be achieved at the local level, the clarity of the purpose and coherence in messaging of the implementation will assist in the production of agency for an individual. Principals, teachers, and other school actors will be able to achieve individual agency when the message and purpose of the innovative practice is clear, concise, and meaningful to those who are implementing. Fullan (1996) furthers this argument by pointing out that “educational change is inherently, endemically, and ineluctably non-linear” (p. 421). The challenge for policy makers is to seek clarity in the implementation process if implementation is to have any chance at success. In the end, it is important for the policy makers who are initiating the systemic change through implementation to address the issue of clarity of purpose in order to achieve individual agency that will allow for those who are at the front lines of the implementation process to implement as intended. In

doing so, by creating clarity, those who are at the front lines of implementation can be empowered to implement the innovative practice that is being introduced into the academic setting.

Setting for Implementation. Beyond simply those who are responsible for implementation, the setting for policy implementation can be fraught with challenges that have the potential to produce negative results in the overall course of implementation. The setting, whether that is an individual school or an entire school district, is a factor that affects the overall success or failure of implementation. The setting is made up of the site of implementation as well as the culture and institutional environment where implementation of policy takes place.

It is important to comprehend the importance of readiness for the individual sites where implementation occurs need to be ready (Durlak, 1998) for the specific implementation to occur. In the location where the implementation is to occur, there needs to be a mitigating factor that enables the location or site to engage in an activity that produces change. This can be a product of discussion amongst actors within the system, it could be a product of data analysis, or it can be the result of community action. Regardless of the impetus for change, the setting for the intervention is best situated when it is receptive to the impending change. If not, the policy being implemented can be diminished and disregarded as unnecessary or worse, an imposition to those who are already engaged in activities related to the objective of the implementation.

In addition to the setting of the implementation, the political environment of the setting where implementation occurs is a factor that can impact how individuals observe the goals and mediate the objectives of policy designers in implementation. Fullan and

Pomfret (1977) argue that the politics of the setting can have significant impact upon the outcome of the innovation being proposed for the site. The political setting includes the relationships and interactions between those who are responsible for implementation and those who introduce the policy. Bal, Kozleski, Schrader, Rodriquez, and Pelton (2014) argue that the “histories and institutional cultures [roles, rules, and division of labor] shape the individuals participation in school activities” (p. 333). The culture of a setting, either open to change or closed to yet another new idea, can be mitigating factors in how the policy is welcomed or resisted against when introduced to the setting.

The setting of the implementation has many factors that lead to success or failure, but a key understanding within the setting is how individuals welcome or challenge the introduction of a new policy initiative. The setting, with its inherent political and institutional challenges can be a determining factor in how the policy is received and ultimately implemented.

Policy Understanding. Spillane (2000) argues that there are an “array of factors that influence implementation” (p. 145). The ability of individuals to conceptualize and internalize the intent and meaning of a policy is of paramount interest. The understanding of policy objectives and goals among those who are implementing the policy is critical to the implementation. This includes the clarity of the messaging regarding the policy and the intended outcome of the policy being implemented that filters down from those who engineer the policy being introduced to those who are entrusted with its implementation. Understanding the intent and objectives of a policy can either help the policy advance within the setting or an overall lack of clarity can inhibit its implementation. Spillane (2000) furthers this argument by positing, “implementers must figure out what a policy

means in order to decide whether and how to ignore, adapt, or adopt policymakers recommendations in practice” (p. 145). The interpretation of the meaning of the policy is premised upon the ability of those implementing the policy to discern the features of the change desired by policymakers and is predicated on the clarity of the message. When the policy has clear goals and explicit procedures (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002) it is more likely that the policy will result in the intended outcomes being sought.

Understanding what a policy is seeking to accomplish and how to achieve the specified outcomes is a key component in the implementation process. As is argued above, it is critical that individuals understand the goals, the process of implementation, and the discreet outcomes sought in order to implement with success.

Effort in Implementation. With the knowledge that the implementer’s understanding of policy goals, objectives, and the importance of the setting are influential in implementation, a further factor in the implementation of a new policy objective is the effort in which individuals work to introduce with fidelity the goals of the policy.

Understanding that the effort of those who implement the policy is a central feature of how well a policy is adhered to, it is important to investigate how effort can both support and derail a promising policy effort. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) posit that “time, personal interaction and contacts, in-service training, and other forms of people based support” (p. 391) are what produce results. The all-inclusive effort that Fullan and Pomfret (1977) argue for is an important factor because it seeks to establish an environment where the efforts of participants are supported in all areas. This effort, which is vitally important to the overall success of an implementation is necessary for success, without it the objectives of the policy may be lost. Meyer et al. (1993) argue that any intervention or

innovation to existing practices needs to be supported by continual effort over time because any “intervention for youth that is done during a limited time period cannot be expected to compete with extremely negative environments within which youth spend their lives” (p. 109). Effort is a factor that is necessary for implementation to occur, but effort must be sustained over time or it has the potential to be a factor in the demise of a policy initiative. Effort is, by its very nature, the glue that holds together any implementation. It is the factor that is easiest to control and contribute to success; it also has the potential to produce the greatest results when it is utilized to fulfill the objectives of the policy as designed.

Overall, while there are many factors that can contribute to a successful implementation of a new policy. It is the participation and individualized interpretations of school leaders and the general understanding of the policy, and the effort engaged in the implementation that is of the most importance. Together, these factors have an informative role in better understanding how implementation of new policy initiative takes place and is made possible.

Frames

A second point of interest in this dissertation will be to investigate and understand how frames and framing are central actors in the attempt to understand the implementation effort. Frames, as defined by Goffman (1974) act as the construct that place meaning and structure to everyday occurrences. Frames and the act of framing are relied upon to interpret how individuals make sense of the implementation that is occurring within the organization. Goffman (1974) asserts that frames and frameworks are a form of interpretation and allow individuals to “locate, perceive, identify, and label

a seemingly infinite number of occurrences” (p. 21) into individually significant spaces. Benford and Snow (2000) further articulate Goffman’s (1974) articulation of frames by positing that frames are a “schemata of interpretation” (p. 614) and that frames “help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action” (p. 614). As such, frames are the mental pathways through which individuals make sense of events that occur. Frames of understanding are created by individuals that are based upon their experiences and beliefs about a particular concept and function to create personalized understanding for individuals. Building upon the basic conception of frames, Benford and Snow (2000) identify two specific categories of frames, diagnostic and prognostic (p. 615). Diagnostic frames are those that enable problem identification and attributions of particular issues (Benford and Snow, 2000).

Prognostic and Diagnostic Frames. Prognostic frames are those mindsets or worldviews of individuals that allow for the “the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 616). Between these two overarching types of frames, diagnostic and prognostic, it will be possible to categorize stated beliefs and actions of participants in the implementation into smaller frames of reference and understanding that are situated within these two larger constructs. The use of frames enables the compartmentalization of data and establish the opportunity attribute meaning and understanding to preconceived notions of how behavioral problems are understood, and how policy can best address the behavioral concerns that are held by individuals in the school.

Figure 2.1

Frames: Diagnostic and Prognostic

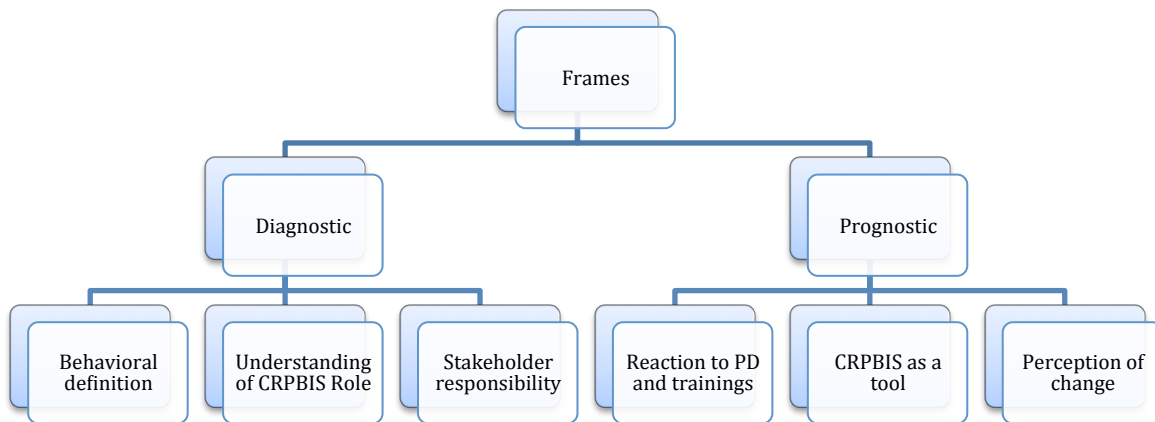


Figure 2.1. This figure represents the framing tree based upon the work of Benford and Snow (2000) and shows how subsequent frames can be created from original frames.

Within the diagnostic frame, smaller individual frames can be constructed that reference and interpret: 1) how individuals perceive and define the behavioral problems that exist currently in the schools and how these change over time, 2) how stakeholders (teachers, principals, school district leadership, and county support organizational leadership) at multiple levels of implementation understand CRPBIS within the school buildings, and 3) how stakeholders are responsible for implementation. Secondly, prognostic framing can also be broken into smaller units to better understand how policy initiatives can affect school problems. Prognostic frames can be used to assess how: 1) individuals perceive the affect of professional development and training in the implementation, 2) how individuals perceive and imagine the impact of the policy, and 3) how individuals view the changes as a by-product of implementation. Frames, and framing of policy goals, will allow for an understanding of how individuals interpret the benefits and the potential changing nature of individual frames over time.

Cognitive Frameworks. Further developing upon the concept of frames, Spillane (1996, 1999, 2000) posits that to enable the development of an understanding of the cognitive frameworks that are in place among stakeholders, implementers need to situate the messaging and intentions of the policy goals from educational leadership at the forefront of implementation. Furthermore it is important to investigate the interpretation of the goals and objectives by implementers through the worldviews and sensemaking activities (Coburn, 2001, 2005; Coburn et al., 2009) of those responsible for the implementation of policy goals. By merging the theoretical frameworks of program implementation and the interpersonal action of sensemaking it will be possible to analyze how individuals make sense of, interpret inputs, and implement the overarching goals of policy makers who seek to improve the behavioral environment of the classroom over time. As such, the cognitive processes, or working knowledge (Coburn et al., 2009) of implementers foregrounds the signals and messages put forth by the district leadership as interpreted by individuals. A key factor in this language or messaging of goals and outcomes is the manner in which the new policy is couched in familiar terms and approaches to classroom management that provides a level of understanding about a policy for implementers (Spillane, 2000).

Second, the success of the implementation is also predicated on identifying specific cognitive views (e.g., the definition of culture, the interpretation of the purpose of discipline, and the dispositions of school leaders) that school officials within the school system rely upon to comprehend the introduction, value, and overall implementation of the initiative. The discrete objectives, and the ensuing focal points for implementation, will help to identify the root cause, intended goals, and the desired

outcomes of introducing a new policy structure within the school system. Using these cognitive markers as points of investigation will provide the pivotal points by which teachers and building leaders begin to pursue a deeper understanding of how this policy is implemented within the school district. For example, if reducing the level of student referrals for discipline is a primary goal of the implementation, the overarching investigation into the implementation will seek to better understand how the implementation of a new initiative can achieve the stated goals of the policy designers.

Last, because the implementation of the new policy is predicated on the localized understanding of the discrete objectives of the district leadership, individual sensemaking patterns will assist in the investigation of how the educational leadership of the school community use external and environmental cues (Coburn et al., 2009) to frame the development of the new program or policy. Coburn et al., (2009) argue that the act of framing a particularly challenging problem by individuals helps to “render complexity meaningful” (p. 1119). As Spillane (2000) posits, “a cognitive perspective enhances our understanding of the implementation process, pressing us to unpack a component of the process that has remained largely implicit in previous work” (p. 168-169). It is critical, then, in the investigation into the implementation to understand how local culture affects overall implementation and fidelity to overarching goals. In doing so, this dissertation will seek to provide knowledge and comprehension to the patterns of thought and action in the development of a behavioral system that honors and includes the wisdom of the local community in the schooling experience for students.

Discipline

On any given day, in school districts across the United States, there are students who are being disciplined for their actions in the school that violate the school's code of conduct and are subject to sanction for their actions. The violations to the code of conduct range from potentially severe events, such as an assault upon another student or teacher, to rather mundane violations, such as insubordination or disorderly conduct in the classroom or hallways within the school. These sanctions include a multitude of possible outcomes, from warnings and detentions and up to be suspended or even expelled from school. It is the localized adjudication of the violations to the school's code of conduct that result in a variety of disciplinary actions for the students.

These disciplinary actions taken by teachers and school leaders arise in one of two forms, punitive and non-punitive disciplinary sanctions. Non-punitive sanctions include any forms of discipline that do not remove students from the classroom environment. Examples of non-punitive discipline are lunch detention, after school detention, or warnings. Punitive sanctions remove the students from the classroom through suspension and expulsion. The use of punitive school discipline has the effect of decreasing time in the instructional environment. In addition to this, punitive school discipline has the capacity to lead to negative consequences such as racial segregation and social stigmatization for those who are subjected to exclusionary discipline (Bal, 2016). Furthermore, the effect of punitive discipline has myriad impacts upon the academic outcomes. In the past twenty years, the number of exclusionary punishments has increased significantly and has resulted in students missing considerable time from the classroom (Monahan, VenDerhei, Bechtold, & Cauffman, 2014). Over this period of

time, the increase and effect of the increase in punitive disciplinary actions has had a disproportionate effect upon students of color. A number of studies over the past decade have argued that the existing use of school discipline does not prepare students, no matter their racial background, for transition into higher grades (Dunbar Jr., 2015), that the increased use of disciplinary sanctions increase the risk of educational failure (Arcia, 2006; Losen, 2013), and may actually lead to increased school dropouts (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Raffele Mendez & Knoff, 2003). Although these three outcomes of school discipline are not an exhaustive list of potential effects, they are indicative of serious implications of the current model of school discipline.

Historical Understandings of School Discipline. In 1975, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) presented the first major study of school suspensions in the United States. According to this report, "until only a few years ago school exclusionary devices such as suspensions were invisible. Neither the federal, state, or local governments had any idea how many children were suspended" (p. 55). The fact of the matter is that schools, at the time of the CDF study, were not required nor expected to report the number of students who were excluded from the classroom. The CDF report broke important ground into the investigation of disproportional school discipline. Within the report, the CDF identified that African American students, in the years prior to 1975, were suspended more than any other group and that "one of every eight black children compared to one in every sixteen white children were suspended at least once during the 1972-1973 school year" (p. 63). The pattern of disproportionate discipline for African American students was only beginning to become apparent to school leaders and scholars. Further scholarship in the ensuing decades show that while exclusionary

discipline had been invisible, due to the lack of public information about suspension and expulsion rates, disproportionate use of punitive school discipline had been taking place at an alarming rate.

During the 1980s and 1990s, nothing much had changed for minority students in the classroom. African American students were still experiencing suspensions and expulsions at a proportionally higher rate than White students and with greater severity. Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles (1982) reported that the disproportionately higher rate of exclusionary punishment for African Americans in comparison to White students was still evident even after the CDF report. Even when adjusting for potential mitigating factors such as overall classroom misbehavior, it was posited by Wu, et al. (1982), that there was a clear level of disproportionality in the punishment of African American students by schools. Following the work of Wu, et al. (1982), in a study by Garibaldi (1992) of the New Orleans school system, it was uncovered that while African Americans represented only 43% of the total male student population within the school system, African American male students were disproportionately punished within the system. In the New Orleans system, as presented by Garibaldi (1992), African American male students represented 65% of all suspensions and 80% of the expulsions. These studies, among others, highlighted the continuing practice of disciplinary action in schools that meted out school punishment in an unequal manner and this led to higher rates of suspension and expulsion for African American youth despite the knowledge that differential patterns of discipline existed in American schools.

Impact of School Discipline: The high incidence of school discipline has an effect of the students through what Gregory et al. (2010) refer to as the increased risk of

academic underperformance. The academic underperformance of students, as a byproduct of school discipline, is considerably important and is fleshed out through a variety of research that identifies the long-term academic impact of school discipline. Skiba and Rausch (2004) show that higher rates of suspension are correlated with lower achievement scores for students on standardized tests, Arcia (2006) and Beck & Muschkin (2012) identify in their individual studies that school suspensions contribute to the delay in reading achievement for students who had been excluded from the classroom as a result of disciplinary action as opposed to those who remain in the classroom. Furthermore, as Rausch and Skiba (2005) reported in a presentation of their work, there is suggestive evidence that the “usage of suspension and expulsion is negatively related to the academic achievement” (p. 2). Furthermore, the decision to drop out of school by students is a serious and life-altering decision for students, but in many cases, the decision to drop out of school is often preceded by a suspension or an expulsion at some point in their academic career (Dupper, 2010). Students who are suspended are “three times more likely to drop out by the tenth grade than those not suspended (Eckstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock (1986), as cited in Dupper, 2010, p. 5).

To better understand the complexity of the prevalence of disproportional discipline in schools today, it is vital to investigate the overall numbers and effects of school discipline upon students, the impact of the discipline tactics for the academic and social development of the students, and the possible methods of responses available to school administrators that seek to keep students in the classroom environment. According to Raffele Mendez (2003), African American students are still much more likely to be subjected to school suspensions when compared with White and Latino/a students. In a

2016 report by the Tennessee Department of Education, African American students were suspended (during the 2015-2016 academic year) at a rate of 60% greater than the state average for other students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2016). Brownstein (2010) also shows that African American students, using data from the United States Department of Education, are given exclusionary punishments for violations of school rules “nearly three times the rate and expelled at three-and-a-half times the rate of White students” (p. 26). The same trend for differential treatment of African American students holds true in many geographical regions of the United States. For example, in the state of Virginia, Rocque (2010) found that African American students received referrals to the administrative offices within schools at a nine percent greater rate than White students. African American students in Georgia were referred to the office for punishment nearly one-and-a-half times more than White students (Jordan & Anil, 2009). Clearly race is still a significant factor in the discipline procedures of schools in America based upon these studies. Not only is race a factor in the prevalence of disciplinary action, but also is a predictor in the severity of discipline actions taken by schools.

Disciplinary Action in Practice. In classrooms, students generally want more freedom and teachers generally seek to establish a classroom environment where learning can take place. It is at this meeting point, or moment, between these two population groups within the school setting that creates the situation where the interpersonal friction can lead to disciplinary action being taken by the teachers to combat the disruptions that occur. (Vavrus & Cole, 2002) This disciplinary moment, when the actions of the students run counter to the intended operations of the classroom, highlight the moment when the stated rules, or norms, of the classroom are challenged. It is in this moment that the

teachers within the classroom are asked to interpret the actions of the students and determine in an instant whether the environment of the classroom is being degraded and present a need for the teachers to take action in a way that achieves the stated goals of the teacher, school, and school district (Bowditch, 1993). As these interactions play out and the more disruptive that these disciplinary moments become, teachers are forced to take action to establish control and maintain the desired level of order within the classroom. The escalation of the interaction between classroom teachers and students inside the classroom can ultimately lead to a disciplinary referral by the classroom teacher that requires the student to meet with the school disciplinarian. It has also been asserted that the administration of exclusionary discipline policies are a manner in which the administration attempts to remove misbehaving youth from the classroom and improve the learning environment for other students (Brownstein, 2010).

Prevalence of School Discipline. More and more schools are reacting to the misbehavior of students with more severe punitive action as opposed to corrective measures (Dunbar Jr., 2015). The impact of the increased exclusionary disciplinary patterns in schools had resulted in what Noguera (1995) argues is a transformation of the schools into a prison-like facility. Noguera (1995) posits that the prevailing wisdom is that schools are resorting to using increasing force to combat traditional student misbehavior. As the increasing use of force to address student misbehavior has been used, the argument has been made that schools are beginning to label student misbehavior as criminal actions. The criminalization of students through the use of school discipline has made “school policing the fastest growing law enforcement field” (Hirschfield, 2008, p. 82). Brownstein (2010) presents data to show that during the 2005-2006 school year,

“over 100,000 students were expelled and 3,300,000 students were suspended” (p. 24) representing a 15% increase in just four years. Furthermore, Losen (2013), using 2006 data from the United States Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection, reports that for every day that American public schools are in session there are approximately 18,000 students suspended for at least a single day and that there are approximately 560 expulsions per day.

Disciplinary Forms. Suspension, as defined by Raffele Mendez (2003), is the removal of students from the classroom for a period of time that is generally no more than ten days. Expulsion is the procedural removal from the school for a longer period of time (Skiba & Sprague, 2008). Together these two forms of administrative authority are utilized to exhibit the desire of the school to establish a sense of order and structure (Losen, 2013) to the school’s operation.

However, as the volume of suspensions and expulsions grow during the school year, or over many school years, students are exposed to the concept that in order to preserve order in the classroom the school must resort to authoritarian models of punishment (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). It is this desire for order and structure that has led many scholars to investigate the frequent use of suspension and expulsion to address student misbehavior

Disproportional Impact. School suspensions and expulsions have been on the rise in American schools and the effects of this increase in harsh, punitive school discipline has led to a near epidemic level of school suspensions (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Not only have the number of suspensions and expulsions increased to unprecedented levels, the incidence of suspensions and expulsions for minority students,

in particular African American students, have continued to show differences in the rates of those suspended when compared to White students. Using data from the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the national gap in suspension between African American and White students in the year 2000 was eight percent higher for African Americans and in 2006 that gap was ten percent higher compared to White students (United States Department of Education: Office for Civil Rights, 2000, 2006). For male students, the gap in suspension for African Americans in 2000 was eight percent higher compared to White students and in 2006 the discipline gap had increased to ten percent (United States Department of Education: Office for Civil Rights, 2000, 2006). The differential discipline results for African American students in schools are of great concern for policy makers and school leaders. To better understand the complexity of the prevalence of differential discipline in schools today, it is vital to investigate the overall numbers and effects of school discipline upon students, the impact of the discipline tactics for the academic and social development of the students, and the possible methods of responses available to school administrators that keeps students in the classroom environment rather than push the students away from schools and into the streets.

According to Raffele Mendez (2003), African American students are still much more likely to be subjected to school suspensions when compared with White and Latino/a students. Brownstein (2010) follows this by showing that African American students, using data from the United States Department of Education, are given exclusionary punishments for violations of school rules "nearly three times the rate and expelled at three-and-a-half times the rate of White students" (p. 26).

Although many studies, as seen above, have suggested the interconnectedness of academic underperformance with school discipline, there are a few studies that highlight the relationship between race and the severity of school discipline. Kinsler (2011) notes that for African American students, the incidence of suspension (of at least one day) increased by 120% from 1972 to 2000, while for White students the increase was sixty-four percent. As the increase of severity for individual punishments has increased over time, so have the impacts of school suspension upon academic achievement. In a recent study, Wildhagen (2012) argued that in schools where punitive disciplinary climates are more pronounced, African American students are predicted to suffer from academic underperformance. Specifically, Wildhagen (2012) reports that the, “racial disparity in the realization of academic potential increases as the school disciplinary climate becomes increasingly punitive” (p. 17).

The presence of punitive forms of discipline within schools has been shown to have negative effects for those who suffer the consequences of school actors meting out punishment for violations to the school’s code of conduct. These punishments have been shown to be the result of a variety of offences, some severe and other not, but the end result for the students is decreased access to the classroom learning environment and a reduction in overall opportunity to learn. The punishments that have been given out to students have, historically, been disproportionately distributed and have been identified to have greater effects for students of color. In some cases, the discipline that has been administered by teachers and school administrators has been far more severe than the action, but in any case, discipline in American schools has drifted away from remediation of behavior and towards authoritarianism in order to establish order and control. The

consequences of this trend have escalating educational impacts for students who come into contact with the disciplinary system. As a result, it is essential to think about the purpose of school discipline and the objectives that are sought in the handing out of punitive sanctions for classroom misbehavior.

Conclusion

As can be seen, implementation of a new policy can be a considerably challenging endeavor. The primary challenge in the implementation process is the effort to empower the individuals who are responsible for the implementation to act in concert with the policy designers. The interaction between policy designers and policy implementers is predicated on the coherent messaging that informs and codifies the purpose of the initiative being introduced to the organization. Through clarity and communication it is possible to engage the champions of the program at the local level and, at the same time, allows for the perspectives of those who are responsible to properly frame the need for the implementation and the comprehend the value of the program that is being implemented. By properly framing the need for the policy initiative and through the empowerment of local actors it is possible for innovation to occur. While understanding policy, for all actors and all levels, is clearly an important factor in the implementation process, it is also clear that the engagement of local actors is also a critical feature in the successful implementation process. While implementation may be fraught with challenges, it is clear that the process is benefitted through open dialogue and constant interaction with the many actors within the implementation process. In the end, a successful implementation is a process that is all encompassing and requires the active participation of all parties involved. Any implementation that fails to incorporate the

views, perspectives, and input from the local actors can result in a failed process. Despite the challenges that are inherent in the implementation effort, it is possible to successfully introduce a new initiative that has positive effects if the policy designers and program implementers work in concert with each and acknowledge the value of all stakeholders in the process.

CHAPTER 3: SETTINGS, DATA, and METHODS

This study of the implementation of CRPBIS is set within three schools that are part of a larger school district. These schools are all elementary schools that serve kindergarten through third grades. The decision to include the three elementary schools was a conscious decision that would provide information about how similarly situated schools attempt to implement CRPBIS. Data for this study will consist of semi-structured interviews with individuals at multiple levels of the implementation. The information from the interviews will be coded and analyzed to determine the form and function of the implementation of the CRPBIS program in the school. From the school district's central office to the local schools, individuals who are pivotal in the introduction and implementation of the new discipline policy have been interviewed at different points in time. Each of the interviews was conducted in a one-on-one setting and was recorded digitally to provide an opportunity to have the interviews transcribed for further analysis. In sum, the setting, data, and methods for this dissertation will be examined to gain a more robust understanding of the purposes for the implementation of CRPBIS, the perceived benefits of implementation, as well as the challenges experienced in the full implementation of the program within the district, but specifically within the three elementary schools that make up the study.

Setting

Bald Mountain School District. The setting for this dissertation is the Bald Mountain School District (BMSD). BMSD is located in urban setting and is made up of 27 school buildings, serving over 11,000 students from pre-kindergarten to high school. In a typical educational arrangement, the district has a Board of Education and a

traditional central office configuration for general school operations. The Board of Education is tasked with setting policy for the district and overseeing the general operations of the school district. One significant task of the Board of Education is to choose the district's superintendent. The superintendent, as is the case in many school districts, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the district. These responsibilities include the determination of the appropriate academic programs of the district, the financial decisions of the district, and several other critical aspects of the operation of the district. The superintendent does not manage these objectives in a vacuum, but does so with the support of a Deputy Superintendent and a cadre of Executive Directors who manage specific operational departments, such as Student Services, to fulfill the mandates of the Board of Education. Together, the leadership team of the BMSD is tasked with meeting the policy goals and objectives of the Board of Education.

In this particular example of program implementation, the Executive Director of Student Services is the individual who is responsible for introducing and seeing through the implementation of CRPBIS within BMSD. The executive director is the individual who will work collaboratively with the district hierarchy and local school building leadership to ensure that resources are available for the implementation of CRPBIS and that building level systems of support are available to help the principal and other school leaders introduce and implement CRPBIS.

The focus of this study is the implementation of CRPBIS in elementary school buildings. Elementary school buildings were chosen as the specific unit of study within this dissertation due to the fact that within the BMSD, elementary school buildings were the location within the school district where disciplinary action was on the increase

(based upon a district study) despite the announcement by the BMSD that school discipline was decreasing within the district as a whole. This is not to argue that the district was wrong in its proclamation, just that the district did not disaggregate the data to identify the difference between different levels. There are 11 elementary school buildings within the district, each with a set of unique grade levels and organizations. While the elementary buildings within the district have a multitude of variation in their organization and academic focus, the three specific buildings that are included within this study are traditional Kindergarten through third grade schools. The three elementary buildings that are the focus of this study are located in three geographically different locations within the district. Each of the school buildings has an administration staff that is representative of the school population in which they serve. The three schools that are a part of this study are Monument, Bo Buck, and Teocalli Elementary Schools¹.

Participating Schools. Monument Elementary School is located in the western part of the city and the principal of the school is a white, female with many years of experience within the school district as a teacher and principal. The school itself is made up of many different ethnicities, but is 43% white and 47% female. A second school, Bo Buck Elementary School, is more centrally located within the city and is lead by a white, male principal, and is the most senior school administrator in the school district. The school is also diverse, but white students make up 35% (the single largest percentage) and males in the school make up 49.6% of the school population. The third school in this study, Teocalli Elementary School, is located in the eastern portion of the city. An African American male principal leads this school. The principal of Teocalli Elementary

¹ The names of each building are pseudonyms to mask the identity.

is relatively new to the position and is new to the school building itself. The school has a greater percentage of African American students than any other school within the study, representing 40.1% of the student body. Teocalli is also a school that has more males (52%) than female (48%) students. As seen in the following table, the schools are made up of multiple ethnicities. The individual populations of these schools resemble, but do not mirror the overall population of the school district.

Table 3.1

District and School Population

	BMSD	Teocalli Elementary	Bo Buck Elementary	Monument Elementary
Total students	11,155	265	284	311
American Indian or Alaskan Native	83 (.7%)	1 (.3%)	6 (2.1%)	4 (1.3%)
Asian	669 (5.9%)	2 (.6%)	1 (.4%)	4 (1.3%)
African American	4378 (39.2%)	108 (40.1%)	82 (28.9%)	46 (14.8%)
Hispanic	2139 (19.2%)	80 (30.2%)	68 (23.9%)	85 (27.3%)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	7 (.06%)	1 (.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Two or more Races	944 (8.5%)	29 (10.9%)	25 (8.8%)	38 (12.2%)
White	2935 (26.3%)	44 (16.6%)	102 (35.9%)	134 (43.0%)

Note. Data for this table was compiled using data available on the mischool.org website. Percentages in parentheses are reflective of that ethnicity's percentage of the population in the individual school, except for the district column. These percentages reflect the percentage of that ethnicity in the entire district.

Each of three school buildings that make up this study is lead by an individual principal. Each principal has a support staff (e.g., secretary and other non-teaching adults) that assists the daily operation of the building. Part of this support staff within the school building includes the Student Assistance Providers (SAPs). SAPs are assigned to the schools by the school district's central office building. The SAPs work to implement new initiatives, support teacher-student interactions, and act as a liaison between the school administration and the student body. Officials at the district's central office determine the operational structure of each building. Each of the individuals that make up the support staff within the school works in concert with the building leaders to ensure that the objectives of the school system are met.

The setting of this study, while predominately in the three specific schools listed above also includes the central offices where the specific decisions related to programming within the schools are made. Within the central office of the BMSD, several individuals have influence over the actions that take place within the individual schools. In the central offices, the superintendent and the deputy superintendent work alongside the executive directors to determine the initiatives that will be introduced and the partnerships that will be made. In this particular instance, the deputy superintendent is primarily responsible for the decision to engage in the introduction of CRPBIS and the length of time that is committed to the implementation. After this decision has been made, it has become the responsibility of the executive director of student services to introduce and implement the CRPBIS initiative to the individual schools and principals. The executive director is tasked with designing the implementation and ensuring that the schools involved in the implementation are clearly informed, have the resources and time

necessary to implement, and that the partnership with the Gore Range District (countywide support district – see below for more information) is facilitated as the district envisions. In sum, once the district leadership, either the superintendent or the school board has identified an initiative and the specific outcomes desired, it is the job of the executive director of student services within the school district to ensure the smooth implementation over time.

Gore Range District. In a unique relationship with the BMSD, a countywide support organization, also considered to be a school district, though not in direct control of any single school, is present to assist and aide all schools within the county to introduce new curriculum, develop teacher's skills, or provide analysis of data. In the implementation that is detailed in this dissertation, the countywide school district is providing expertise, training, and support for the implementation of CRPBIS. This support organization operates outside of the individual school districts, yet is partly funded by each of the schools that are serviced by the support organization. In this study, this support organization will be referred to as Gore Range District (GRD). GRD is organized much similar to a traditional school district with a superintendent and is also structurally organized with a number of departments that are available to provide support services to the schools within the county. Within the GRD is the Student Instructional Services (SIS) department that is able to provide assistance to member school districts that is specific to curriculum development, technical assistance, and program implementation. Within the SIS, there are multiple individuals with educational experience and expertise who manage individual initiatives that provide county schools with support not available within the individual districts. A director oversees the content

supervisors, who in turn manage the specific area specialists, leads the GRD SIS team. The director of the SIS team is responsible for overseeing the overarching initiatives of GRD related to academic interests. Within the SIS team, there is a cohort of supervisors of particular content areas, such as curriculum, CRPBIS, or technology. The supervisors oversee specialists who are tasked with working directly with schools and educators. The specialists are assigned to work with particular schools that have either requested support or have been identified as needing support in particular academic areas. As a system, the individual members of the GRD SIS team operate to provide a variety of professional development opportunities for county school districts.

The relationship between BMSD and GRD in the implementation of CRPBIS was a product of the need for services that were initially identified for Teocalli Elementary School. In the spring prior to full implementation, Teocalli Elementary School was identified as a school with persistently low achievement and as a result was afforded the opportunity to restructure several internal programs to address the persistent low performance. It was the GRD that introduced the implementation of CRPBIS in this one elementary school (along with a high school) as a potential initiative that would improve the school climate and potentially lead to improved academic outcomes for the students. Working in concert with the BMSD, the initiative was brought to the school and ultimately, through communication and dialogue between the content specialists of GRD and the leadership of BMSD, expanded the implementation of CRPBIS across the entirety of BMSD. In the interim months, between spring of the year prior to full implementation in the following fall, Teocalli Elementary worked with GRD to initially implement CRPBIS and then serve as an example for other schools. Even with the short

amount of extra time in the implementation for CRPPBIS at Teocalli Elementary, the overall implementation of CRPBIS was not fundamentally altered. The partnership between BMSD and GRD for the implementation of CRPBIS was created from a need to address the climate and culture of one school and blossomed into a full district implementation in a short amount of time.

Together, these two educational systems, the Bald Mountain School District and the Gore Range District, help to ensure that the students within the local school district and the county have the resources and opportunities to effectively engage with the school initiatives. These two organizations are at the heart of this dissertation and the commitment that they have to the collaborative working environment is critical to the success of the implementation of the CRPBIS program in the schools. Historically, these two groups have worked at arm's length to each for a variety of reasons, but in this instance the specific collaboration in the implementation of CRPBIS is mutually agreed upon and is a chance to develop stronger relations between the two organizations. However, the implementation of CRPBIS within the BMSD is a district initiative that is being introduced, supported, and led by district actors that are being aided in professional development and specific training that is provided by the countywide support district.

Data

Data for this dissertation is from a series of semi-structured interviews that took place during and after the first year of implementation of CRPBIS. The interviews were conducted with individuals at all levels of implementation, from the central offices of BMSD, to the schools within the study, and with the members that facilitated the implementation at GRD. Overall, the data provides a lens into the implementation of

CRPBIS at multiple levels and is able to help create an understanding about the alignment of goals across strata. The interviews shed light on the challenges experienced in the first year of implementation, especially on the differences in interpretation that existed across groups about the need for CRPBIS in the schools. Overall, the data paint an interesting picture of the implementation process. The data highlight the similarity in goals, but also the discontinuity in implementation across the three individual schools that are part of this study.

Interviews. Interviews are an important source of data and they provide an opportunity for the participants to provide voice to the implementation (Kvale, 2006). Furthering the point made by Kvale (2006), it is asserted by Denzin (2001) that “the interview functions as a narrative device which allows persons who are so inclined to tell their stories” (p.25). Interviews themselves, as Alvesson (2003) writes are an example of knowledge production, in that the interviews provide “rich content” (Alvesson, 2003) that enable analysis and help to shape the analysis of how individuals think and act. Alvesson (2003) also writes that, “the interview then appears, on the whole, as a valid source of knowledge production” (p. 17). From this information and perspective, the interview process is quite helpful in gaining understanding and also for developing knowledge that is helpful in the qualitative research process.

The series of semi-structured interviews took place during the winter and spring of the first year of implementation. The interviews were conducted using a pre-populated series of questions that were aligned to the research questions and provided interviewees an opportunity to reflect on the design, implementation process, and follow-through after

initial roll out of the CRPBIS program. Interviews were conducted across all levels of implementation, including district and school leaders, principals, and street-level actors.

Interview participants were selected and included into the interview cohort because of the role they play in the implementation process. At the school district level, the deputy superintendent and executive director of Student Services were approached to participate (both agreed to be interviewed). The deputy superintendent was interviewed once and the interview took place in the central offices of the school district. The executive director was interviewed three times, once during the winter, once after the school year of the first year of implementation, and once during the second year of implementation. At the individual schools, each principal participated in the interview process. Each principal was interviewed during the winter of the first year of implementation and were later interviewed during the second year of implementation. At the school level, one SAP agreed to be interviewed (a second SAP at a second school declined to participate). Members of the GRD support team were also interviewed during the course of implementation. The Director of the SIS team was interviewed and provided overarching information related to the implementation. Two facilitators, specialists in implementation and CRPBIS, were also interviewed. These individuals were interviewed twice during implementation, once during the winter of the first year of implementation and after the conclusion of the academic year. A final participant of the interview process was also interviewed, but this individual does not fall into one of the three levels. This interviewee was a BMSD district employee who was on loan to GRD to support and observe the implementation process. This individual was interviewed during the winter of the first year of implementation.

Table 3.2

Interview Participants

Organization	Position	Interview #
Bald Mountain School District	Deputy Superintendent	1
	Executive Director of Student Services	3
Bald Mountain School District	Teocalli Elementary School principal	3
	Bo Buck Elementary School Principal	2
	Monument Elementary School Principal	2
	Teocalli Elementary School, Student Assistant Provider	2
Gore Range School District	Executive Director of Student Services	1
	Supervisor, Student Services	2
	Supervisor, Student Services	2
Gore Range School District/Bald Mountain School District	Implementation Advisor	1

The overall number of interviews is 19. There are limitations in the overall number of individuals who were interviewed, but the limitations in size of the cohort does not preclude analysis from being made about the form and function of the implementation process because of the breadth of their involvement in the implementation process. More interviews at all levels would have been helpful, but the lack of interview data does not preclude the investigation about the framing of CRPBIS to be made, especially when

considering that this study looks to better understand the way in which the district approaches a new initiative and the manner in which implementation begins.

The initial plan, by the district, was to implement CRPBIS over a three year period of time, but a decision was made late in the first year to expand the time frame to a five year implementation. Due to the fact that this dissertation is unable to fully account for all five years of implementation, the data provided by the interviews will be utilized to make early observations about the implementation process and the ways in which individuals responsible for implementation make sense of and interpret the need for the program and the manner in which the program is being implemented.

Each of the interviews that took place was scheduled according to the availability of the interviewee. Initial interviews were conducted in the location where the individual being interviewed worked on a daily basis; subsequent interviews were done via a telephone due to circumstances that required this pathway. Each of the interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed to provide an accurate record of the interview. These transcriptions will be the source for the analysis.

The interview data was coded and analyzed using the online service DeDoose to provide insight into the systemic approach to the implementation of CRPBIS in BMSD. The data from the interviews highlight the challenges and efforts that were made by all parties involved to provide the participant schools the opportunity to introduce CRPBIS in the most effective manner. Using interview coding processes presented by Miles and Huberman (1994) the interviews were coded to categorize information about the implementation and the experiences of the implementers. Approaching the interviews in what Miles and Huberman (1994) posit as an attempt to “dissect them meaningfully

while keeping the relations between the parts” (p. 56) presented an opportunity to better understand the experiences of the individuals who are implementing CRPBIS in the schools. Further, as Miles and Huberman (1994) and Corbin and Strauss (1990) argue, the next step after dissection of the interviews is to code the data in a way that creates meaning. Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that codes are “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive of inferential information compiled during a study.” Adding to this conception, Corbin and Strauss (1990) point out that codes consists of concepts as basic building blocks of coding and that from concepts it is possible to develop categories within the concepts. Miles and Huberman (1994) posit that the types of codes that are created fall into one of three fields. First, there are descriptive codes that “attribute a class of phenomena to a segment of text” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57). Second, interpretive codes can be used to describe a “more backstage web of motives [that] turns up” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57). Last, there are pattern codes (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57) that describe particular patterns in the data that help to provide insight into the relationship between various categories found in the data. These categories allow the data to be organized in a coherent manner to explain the concepts developed in initial coding. Following the coding of interview data into the buckets created by the prognostic and diagnostic coding pattern, iterative pattern coding occurred based upon themes generated during the analysis process. Together, these three types of coding produced the framework necessary to further code the interviews into smaller units of information. The smaller units further clarified the interpretations and understandings that each individual within the interview cohort applied to the implementation of CRPBIS. Overall, the investigation into the interviews, using the

smaller units of analysis provided an opportunity to further investigate the data found within the interview transcripts.

Table 3.3

Coding Patterns

Code Type	Original Coding	Secondary Coding
Diagnostic	Behavioral Definition	Biases named or perceived Behavioral definitions Students and CRPBIS
	Understanding of CRPBIS	Implementation Information Purpose for implementing CRPBIS Plans for professional development School leaders CR definitions
	Stakeholder Responsibility	CRPBIS outcomes expected Staff and faculty responsibility Implementation variation
	Reaction to Professional Development	Staff experiences Response to professional development
Prognostic	CRPBIS as a tool	Implementation Challenges Use of CRPBIS as a tool
	Perception of change	Change that CRPBIS will bring

Due to the fact that qualitative research, as Winter (2000) discusses, is “concerned itself with the meanings and personal experiences of individuals, groups, and sub-groups” (n.p) the coding structure enabled the interpretation of the meanings and various experiences that individuals have in the implementation of CRPBIS. Following the framework created by these authors, it will be attempted to show, through interviews, how the

implementation of CRPBIS was experienced and understood by those tasked with implementing the new initiative.

In sum, the data for this dissertation create the framework through which a better understanding of the implementation of CRPBIS. The interview data will be able to paint a picture of the implementation from multiple perspectives. This data will offer more insight into the challenges and success experience in the first year of implementation.

Methods

The methods utilized for this dissertation focus upon interviews as the primary source of data to fuel the analysis of the implementation of CRPBIS in BMSD. For the interview data, an inductive coding methodology is used to allow themes to develop from the material and then form into concepts that identify the way in which the implementation process unfolded and evolved during the first year of implementation.

Interviews. The primary source of material for this dissertation originated from the interviews that were conducted during the first year of implementation. The interview process began with the creation of an interview protocol that would seek to investigate the actions and beliefs of those who were implementing CRPBIS. After the interview protocols were approved and submitted to IRB, the process of participant recruitment began. By reaching out to schools and speaking with stakeholders, a cohort of candidates was contacted and asked to be a part of the study. Once participants had agreed to the interviews, appointments were made and interviews were conducted. Following the interviews, each interview was transcribed so that the interview data could be entered into a digital analysis tool (Dedoose) for analysis. In the end, the interview process provided

critical information to better understand how individuals make sense of this new policy being introduced to the schools system.

The first step in the interview process was to create a set of interview protocols that would be used in the interview process. Due to the fact that individuals from multiple locations, who work in different capacities, would be part of the overall interview process it was necessary to create six separate interview protocols. Interviews were intended (and were) conducted with individuals at the school level, with members of the countywide support organization (the GRD), and with individuals at the central district offices. The interview protocols all sought to gain insight into how individuals saw the need for the implementation and how the implementation could affect the existing behavioral problems that existed within the schools system. The interviews, because they were designed to allow for dialogue to be part of the interview, allowed the interviewee to provide knowledge and perceptions about the implementation of CRPBIS. Each of the different groups within the interview process was asked questions that would provide insight into how CRPBIS was viewed at their particular level. Each interview protocol has a second set of questions, which were to be asked at a later time that would seek to understand how their perceptions had changed over time regarding the implementation of CRPBIS.

Along with the interview protocols, individual consent forms for each participant were created and were designed to provide as much anonymity as possible for the participants. Each participant within the study, per the consent form, was associated with a pseudonym that would be used to protect individual identity. Within the consent form were two required signatures. One provided their consent to be interviewed; the second

consented to have the interview audio recorded so that a transcription of the interview could be made at a later date. Each participant in the interview process agreed to each of the provisions within the consent form.

The selection of those who would be interviewed included a sampling of individuals from each level of leadership within the implementation plan. As mentioned previously, ten individuals were part of the interviewee cohort. It was hoped that there would be more participants, but several locations turned down the opportunity to be a part of the study. In one school that did participate, the SAP denied the request to be interviewed for personal reasons. However, the hope was that the interview cohort would provide a set of individuals that could provide a view into the implementation process that would present perspectives from all levels, from the top to the bottom of the school system. Due to this goal, individuals at the central district offices were asked, and consented, to the interview request. Schools at the elementary level (since this was location was the focal point of the implementation) were asked to participate. Three schools agreed to participate, two turned down requests, and others did not respond to offers to participate. Requests to participate were made via e-mail communication and personal visits (following the initial round of e-mails).

Following the agreement to participate in the interview process, interviews were scheduled and conducted in a one-on-one basis. The majority of the interviews were conducted in person, though some interviews were conducted on the phone. The interviews lasted between 35 – 70 minutes. During the course of the interview, follow-up questions were asked based upon the responses of the interviewees to provide clarity of an answer or to dig deeper into a response. Overall, the interview process sought to

include as many participants as possible and provide an insight into the implementation process through a multitude of lenses.

Following the completion of each interview the audio recording of the interview was transcribed. The transcriptions provide an opportunity to go back through the interviews and code the material based upon the answers and insight that they provided. The interview transcripts were loaded into a digital coding software program (Dedoose) to enable the iterative coding process to occur. Codes for the interviews were initially based upon the prognostic and diagnostic frame buckets, however the excerpts were recoded into pattern codes to further break down the information from the interviews. The codes were used to bucket thoughts and themes, however, throughout the coding process further codes were created to better articulate and categorize various perceptions and concepts that arose during the analysis.

In totality, the interview process included a number of steps. From the creation and approval of the interview protocols to the actual interviews and ultimately the analysis of interviews that had been conducted. The process provided the opportunity to meet and get to know many of the individuals involved in the implementation process. Their insight and commentary about the process proved to be quite valuable in assessing how the implementation process occurred and what challenges were faced in the process of implementing CRPBIS.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Prior to engaging in the analysis of how the implementation process of CRPBIS led to variations across the schools within the study, it is necessary to discuss components of the implementation that help to encourage the implementation of CRPBIS. The specific components that help to position the implementation include a rationale for why the program was implemented, an understanding of how individuals understand what the cultural responsiveness (CR), how the implementation evolved within the school systems, and last an understanding of the disciplinary situation within BMSD. Following the description of how CRPBIS came to be introduced in BMSD, I will seek to tease out how individuals at different levels understand the need for and the benefits of CRPBIS in the BMSD schools, as well as the impact of professional development upon the implementation of CRPBIS. The analysis in this chapter is predicated on the language used in the interview process. The words of the principals in the interviews are the source of the analysis of the adoption for this section, this also limits the study in that clear causal relationship between the success of the implementation are unclear. The analysis is based upon the responses of the principals in the interviews. It should be noted that in this section of the study, I refer to all participants as females. I will also refer to all members of the BMSD administration as a “district official,” in an effort to protect the identities of individuals within the study.

Why CRPBIS?

The introduction of CRPBIS within the BMSD occurred as a result of the efforts by BMSD central office officials to address the growing concern about the suspension numbers within the school district. CRPBIS was also introduced to BMSD to provide

consistency for the students across all school buildings. According to one school leader, “we started looking at our suspension and expulsion data across the district...and we were very concerned.” This concern ultimately led to the partnership with GRD to implement CRPBIS within the school district. The original intent of the GRD was to begin the implementation with a small cohort of schools, but that desire was superseded by the decision of one district official at BMSD to implement CRPBIS in all of the schools within the district at one time. It was thought, by district officials, that this implementation of CRPBIS would be most effective if all the schools within district implemented the program at the same time. The assumption is that if implemented across the entire district, all of the schools would see the commitment and focus that the district was placing on the implementation of CRPBIS. Additionally, this commitment to the implementation across all schools would ultimately lead to coherence and a consistent approach to addressing misbehavior in the classroom across the schools for all students. As a school district official put it:

It is important that those expectations [related to the approaches taken to school discipline] for kids are consistent. And especially students at risk, especially students that are struggling, they need more consistency, not less consistency. So it was really important to me that we did it district wide and I’m happy to say we did.

The commitment to implementing CRPBIS across all schools in the district ensures, in one sense, that all schools will begin the implementation process at the same time, but in another sense, does not allow for best practices to be discovered and shared with other schools in the district. The primary purpose for implementing across all the schools is to

create consistency and coherence for the students in the schools. As envisioned by the central offices of the school district consistency and coherence can be attained by insisting that all schools implement CRPBIS at the same time. Through a universal implementation of CRPBIS, the district is seeking to introduce culturally responsive practices in all school building, create continuity in application of behavioral expectations, and to address the growing rate of school discipline actions.

Culturally Responsive

A key facet to understanding the implementation of CRPBIS is to understand how individuals interpret Culturally Responsive (CR) approaches to school discipline. The concept of culturally responsive approaches can best be understood by the definition provided by Mrs. Roffee of BMSD. Mrs. Roffee argues that:

CR is not just about race and ethnicity. CR is about uniqueness and appreciation for uniqueness and also the connection and the need for me as an adult to connect to my students in my classroom in unique ways based on who they are and what they come with.

The act of being CR is embedded in the totality of actions by schools that include the background and lived experiences of students and not in the simple acknowledgement of race. CR is also seen as the effort to understand the culture that is present in the school's environment. The ability to comprehend and value the individuals who make up the community in which a teacher, principal, or other adult in the school operates within is a key factor in the development of CR practices. Furthermore, Mrs. Roffee points out that CR "forces us to really consider our privilege and our social location and how that might disenfranchise other people who are not like us." To take this a step further and building

upon the conceptualization of CR as posited by Mrs. Roffee, CR requires that individuals pay particular attention to their own station in life and the background from which an individual comes from and how that affects the day-to-day classroom setting. At the school level, the CR portion of CRPBIS is about building trust and finding ways to help teachers adopt culturally responsive practices in the classroom. Cultural responsiveness can be the way in which teacher's present material, promoting cultural differences, and the way in which teacher's can help students from different cultures interact with one another. Mrs. Maier, a school leader, provides a strong articulation of what this means in the classroom by saying that, "it's really [about] building relationships with kids. It's making kids feel safe. They're in a culture where a lot of times they do not feel safe in school so to me, that's the part of the cultural part is how do we make the school safe for them." The idea of CR in CRPBIS is to ensure that the local culture of the school is given the chance to be represented in the policies, procedures, and programs within the school.

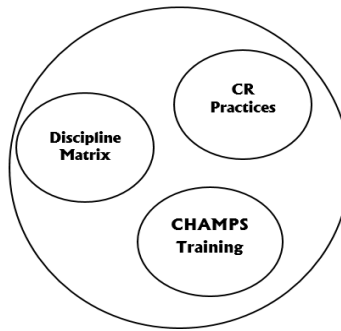
Implementation

The implementation of CRPBIS sought to provide students and schools with a coherent approach to school discipline while at the same time allowing schools to tailor the implementation to the needs and capacity of each school. This tricky proposal, allowing for variation yet at the same time seeking to create consistency in systems across schools, is achieved by providing the schools a basic set of expectations that stipulates the inclusion of specific requirements. Rather than approach the implementation of CRPBIS with a "command and control" approach that mandates the continuation of the traditional disciplinary policy as determined by the central office, the new approach being implemented, as an official of BMSD articulated, sought to

implement CRPBIS in a way that created capacity for local variation, but would require that schools have three specific features.

Figure 4.1

Implementation Expectations of BMSD



As seen in the figure above, the three circles within the larger circle represent the three non-negotiable requirements as set forth by the school district. First, each school is required to locally design a discipline matrix, second, the teachers would be trained in the CHAMPS approach to classroom management, and last, each school is required to introduce culturally responsive practices in the school. What this means is that while the district is mandating three specific components to the implementation, there is room for some variation within those components within the buildings.

For example, while the school district might require a school to have a discipline matrix, it would be up to the school to flesh out the expectations, consequences, and the disciplinary action for a student who violates the expectations of the school. The school district will still require that certain egregious actions require certain punishments, but the local school leadership will be able to address minor disciplinary actions in a way that provides students an alternative to the traditional systematic approach to school misconduct. A second example of the way in which the school can introduce a varied

approach to the mandates of the district is to personalize their approach to CR. The school is required to address CR, but the school is allowed to develop that approach and can be done in consultation with the students and the families of the school community. The need for this, as Mrs. Roffee, another district official, argues is that “what's great about our district is the diversity...and what’s bad about our district is the diversity. When I talk about diversity, what I really mean is the differences that schools have in their expectations, policies, and procedures.” Diversity in this case is not racial or ethnic, but is a diverse product of the community that exists in the school.

CRPBIS is projected by BMSD as the approach to school discipline that helps to create the structural systems that enable school leaders to account for local populations and at the same time, introduce the specific requirements of the implementation of CRPBIS for the school district. This variable consistency will allow for “students to be able to transfer from one building to another and really understand how to be successful in that building regardless of whatever location they’re in” according to Mrs. Roffee of BMSD. The overall goal of the district wide implementation is to address the need that students have for consistency in the classroom related to approaches to misbehavior as a result of the high level of transiency in the district.

It was also important for the district to provide to the school leaders a framework for why the implementation of CRPBIS was important for all schools. The rationale for this came from the central office and was centered on the importance of addressing the disproportionality of discipline within the schools. Recall that the risk of a student receiving a suspension was considerably higher for African American students than for non-African American students in the district. Due to this existing disproportionality

within the system, it was necessary for the district to look closely at how the existing system of discipline perpetuated the continuing risk for African Americans. As Mrs. Roffee stated regarding the existing PBIS systems within BMSD, “what you’re seeing with PBIS in and of itself is no reduction in disproportionality.” It was the district’s history of disproportionality that led to the inclusion of culturally responsive practices to curb the removal of students from the classroom. Culturally responsive practices allow for individuals to have, according to Mrs. Cooper from the GRD, “a better understanding of the students and the environments that they are coming from. I think they [teachers] have a better understanding of how to strategically deal with student behaviors on a more individual basis.” A school principal, Mrs. Mahre, further pointed out that with CRPBIS, “you’re looking for their [students] strengths, their weaknesses, and their proficiencies and their interest so that you can maximize instruction and get them motivated.” Overall, the implementation of culturally responsive practices, related to disciplinary approaches in the school, create the opportunity for schools and school leaders to look beyond the behavior and seek a deeper understanding behind the misbehavior of the student. It is an effort designed to seek an understanding as to what is causing the actions of the student rather than simply punishing the student.

School Discipline History in BMSD

On the whole, punitive discipline within the district has been falling in the years prior to this study. Despite the fact that punitive discipline was declining district wide over time, at the elementary school level punitive discipline was on the rise. In fact, one of the schools in this study (Teocalli Elementary) had the highest rate of suspension in the school. According to the school principal, at Teocalli Elementary discipline had come

to be a form of maintaining order within the school for the principal. Principal Stenmark, of Teocalli Elementary, saw discipline as “the way to keep the building safe and to run a tight ship.” The mindset in this case, was that by having a strict disciplinary system in place, the classrooms would function more efficiently and provide a greater opportunity for the students who were behaving as asked to learn in the classroom. Though this was not the dominant mindset across the district, it does present an important view into the situation in one elementary school where CRPBIS was set to be introduced.

Discipline, across the interviews, was perceived as an important tool to ensure that students acted appropriately within the schools, but it became clear that many of the participants within the system have come to the understanding that harsh, punitive discipline is not an intervention. It is not an intervention that will produce the best results for students in the classroom and it is possible that the historic approaches to school discipline may simply propagate further bad behavior in the future. The behavior that principals spoke of as being the reason why students were sent to the principal’s office was persistent misconduct or disorderly behavior. These “nuisance” behaviors, as described by a central district office official, lead to an overall escalation of frustration within the classroom that results in students being sent to the principal.

Research Question #1

The first of three research questions in this study is designed to gain a better understanding of how individuals across the school district frame the need for the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS). Along with understanding the need for implementation, it is also important to explore how the individuals in this study frame the benefits of the implementation. Thus,

the first research question of this study looks at how individuals frame the purpose of CRPBIS and reads as follows:

In what ways do stakeholders responsible for implementation frame the need for and potential benefits of CRPBIS as a form of behavioral interventions?

- a. What differences exist in the framing of CRPBIS across central office and elementary school personnel?*
- b. In what ways do these individual framings change as a result of professional development, training, and oversight in the implementation of CRPBIS?*

Understanding the way in which individuals across the school district frame the purpose of CRPBIS is an important first step in understanding the overall implementation of the CRPBIS program across and within the schools within the Bald Mountain School District (BMSD). The framing that individuals have related to the implementation has an impact on how school leaders view the value of CRPBIS and how individuals implement the program in their individual building. Both of these constructs, the need for CRPBIS and the benefits of CRPBIS, help to provide insight into why different schools have varying levels of implementation of the CRPBIS program.

At a basic level, the need for the implementation of the CRPBIS program is rooted in the conception that the introduction and the implementation of the program will result in noticeable changes in the classrooms and schools will be able to reconceptualize the identification and reaction to student misbehavior. The goal of the implementation, across the many levels within the school system, is to find ways to reduce the incidence and severity of school discipline for students within the district. The

need for implementation and the benefits of implementation are wedded together in this study due to the fact that the overarching goal for CRPBIS is to reduce suspensions for students. These two key objectives, which are closely related, of the implementation of CRPBIS, represent the first of three research questions in this study and focus on the way in which individuals use personal frames of reference and experience to implement CRPBIS to explore the way that the implementing agents understand the need for and benefits of CRPBIS I look specifically to how the district and local goals of the implementation are aligned.

Principal interpretation. A pivotal piece of analysis within this study is the investigation into how principals individually interpret and understand policy initiatives, but it is also important to understand how an individual's history and experience influence the manner in which policy is acted upon. In each of the school buildings that are a part of this study, the interpretation of the CRPBIS policy was influential in the actual implementation of CRPBIS. For example, in Monument Elementary school (the building where an alternative behavior policy, the principal's desire to maintain the existing approach to school behavior was preferred over the new method due to the historical knowledge and experience. The new system, according to the principal, did not take into account the work that had been previously done and failed to acknowledge the merits of the existing program. In opposition to this, the principal at Teocalli Elementary embraced the idea and implementation of CRPBIS in the early stages. At Teocalli Elementary, the principal came to the understanding that CRPBIS would be helpful in improving the overall climate and culture of the building.

Together, these two examples help to identify that the positionality of the principals can have influence on the implementation of policy. It is important to understand that the experience of the principals has an influence on the adoption of district policy, but that influence is variable based upon the interpretation and understanding of the policy. The interpretation and understanding of policy by an individual is predicated on the environment and need in each of the buildings that a policy is being implemented. As such, the actions of the principals, or sensemaking of the policy, can have an influence on the overall implementation of policy.

District vs. Local Goals. In the analysis of the interviews, it became clear that there were a set of distinct goals that were being sought in the implementation. At the district level, there was an effort to address the inequalities that exist within the system for students of color and from low Socio-Economic Status (SES). In addition to the disciplinary inequalities that were identified, it was also the goal of the district to introduce a systematic approach to school discipline that would provide students with a sense of consistency within and across school building. Whether students transfer buildings as a result of a move by the family or if the students graduate from one building to the next, the goal of the district was to provide structure and coherence for the students. At the school level, the goals of implementation were to increase the awareness of the culture that students come from and to increase the level of understanding and empathy for the students. At both of these distinct levels of administration, the benefits and needs for implementing CRPBIS were similar in that they represented an attempt to improve the day-to-day environment for the students.

District Level Outcomes. A clear outcome that was identified by district administrations was that CRPBIS would provide an opportunity for the district to address existing inequality for students of color within the school system. There is a disciplinary inequality that exists within the school system. African American students, particularly African American males, face a much higher rate of suspension when compared to other students. The reason for the inequality is not that teachers and principals are racist in their implementation of school discipline, it seems as if the cause of the differences is attributed to the adjudication of classroom misbehavior. It is offered by Mrs. Roffee that one potential reason for the differences in disciplinary action may be a result of a difference in norms and expectations for students. Although it was not outwardly stated that teachers and principals have a different expectation than students, it can be inferred from the interview data that an underlying conception is that the traditional composition of the teaching corps, middle class white females, lends itself to a different understanding of how students should behave in the classroom. These differences in classroom expectations imply that students come to the school building with a cultural norm that is different than the cultural norms of the teaching staff. A result of the differences in expectations between the two populations is that certain behaviors, especially oppositional behavior in the classroom, which may be manifested in a refusal to do certain work or student behavior that could be construed as disruptive, can lead to disciplinary moments when the clash between cultures results in punitive action taken against the students. As a result of this, the administration of the district undertook an effort to address the cultural differences by implementing CRPBIS.

Addressing Inequality. Across the board, the interviewees from the district leadership to the GRD facilitators highlighted that there is a distinct need for a disciplinary system to be introduced that will provide equality where inequality currently exists. Central office directors and supporting facilitators both pointed to the fact that it was pivotal to introduce to the school system a program for school discipline that worked towards the achievement of discipline equality for all students within the district. While the expressed need for the implementation of such a system came from different sources, there was agreement of the need. As Mrs. Cooper, one of the facilitators from GRD noted that, “we also have unequivocal evidence that we begin with disproportionate discipline outcomes.” One of the key reasons why, according to Mrs. Cooper of the GRD, the starting point of inequality in school discipline exists is due to the historical composition of the teaching and administrative body, which is generally middle class and female. Mrs. Cooper pointed out that:

If you think about traditionally, who make the rules for the schools? Usually your teachers and administration, right? They collaborate, they come up with an idea of what their, what their school should look like, how it should be run? What are the variables for suspension or behaviors? What are all of those criteria and it’s from the framework. And traditionally in education, a majority of your teachers are middle aged and White and so sometimes, when you’re in a highly urban district, cultural norms that are being established by folks that are not from the culture that they’re serving sometimes can be a conflict.

This passage provides an important insight to the potential genesis of the existence of a structural inequality that faces students, especially in urban districts, before the school

doors even open. If the rules and expectations for school behavior, and the consequences for violating those rules, are being set by a group of individuals who are not from the location in which the school resides, the design of a set of rules and expectations that reflect what the creators of the policy believe to be appropriate behavior can work against the world and cultural norms from which the students come from. The potential for a disconnect between the expectations of the school district and the lived experiences of the students is quite possible, and might be a significant source of the identification of “nuisance” behavior such as insubordination or disorderly conduct.

In this setting, if the students of BMSD come to school from backgrounds that are wholly different than the backgrounds of the adults who design the disciplinary system it is possible, if not probably, that the system of discipline, if followed as written, could be putting the students at a disadvantage from the very outset. For some of the students of this district, many of who are low-income and arrive to school in some sort of trauma state, as posited by Mrs. Roffee of BMSD, the students may bring to the school an historical background and set of norms that is in opposition of the school district’s behavioral expectations. Not that all of the students want to misbehave, not that all of the students want to create tension in the classroom, but it is possible that the student’s simply come from a lived experience that not similar to those who set the rules. As Principal Madsen stated, “just like you have to know where a kid is starting from as a reader, you gotta know where they’re starting from as a human. And when they come from the trauma that some of them come from they learn differently.” Not only do the student’s learn differently, but they also act differently. Knowing where a student is coming from and understanding that the cultural expectations that the students bring to

the classroom is different than the cultural expectations that the school system seeks to privilege can produce an adversarial situation. This makes it even more important to introduce culturally responsive practices to bridge the existing gap between the school and the community to which they serve. As Mrs. Roffee states, “CR [culturally responsive] really says we need to include their voice and they need to walk alongside us as we implement policies, expectations, and procedures so that their voice is not lost and so that disproportionality is not maintained.” The need for implementing CRPBIS as a system of behavior expectations as a way to address the existing inequality of the school’s disciplinary system is clearly an important factor for the individuals in this study. As Mrs. Cooper of GRD argues, the system is naturally biased towards the middle class normative expectations and it is the responsibility of the school leadership. Mrs. Madsen states, to seek to understand the students’ cultural background in order to implement a system that is moving towards a more equal setting. The implementation of CRPBIS will help the schools and the school district to develop practices that help teachers and principals to generate conversations, “prickly conversations” according to Mrs. Moltzan who is a district official. These prickly conversations are conversations that are centered on race and the application of discipline that might be attributed to racial beliefs. The conversations are prickly because no teacher or principal will react kindly to the implication that they are acting in a racist manner, but the conversations must occur. There must be dialogue that is based upon existing data that highlight the disparity in discipline within the district. As Mrs. Moltzan of BMSD states, it is a very sensitive area and individuals may “feel attacked, they get defensive, they stop listening and you aren’t able to make inroads. So you have to have very delicate conversations but we need to

have those conversations.” However challenging or prickly the conversations may be they do have the potential to produce positives outcomes when they are structured in a way that is not condescending or accusatory. As Principal Stenmark states, “It’s a tough conversation, it’s uncomfortable. Now we’ve had those conversations and we’re seeing the progress.” While having the conversations may be a challenge and they may stir up angst, the outcomes as seen by Principal Stenmark produce positive dialogue about what to do after the issue of racial differences have been identified. The dialogue does not have to point to a teacher and say that their disciplinary history shows that they act in a racist manner; the dialogue needs to show that a situation exists and CRPBIS is a way in which the community can address the situation. In the end, the conversations about race provide a space for action to take place.

Mrs. Moltzan further states that, “the CR part of it, your gonna open up solutions and possibilities, rather than being closed off and saying, nope, this is the rule.” By opening up solutions and possibilities for discipline to be less culturally biased, it is possible that the historically biased system of school discipline may become more responsive to the needs of the school buildings and the students within the buildings.

Systematized Approach. A second need that arose across of the interviews during the investigation of the implementation of CRPBIS was the need for the school district as a whole to have a systematized approach to school discipline. The need for the systematized approach is a direct result of the high rate of transiency among the students within the district. Students move about the school district quite frequently, whether that is from school to school or as the students advance in age from an elementary building to a middle school. Either way, the student population is highly transient and as a result, the

students experience different expectations from one building to another. The significant challenge of this implementation is that while the school district wants to achieve a coherent, consistent systematized approach to school discipline, the district is also seeking to allow for variation of school discipline based upon the location where CRPBIS is being introduced. To address this duality of goals, it is necessary to understand that while the district is expecting local variation in approach, each school needs to include three specific expectations that have been established the school district as non-negotiable. As Mrs. Moltzan of BMSD put it, “they’re [individual schools] not gonna be exactly the same within each of those settings but the closer we can get to having similar expectations, the easier it is for the kids to predict, know what will happen, know the consequences of their behavior.” Essentially, according to the school district leadership, variation in implementation is acceptable as long as the core structure of the approach includes the three specific expectations identified by the school district. To further this conception of alignment across schools, Mrs. Roffee of BMSD, pointed out that:

Having systematized, consistent expectations across the district is essential really to support the type of population that we have. So implementing CR really helps to have consistency across the board, where everyone has shared expectations and a student and a parent will know that these same expectations are the same expectations across the board, regardless of how transient I am as a student and as a family.

This consistency across buildings means that students will be able to quickly gain an understanding of the behavioral expectations in their new building and that will,

according to individuals interviewed, produce positive results for the students socially and academically.

Having similar expectations, if not an exact replica from building to building, will have positive effects for the students and families in the mind of a school district official. Mrs. Moltzan stated that the outcome of introducing a systematized approach to school discipline will result in three important outcomes, “attendance will be better. Behavior will be better. They’ll learn more.” This is, in the view of the school district, an articulation of the benefits of CRPBIS and the stated goal of having a system in place that is familiar and predictable for the students. The similarities of approaches across school buildings will help the students avoid punitive discipline, such as suspension, and remain in the school building instead of being at home. The similarities will help the students to understand the limits of their behavior in the classroom and will, eventually, allow the students to see academic gains. For instance, in Teocalli Elementary, which was at one point the leader in the number of suspensions administered for the district, students there during the early stages of the implementation have made some of the largest gains academically. Even the students who were more frequently sent to the school principal’s office, the high-flyers, are seeing academic growth. According to Principal Stenmark, of the 20 students who were identified as high-flyers (those who most frequently sent to the office), 17 of the 20 students showed growth on standardized math assessments. While the growth may not be entirely a result of the systematized approach to school discipline, Principal Stenmark does believe that the CRPBIS program and the systematized approach did play a distinct role in their academic growth. As Principal Stenmark says, regarding the implementation of a systematized approach to school discipline:

It was huge. Because before, we didn't have any systems. If a kid, let's say a kid continues to be disruptive in class, they come to my office, sit in my office for a while, do work. Okay, I'm not a teacher. So I can't teach them. They're not learning anything. Or depending on the infraction, I would say okay, you have to go home. You go home today. The kid comes back, does the same thing. Okay, you're going home today. So kids were sitting with me not learning or they were going home not learning.

The implementation of a coherent and consistent approach to school discipline across the school district enables the students to more accurately predict the consequences of their behavior in the school building. The consistency has produced noticeable reductions in suspension and considerable increases in student achievement. As Mrs. Roffee states, "we see students are performing better because they don't have any confusion on what is expected of them." The need to have systems and supports in place that are similar across school buildings is clearly a need that is identified by participants in this study and the outcome of the systematized approach is beginning to show benefits for students.

School Level Outcomes. At the individual school level, the need for and benefits of CRPBIS is articulated through a slightly different lens. Rather than CRPBIS addressing significant overarching goals, at the school level, the outcomes address more interpersonal and community needs and benefits. CRPBIS, at the school level, has the potential, according to the school building leaders, to elevate empathy, care, and understanding from the teaching staff. CRPBIS as a program is believed to be the avenue through which individuals of different backgrounds can come together as a community. This community benefit is seen as central actors in the achievement of stated goals of the

implementation to address the lack of relationships and cultural understanding between the teaching staff and the student body. To achieve these goals, it is necessary for the teaching staff and principals of the schools to make concerted efforts to include the students and the parents in the school environment. It is also necessary for the school to reach out to parents and to students in order to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of the families outside of the school to have a better context of what the students are bringing to the classroom when the bell rings.

Understanding of the Students. From the perspective of the individual school leaders, an important need that is addressed through the implementation of CRPBIS is the opportunity created to learn about and understand the lives of students outside of the school. By understanding the students, where they come from, and the cultural norms that they live by outside of the school building, it is possible for the school to better meet the needs of the students in the school building.

The primary need, and ultimately the benefit of introducing CRPBIS to the school building that was addressed through the interviews, was framed in the way that CRPBIS seeks to have school leaders get to know their students and the communities from which they come. Each of the principals, and even the school district officials that participated in the interviews, identified the need to get to know the students and the environment they come from. This is important because the students bring with them the culture that they live in to the classroom and this has an effect on their ability to interact with individuals, both young and old, within the school setting. Principal Madsen stated that, “we’ve got to understand, you know, in a sense, the raw material that we have, that we’re working with.” Understanding the raw material, or the cultural norms that students bring

to the classroom is quite important when thinking about expected behaviors. It is the recognition of where students come from, as Mrs. Roffee states, “their SES, ethnic/racial background, and their cultural practices” that can result in a school building that is more aware of how a student’s home environment can effect the student’s behavior in the classroom and how the student may react to the expectations set forth by the teacher, the school, and the school district.

According to Mrs. Roffee of BMSD, the school district has a number of students that sit outside the traditional expectations of what a student looks like. Mrs. Roffee states that:

We have a high percentage of kids coming out of poverty so they’ve already been stressed out. They’re stressed out on a continual basis. We have a lot of homeless kids. We have a lot of English Language Learners. We have a lot, a high percentage of students who have these extraneous things affecting them in different ways

This conception was supported by the comments of Mrs. Nelms (another school district official) who echoed the statement of Mrs. Roffee when she said that:

We have such a high proportion of students who aren’t necessarily gonna be served well with a very traditional education model. They’re not going to be able to sit in rows. They’re not going to be able to listen for long periods of time, just based on their backgrounds. We have a high percentage of kids coming out of poverty, so they’ve already been stressed out. They’re stressed out on a continual basis.

The students come to the school building with a much different mindset than traditional students. The lived experiences of the students outside of the classroom have a considerable impact on the ability of the students to meet the expected norms of the classroom. As a result, the school system needs to better understand the students and the experiences that the students bring to the classroom. Through a better understanding of the students, it is possible to better enable academic and social growth.

A significant component of this understanding is realizing that the school's adult population, majority white and majority female, do not look the same as the students in the desks. As Mrs. Moltzan, of the BMSD, states:

When you look at our staff, we're also disproportionately represented in how our student population is. Our staff is mainly white females...but when our kids look at our teachers predominately, they don't see people that look like them. They don't see people that come from their culture or have their values."

As a result of this difference in population groups, there is a real need for the school leadership and teaching staff to create relationships and develop a level of understanding that allows faculty and staff to better work with their students. In order to accomplish this level of understanding, it was clear that across all levels of the school district, a clear and concerted effort was needed to get out of the building, out from behind the desk, and get to know the kids, their families, and their surroundings.

This effort to generate greater outreach and inclusion of external stakeholders was a goal of the district for the schools. At the district level, getting to know the students was envisioned as efforts by the faculty and leadership of the school to go to community

events, make home visits, and learn about where the students are from. As Mrs. Moltzan, of BMSD said:

The leaders need to get out and attend community events. They need to know where their community is from. They need to look at the data. They need to look at unemployment figures, which sounds counterintuitive to what teachers and principals should be doing but they need to know their local context. They need to go to football games. They need to attend, you know, the choir assemblies and things like that so that they can talk with families.

Interaction with the community can provide an increased level of understanding for the principals and teachers. It can help to teachers, as Mrs. Moltzan states, to know their local context and to talk with the families in a non-academic environment. In the same manner, the principals in this study equally agreed that it was important for the school staff to know the students and to know their lives. Mrs. Stenmark, principal of Teocalli Elementary spoke to this when it was intoned that it was necessary for teachers to get to know the families:

I think that helped out as far as having that first positive contact with families and they learn, when they call the homes, maybe it's just mom there. Maybe its just granddad there. Maybe there's no one there. Staff really started realizing the lives of our kids are so much different than ours and we have to be more patient and have a lot of empathy.

The use of the term empathy is quite important and represents a major decision by the school leadership to move beyond simply having a disciplinary system and to develop an approach that includes the students and the community in the disciplinary process. The

CR approach, with its inclusion of stakeholders has created an opportunity for solutions, as was mentioned by Mrs. Moltzan, and CRPBIS provides the opportunity for the community to become more involved in the school process and to help generate gateways for parents to inform the teachers about their own conceptions of the disciplinary process. It was Mrs. Stenmark who noted that part of the success of implementing CR was a result of reaching out to parents. “I think just involving all stakeholders, making sure they have a voice has played a pivotal role in success we had.” At the root of this stakeholder involvement is the need to expand the role of the community in getting to know the students. Getting to know the students and getting to know their environment was a critical need of the schools within the study, and is also an important reason why CRPBIS was brought into the school district.

Framing of CRPBIS. In looking more closely at how the individuals within the school system framed the need for the implementation, it is evident that two unique frames were applied to the value of implementing CRPBIS. Framing, as defined earlier in the study, is the way in which individuals establish understanding and acts as a schema for individual understanding. It is the act of framing that allows individuals to place meaning where meaning is unclear. In the case of this study, the act of framing by the leaders of the school district allowed for various actors in the implementation to place meaning onto the perceived need for the implementation. It was the framing of the implementation of CRPBIS that created the space and pathways for the school district to use a lens that viewed the implementation as meeting the needs of the school system to address the existence of disproportionality that existed within the school system’s disciplinary expectations. Secondly, the individual schools approached the

implementation with the framing perspective that through the implementation of CRPBIS, it is possible to develop a more robust understanding of the students and the families that are part of the individual school's community. Both of these perspectives and these individual frames are important to explore. At times, the frames appear to be considerably different, and at the same time, they are considerably similar in outcome goals.

The identification, by the school district, that the existing system posed a real threat to achievement of disciplinary equality in the school system helps to explain the stated goal of the school system to address the high rate of discipline being meted out to students of color within the school system. It shows that, despite the existence of an existing inequality, there are pathways through which the district can be proactive. By framing the efforts of implementation as a systems approach, the school district is able to look holistically at how the implementation of CRPBIS can improve the opportunities for students through consistency and through a coherent approach. As Mrs. Roffee stated, "by having a clear approach and a consistent approach, we're able to allow our students to understand the general culture and climate and the expectations" within the school system. It is this consistency in expectations that is able to achieve clear understandings for the students across the school district.

With regard to the overarching goal of framing the implementation of CRPBIS as a way to address the existing disproportionality in the school district's disciplinary history, the school district has approached with the conception that regardless of a teacher's, or principals, perspective to the classroom environment the central effort was placed in getting to know the students. The effort to get to know the students and their

cultural norms is what foregrounded the efforts of the school district. As one school leader put it, “you really need to build relationships with kids in order for any of it to work.” By framing the need for CRPBIS in the schools as a social well-being effort, the school leaders were able to drive the implementation to address more than just the disciplinary code, but to develop a caring, empathic stance when addressing student misbehavior. In sum, while the district took a systems approach to the implementation of CRPBIS, the schools attempted to approach the implementation through social structure of the school setting.

In sum, the framing of CRPBIS as a program that has the potential to address the existing disproportionality and the development of social structures to improve the classroom setting, the implementers, at all levels, have been able to apply multiple meanings to the current situation that exists within the school system. It is also possible to see how the frames, the pathways of individual understanding of purpose, align from one level of the school system to another to seek the overall improvement for students. The fact that two groups of implementers were able to frame the outcomes of the implementation in similar ways shows that even with a rigid set of goals, variation is beneficial in this case because it seeks to achieve two distinct goals. In one frame, the district was able to assess the overarching situation and strive to implement a set of goals that assisted with the development of systems that addressed larger goals, while at the local level, actors within the school were able to address the needs of the school. It is this similarity of outcomes that makes this implementation so important to study. At one level, the systems were being developed to provide the schools that chance to work at the individual level with students and families.

The Role of Professional Development, Training, and Oversight. An important aspect of the school district's implementation of CRPBIS was the development of targeted professional development (PD) and training sessions. The PD was designed as a way to introduce and ensure the implementation of CRPBIS through a series of planned sessions that would deal directly with CRPBIS implementation in the schools. PD opportunities within each building was to occur at least once per month during the school year and two full day sessions for all schools in one location during the school year. According to a school district official, "we've set consistent dates so that all staff across the district know this is something that is not going away." In addition to the PD framework created, the school district (at the outset of the implementation) planned to have one additional PD opportunity per month that was uniform throughout all of the school buildings. Mrs. Moltzan, a member of the school district central offices, said that this approach would ensure that, "it didn't matter if you were a preschool teacher or ... a teacher that teaches at Jupiter High School² that teachers seniors, you were getting the exact same professional development." The intention of the highly structured PD plan for the school district was to ensure that the teachers and the principals within the school district understood that the school district was committed to CRPBIS and that this would be a program that would be supported over time by the central offices.

The intention of the professional development at the onset was sufficient and provided structure where structure was badly needed. However, with any initiative, what is planned at the outset sometimes results in different outcomes than the design that is planned. In BMSD, the plans for professional development were quite robust but in

² This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the high school mentioned in the actual quote

actuality there were few opportunities for PD related to CRPBIS. Admittedly, Mrs. Roffee acknowledged that, “we really struggled with our ability to really manage the level of focus that they [schools] put on culture.” As a result of the amount of latitude given to the schools to utilize time allocated to PD, it was hard for the district to ensure that each session dedicated in the design plan was actually used to focus on CRPBIS. In the same vain, the initial plan for professional development allocated multiple days within the year for the facilitators from GRD to work with individual schools, but it eventually only produced two days during the year when PD took place with the assistance of GRD. Why there were only two days for PD was unknown, but could have been caused by a struggle to prioritize the events that took place within the school building according to Mrs. Cooper of GRD. It is also possible, as Mrs. Moltzan of BMSD surmised, that one of the challenges to fully meeting the goals of the first year might have been attributed to the fact that the district had too many initiatives taking place at once that competed for valuable PD time. As a result of this acknowledgement of being overcommitted across the district, Mrs. Roffee made it clear that in the subsequent years of implementation, the district was going to focus on only four initiatives (CRPBIS being one of the initiatives) to ensure that CRPBIS will receive the time necessary to see greater implementation effort. Despite the fact that time was not allocated during the year as planned, that does not mean that the efforts in the first year were not beneficial. In fact, according to Mrs. Roffee, the success that was seen in the first year identified that success was possible and that moving forward there can be much greater success as a result of decreasing the overall number of initiatives undertaken.

Despite the challenges with time allocation, there was time and effort that was given to provide PD opportunities designed to help address disproportionality was focused upon how to help teachers and principals introduce culturally responsive approaches in the classroom. Efforts were made within the schools to collaboratively develop strategies for engaging students from different cultures, to develop culturally responsive forms of disciplinary pathways, and how to ensure that all voices are being heard in the school building relative to discipline.

Professional Development and Cultural Responsiveness. When professional development opportunities did occur, they helped to develop culturally responsive approaches. This was done with the assistance of the facilitators and coaches from GRD. They were the “guides on the side” according to the school district leadership and provided valuable aid in getting CRPBIS professional development into the schools. Mrs. Moltzan pointed out that, “They’ve [GRD facilitators] been critical in the involvement. From the planning, aiding in the professional development, [and] helping us get speakers.” The introduction of GRD facilitators created a space to introduce practices that would aid in the cultural understandings that were necessary to develop approaches to school discipline that respected the culture of the students and the aims of the district. Mrs. Lindh, from GRD, argued that the professional development needed to address the differences in the community and how to gain a better understanding of the culture that students are bringing into the classroom:

A big portion of CR implementation is to either develop, to co-jointly develop norms and expectations with the stakeholders, with students and parents or at the very least, vet their norms and expectations through those individuals who can

provide feedback into what those terms, what those expectations might mean to the students and families that might differ from what it means from those people in power.

Through the inclusion of the community stakeholders it is possible for the schools, and for the school leadership, to gain a better understanding of the experiences of the students and their lives outside of the school building. In doing so, the leadership of the school and the teachers who are in the classrooms will be able to better address the misbehavior in the classroom because they are more familiar with the expectations that the families have for the school. As Mrs. Cooper states:

If we're looking through the culturally responsive lens, I think if we have a better understanding of, of the students and the environments that they are coming from, I think they [school leaders] a better understanding of how to strategically deal with student behaviors."

The ability of the school leaders and the teachers to develop strategic approaches to helping students articulate the causes of their misbehavior, when possible, creates a shared ownership of the classroom or school. The inclusion of the students, at the onset, in the development is believed to be an important method for developing culturally responsive practices in the school.

Co-developed CR Practices: One example of collectively community created CR practices within a school is the development of the school's code of expectations. This is a code of expectations is a simple set of expectations that are designed to guide the actions of the students within the building, but are the starting point for all other expectations. As an example of a CR practice, the code of expectations generally has

three practices that the students are expected to infuse into their daily activities. The code of expectations varies from building to building, but can look like this: Be safe, be responsible, be respectful. These three actions fall into what the district considers to be CR activities and is developed collaboratively during professional development trainings amongst the staff members. These codes of expectations are to be known by all the students and prominently placed throughout the school building. The codes of expectations are also part of the accountability metrics that are used by the district to measure implementation. The code of expectations within the school also form the basic building blocks for the rest of the school's Code of Conduct and the pathways through which the school addresses student misbehavior. One school district official said that, "They [examples of CR practices] might look different but they must be present. I must be able to walk in and know your three words that all students, all staff live by as a culture and climate in your school." These words reflect that aims and goals of the school and are created through PD sessions.

In this implementation, especially in the early phases of implementation, professional development is a critical piece to the successful integration of CR practices into the school. Although the professional development did not occur as initially planned, it did have enough of an impact to get schools started on the path to adoption of the CRPBIS program. PD, as seen by the district, "is ongoing, job-embedded and high quality. It's not just a one shot deal." As a result of this perspective, PD will continue will be continually developed and perfected.

Conclusion. What became clear through the analysis of the interviews with the school principals and the school district officials is that all of the individuals that

participated in this study possessed a clear understanding that CRPBIS was being implemented to address the discipline history of the school district and was an attempt to find ways to create continuity for students in the school buildings. It is remarkable that the central idea of the implementation was agreed upon at multiple levels across the school district. One of the main benefits of this alignment is that there is no concern about whether or not the objective of the initiative is understood by all individuals. As a result of this alignment of understanding of the central goals of CRPBIS, if there is any variation in implementation in the schools, the miscommunication of goals can be ruled out as a cause for variation.

Research Question 2

The second research question in this study seeks to investigate if there was any variation in implementation of CRPBIS across the buildings within BMSD. In this study, efforts to understand the implementation of CRPBIS was focused upon school buildings at the elementary level as a result of the disparity in discipline in these buildings. After determining the group of schools that fit within this category, attempts to reach out to the school building leaders took place and three buildings responded. These three schools, which are kindergarten through third grade buildings, make up the sample set. Over the course of the last two years I have met with the building leaders multiple times to gain a better perspective of the implementation of CRPBIS. It is clear in this implementation that variation in implementation, based upon principals perspectives did occur but that variation is primarily understood through the interviews that occurred. While the reasons for the variation in implementation are complex, it is also understandable. The second research question in this study seeks to identify the factors, as identified through the

interview process that cause variation and the degree to which the school vary in their implementation. Research question two reads as follows:

What variations and similarities exist in CRPBIS implementation across elementary schools?

- a. To what degree do stakeholders attribute the variations in implementation to differences in their framing of the problem*
- b. To what degree do stakeholders attribute variation in the implementation of CRPBIS to localized challenges to implementation?*

In order to better understand the variation in implementation, I rely upon interview data to make sense of how school leaders and other stakeholders frame the problem of school discipline and the setting in each of the schools that participated in this study.

The three schools that were part of this study were Bo Buck Elementary, Monument Elementary, and Teocalli Elementary. Each of these buildings, as stated previously, is a kindergarten through third grade building, and is led by a single principal. The three schools are located in different locations throughout the city and have unique populations that they serve. As seen in the chart below, each of the schools lose population from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016, but are still similar year over year with regard to the population that the schools serve as can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

School Population Demographics

2014-2015	Bo Buck Elementary	Monument Elementary	Teocalli Elementary
Total Population	312	332	293
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	3	1
Asian	5	4	1
African American	79	51	114
Hispanic/Latino	75	89	79
Two or more	37	45	30
White	113	140	67
2015 - 2016	Bo Buck Elementary	Monument Elementary	Teocalli Elementary
Total Population	284	311	265
American Indian or Alaskan Native	6	4	1
Asian	1	4	2
African American	82	46	265
Hispanic/Latino	68	86	80
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0	1
Two or more	25	38	29
White	102	134	44

Note. Data for this table achieved from a publically available data set.

Each school building has a principal and support staff member, a SAP (Student Assistance Provider), to assist in the implementation process. The three school buildings were similar in grade levels and leadership, but each building serve a different location of the city and a diverse group of students.

The information from the interview process identified that variation in implementation had occurred within the three schools. Teocalli Elementary was the most advanced in their implementation process while Bo Buck Elementary was the least advanced among the three schools. Monument Elementary fits in the middle due to a commitment to similar, yet different approach to school discipline. Over the course of the two-year study, implementation did vary between the schools and the variation in implementation is predicated on three primary factors. First, the explicit focus on implementation was varied across buildings. Second, the engagement of stakeholders in and out of the schools effected the implementation. Last, the funding allocated to the implementation also played a role in how CRPBIS was implemented. Together these three factors of implementation led to the three forms of adoption of CRPBIS that was identified in this study.

Focus Placed on CRPBIS. Intentional effort to implement CRPBIS is crucial to the implementation. In the three buildings studied in this implementation, each principal placed a different level of focus on CRPBIS in the implementation process. The varied amount of effort produced different rates of success. In each of the three buildings, the principals agreed that a primary goal of the implementation was to address the student misbehavior that was taking place inside the school but their efforts to introduce CRPBIS as an intervention varied. For example, Teocalli Elementary, according to the interview of the principal, was an early adopter and fervent believer in the value of CRPBIS as a method to address the growing rate of discipline within the building. Across town, at Monument Elementary, an existing commitment, as described by the principal, to another program created a tension between the goals of the district and the existing progress made

in implementation of a separate program. Last, at Bo Buck Elementary, the status quo, according to the interviews with the principal, was maintained as a result of slowed implementation. Together, these three buildings exemplify that challenges that are present in the effort to implement a new program.

Teocalli Elementary. Starting with Teocalli Elementary, where a relatively new principal was facing the fact that the building led the school district in suspension handed out in a single year, it was critical for an intervention to take place. At Teocalli Elementary, the principal, the school faculty, and a facilitator from GRD worked in concert with one another to introduce CRPBIS and make the program central to the development of a new school culture. In all aspects of the schooling experience, CRPBIS is being infused into the culture of the school. Through summer planning sessions to weekly school-year CRPBIS meetings, Teocalli Elementary has developed an approach that maximizes the opportunities to interact with CRPBIS in a manner that increases awareness and understanding. The localized success in implementing CRPBIS is a direct result, as intoned by the principal in the interviews, of the focus placed on CRPBIS and the continuity created by the efforts of the principal and faculty of the school. CRPBIS, according to the principal has resulted in greater stakeholder participation, increased academic achievement, and substantially decreased suspension.

One of the ways in which the school sought to increase the understanding and empathy present in the educational environment was to seek out input from parents and other community members. Principal Stenmark, of Teocalli Elementary, noted in an interview that a primary goal for the implementation of CRPBIS was to reach out to the community, to include the parents into the school culture, and seek out input from

outsiders to better understand the expectations for the school and to find ways to incorporate their perspectives into the school. At Teocalli Elementary, Principal Stenmark spoke about the importance of reaching out to parents and the impact that such outreach can have on the implementation of CRPBIS:

We started reaching out to parents and community members, saying this is what we're trying [improving community relations through CRPBIS] to do at Teocalli. We want to make this the best school in town³. We want to make this a community and not just a school. We want to see this as a large and important part of the community, similar to what a church would be like.

With outreach to stakeholders as a focus of the implementation, the leadership of Teocalli Elementary explained that the outreach to the community had helped to create a bond between the school and the community. This explicit outreach has created an opportunity for the school leaders to better understand the norms of the community. The result of this is that the school is able to better communicate with the students and to find alternative ways to address the challenges that arise during the school day for students.

A second manner in which the faculty and staff at Teocalli Elementary has worked to increase the local focus on CRPBIS implementation has been to work outside of the normal professional development pattern to learn about and plan for implementation of CRPBIS. It is not uncommon, as expressed by the principal, for the faculty and staff at Teocalli Elementary to meet during the summer to plan CRPBIS approaches for the coming year. According to the principal, these meetings and dialogue has the potential to produce data-driven decisions about how to best address persistent

³ I have used the word "town" here instead of the actual city name to protect the identity of the community in this study.

misconduct or it can result in the development and introduction of a common language across teachers and classrooms that establishes continuity across the school building.

Across the board, at Teocalli Elementary, there is a consistent and driven approach to implementing CRPBIS in a way that improves the climate and culture of the school. The singular goal of developing a system that strives to meet the needs of the students through the implementation of CRPBIS is one reason why Teocalli Elementary has been able to be successful in the implementation of this initiative. From the principal to the faculty and to the staff, based on the interviews, this school has made the development of culturally responsive approaches to school misbehavior a primary focus and it has produced results in the reduction of suspensions and the overall improvement of the academics achievement in many students. The focus of the school, to be responsive to the needs of the students is a good example of what can happen when a school leader is focused on an initiative and is able to convey the value of the initiative to the school community.

Bo Buck Elementary. Across town at Bo Buck Elementary, the most senior principal in the district led the school in a slightly different approach to the implementation of CRPBIS. In this school, according to the analysis of interview data, little time was spent leading up to the school year to plan and prepare for the implementation of CRPBIS. Once the school year began, what time that was available was spent amongst a small group of individuals (which varied from meeting to meeting based upon availability) learning about and planning to implement the program. As a result, according to the principal of the school the introduction of CRPBIS was slower to occur. Over the course of the next two years, the implementation CRPBIS at Bo Buck has

caught up to the level of expectation, but it has taken time to reach a level that has positive effect due to the lack of concerted effort at the onset to implement CRPBIS.

Initially, when the program was introduced by the school district, Bo Buck faculty and staff, as mentioned by the principal in the interview process, participated in the district wide professional development training that was offered in August prior to the beginning of the school year. In this training, which was a two-day event designed to introduce the entire district staff to CHAMPS, GRD facilitators presented the focal points of CHAMPS to those present. CHAMPS is a required element to CRPBIS and helps schools develop protocols for establishing expected behaviors in the school building. The introduction of CHAMPS was a way in which the school district could start the roll out of CRPBIS and give schools a baseline set of protocols for the implementation of CRPBIS. The challenge for Bo Buck Elementary, as this was one of the first opportunities in the implementation of CRPBIS that the faculty and staff had to work as a team in the implementation of CRPBIS, was the development of internal teams to implement CRPBIS. At Bo Buck Elementary, the implementation began with a small team of three to four teachers, depending on the day of the meeting. As Principal Mahre, of Bo Buck Elementary, stated regarding the participation within the school, “we’ll get various turnouts each month but typically we have at least three or four people.” In comparison to Teocalli, where meetings were attending by the entire staff, Bo Buck, based on the interviews with the principal, was getting less participation from the faculty and staff (due to other commitments) and as a result, the overall implementation of CRPBIS lagged behind the goals of the district.

A second reason for the variation in implementation of CRPBIS in Bo Buck Elementary may be attributable to the disjointed nature of the implementation within the school. In eyes of the school district, the implementation of CRPBIS is designed to create consistency and coherence within and across the schools. However, in this school, one limiting piece is the piecemeal approach that may have taken place within Bo Buck. Principal Mahre reported that implementation was slower because of the limited and variable participation of teachers in the school. In this instance, though not corroborated with insight from the teachers in the building, it is possible that a reason why Bo Buck Elementary may have produced different implementation results is that the teachers within the school either did not buy-in fully to the approach to implementation or the teachers may have been less able to implement CRPBIS as a result of their own beliefs about culturally relevant practices. There is no concrete evidence that one teacher or another may have stalled or been less able to implement the new approach to classroom expectations, but the implied understanding of the perspective of the principal is that the implementation is varied in this building as a result of the teachers not fully participating in the implementation.

For Bo Buck Elementary, the focus was on building an understanding of what the CRPBIS initiative sought to achieve. The committee meetings and book study that occurred in this building, as was mentioned in the interview process with the principal, was more about setting the table for later action than it was about implementing explicit aspects of the program. Since this activity happened after the school year had begun, the CRPBIS implementation became another program that was being investigated and implemented at the same time. This does not mean that Bo Buck was not making

progress according to the principal; it is just an example of a more explicit approach to understanding the full scope of the initiative and what it means for the school where it is being implemented.

Monument Elementary. The third school within the study, Monument Elementary, presents another important view into how variation occurs. In this school, resentment and angst appear to be the reason for variation. When CRPBIS was introduced to the principals in the spring prior to implementation, Monument Elementary was already deeply engaged in a program⁴ to address the culture and climate within the school building. The implementation of the other program had been developed and implemented over the course of prior years and was well regarded and accepted by the faculty of the school. Due to the fact that CRPBIS was being implemented across the school district without consultation or concern for what had already been in place at Monument Elementary resulted in a feeling of confusion and angst for the principal. Confusion about the overall purpose for the implementation, about the specific purpose of the program (as introduced) was a considerable stumbling block for the school. The angst was a product of the failure of the school district to consult with the principals about the existing systems already in place. Due to this, Monument Elementary, based upon the interview analysis, did not fully engage in the implementation process.

One cause for the lack of equal implementation, based upon analysis of interview data, at Monument Elementary was the confusion caused by the timing of the announcement that the school district was going to implement CRPBIS in all schools at one time. Adding to the confusion, expressed by the principal, about the universal

⁴ The name of this program is omitted to help protect the identity of this school.

application of the CRPBIS implementation was the fact that for those in attendance when the announcement was made, there was not a clear purpose that undergirded the implementation of CRPBIS. The announcement of CRPBIS as the district-wide approach to intervention in the rising level of suspensions came as a surprise to the principal at Monument and even led to confusion. Admittedly, the principal of Monument, Mrs. Madsen, was not present in the initial introduction but in subsequent meetings with faculty and staff, Mrs. Madsen did come to the understanding that CRPBIS was the only program that would be accepted. This was disheartening to the principal and even led to a small act of resistance. Principal Madsen said that, “I understood it [CRPBIS implementation] to be that the school district was interested in pushing for this [CRPBIS] more of a continuity across schools and across the district. But it was, I gotta tell you, we were kinda blindsided by it.” This feeling of being blindsided to the implementation led to the decision to not actively participate in the district offered professional developments related to the CHAMPS system. As mentioned previously, CHAMPS training and implementation is one of the three non-negotiable expectations for schools. Principal Madsen and the school faculty were not going to participate in the professional development, “I basically said, I said, no, we’re not going to do that.” The reason that Principal Madsen said that Monument Elementary would not participate in the CHAMPS training is that it was not aligned with the alternative program that was being implemented at Monument Elementary. The outcome of this decision is that the implementation of CRPBIS was different than in other buildings. In this building, the protocols to address cultural differences and culturally responsive practices were to align with the original programming but with modifications would be sufficient to meet the

expectations of the district. The modifications of the existing protocols in place move the school towards the district's goals with CRPBIS, but do not detract from the work previously engaged in by the Monument Elementary faculty and staff.

In addition to the ad hoc decision by the principal of this school to bypass the CHAMPS training, there were also mixed messages being sent to the school by individuals from the district offices. At one level of the school district's central offices, CRPBIS was the explicit program to be implemented within the district because of the benefits offered, but at another level an administration official told Principal Madsen that Monument Elementary could continue to pursue the existing program in place. In the words of Mrs. Madsen, an influential member of the central district offices intoned that CRPBIS, CHAMPS, and other expectations of the implementation plan of BMSD were not required by individual schools. Principal Madsen, in our interview, said that:

And when I talked to my supervisor, I said, okay so how is this supposed to work? You guys are saying we have to do this. And she [the supervisor] said, 'well, I don't think you have to.' So when she was talking about it, there wasn't a sense of, you know, continuity with what the message was versus what the interpretation was and of course, she was one person downtown. You know, she happens to be (some of authority downtown) so I kinda thought, okay, well, that's the voice of authority for me.

The ensuing result is that Monument Elementary did not implement CRPBIS in the first year in the same way that other schools did. Part of the reason why is that there was confusion about the expectations for implementation from individuals in higher places

and the resentment caused by the lack of respect for the effort previously put forth by the school to address the challenges in Monument Elementary.

In sum, variation can arise for a variety of reasons. In the above examples, focus and intentional effort is a key reason. One school may buy-in to the program fully and produce significant results while at the same time, another school may be slow to adopt or even resistant to the program. Due to this, variation in implementation can be the result of how individuals in positions of authority actively make decisions that cause variation and those decisions, both positive and negative, have considerable impact on how a program is implemented within a large system.

Stakeholder Engagement. A key component in the introduction of CRPBIS within BMSD is the desire by the district to increase the engagement of stakeholders in relation to student misbehavior. Included in this outreach, schools were expected to invite members of the school community into the school and to find other opportunities to participate in external events in order to build a bridge with the community. As Mrs. Moltzan of the BMSD stated:

They [school leaders and faculty] need to go to football games. They need to attend, you know, the choir assemblies and things like that so that they can talk to families. They need to make school an inviting place for families as well. So rather than being standoffish and standing behind a counter, they need to come out and greet parents. It sounds in some ways simplistic and it sounds very organic and it is. It needs to be relationships one on one.

Through community outreach and inclusion, it is believed that the schools will be able to better understand their community and their students. The value of this external

engagement for the schools in this study can be seen in the positive outcome for one school and the missed opportunities at the other two schools.

Teocalli Elementary. At Teocalli Elementary, fostering community and developing outreach has produced considerable positive results but it took time and effort to ensure success. Two primary focal points for outreach led the efforts of the school leadership at Teocalli Elementary School. First, Principal Stenmark sought to make sure that teachers were engaging parents through home visits as well as before and after-school activities to ensure parents were given opportunities to contribute to the school community. While this may be a challenge for some teachers to do alone or in the limited time that is available, the outcome of these efforts have produced a strong relationship with the community and a greater understanding of the students' lives outside of the school building. One example of this relationship development can be seen in the way that when a staff member was unable to work, a parent came in to take care of the school building and the responsibilities of the staff member. Even more to the point, Principal Stenmark, when reflecting on engaging parents and expanding the role that parents have, said:

Parents start to take ownership. Parents feel, they don't have that sense of division between home and school. Parents feel like Teocalli is theirs. This is my school.

I'm an active member of Teocalli. I can come in and see Mrs. Stenmark, her door is open. I can come whenever I like to talk with the teachers.

The ability to include, respect, and gain from the conversations and interactions with the represents a tremendous area of benefit for the school and highlights how, in this school, the implementation of CRPBIS has produced positive outcomes for the school

community. Through the active engagement of external stakeholders, Teocalli Elementary has been able to improve the internal operations of the school because parents and other stakeholders are taking a more active role within the school.

Bo Buck Elementary. The situation at Bo Buck is markedly different and as a result the implementation of CRPBIS has not seen the same level of growth and impact. Recall that Bo Buck Elementary was a bit slower in the implementation of CRPBIS. Despite this difference, even a year into the program the school was still having trouble getting parents and other stakeholders involved in the implementation of CRPBIS. Principal Mahre spoke to this when he said that when asked about parental involvement, “That’s [parental involvement] an area we can show some progress in...we haven’t done a good job at that yet and that’s an area that we need to work on and show progress.” An argument that the principal of Bo Buck made to explain the different level of parental involvement was that due to the many demands on the lives of the parents, and the precedence that those demands command, the parents are unable to be as engaged in the activities of the school as some school leaders would hope. This perspective presents a challenge to the successful implementation of CRPBIS. If the goal of the implementation is to determine ways to gain a better understanding of the community and the lives that students live outside of the classroom, it is vitally important (as seen in the experiences of Teocalli Elementary) to engage the parents. What is good, however, is that the principal is aware of this deficiency and is actively working to address the concern. Despite this desire to improve the situation, the lack of parent voice in the implementation has an impact on the overall implementation and may be a cause for the variation in progress.

Monument Elementary. At Monument Elementary, the explicit outreach to the parents in the community has taken a bit of a different tack when compared to other schools. Monument Elementary, like some other schools in the district is populated with many families who need extra support during the year, has worked to find ways to get families involved in the activities of the school as the preferred method of increased outreach to stakeholders. Through community nights, which occur each month, or through the inclusion of parents on school field trips, Monument Elementary has worked to develop a form of outreach and inclusion that seeks to get the parents involved in the activities of the school. The school field trips, which are funded through dollars allocated by the principal, seek parental involvement as chaperones, create opportunities for the parents and the faculty of the school to interact in a manner that is not focused on student's behavior or academics. By including parents in this way, Principal Madsen is, "creating and building these solid relationships" so that when needed, Principal Madsen can leverage the social capital to work with parents to address concerns about student behavior. Another way in which the school works to develop community relations has been a program that provides families in need with support during the holiday season. This program reaches a large number of families within the school and helps to continue to construct the solid relationships with all the families of the school. Some families are able to support the holiday initiative and some families are able to benefit from the support. The end product is that this school has been able to build a relationship-based approach to community inclusion.

This approach to community inclusion is different when compared to other schools, but this approach is able to get families working alongside the school. This

working relationship helps the school leaders to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of the students and creates the pathway for the school to understand how the development of culturally responsive approach to school discipline can be designed in a way that meets the needs of the students, the lives of the community, and the goals of the district.

Funding Allocated. The third cause for variation can identified as a result of funding available for schools and how money is allocated to the implementation of CRPBIS. In this instance, I will group the three schools into two distinct groups. One, where extra funding was made available and the other group of two schools, where extra funding was not in place to aide in the implementation efforts. The funding, for Teocalli Elementary, was made possible through the School Improvement Grant funds that were made available to Teocalli Elementary above and beyond the other funding allocated at the district level for the schools and the implementation of CRPBIS.

For most schools in the district, including Bo Buck and Monument, the school district used funds from a federal grant to subsidize the training of all teachers in CHAMPS, for the financial support for the Student Assistance Providers (SAPS) at the elementary level, and for other resources necessary to implement CRPBIS. At Bo Buck Elementary and Monument Elementary, this provided the opportunity to support local initiatives, but did not do much else to provide extra incentives. As a result, these two elementary schools were unable to match the efforts put forth by Teocalli Elementary School and this is evident in the velocity in which CRPBIS was implemented.

In most schools within the school district, BMSD allocated funds to support the placement of SAPs and BIMs (Behavioral Intervention Monitors at the secondary levels).

These individuals are “essentially your counselors by any other name” according to Mrs. Roffee. The placement of SAPs and BIMs in the schools was a design feature that predated the implementation of CRPBIS, but once implementation began these individuals became the central actors in the implementation of CRPBIS, but their work was only half funded by the district. At Teocalli Elementary, with extra discretionary funds available, money was spent to fully fund the SAP as a full time employee. The SAP at Teocalli Elementary was the individual who was solely focused on CRPBIS implementation and was responsible for the development culturally responsive activities for the students and faculty in the school. The funding difference between the schools represented a significant capacity that was pivotal for Teocalli Elementary to speed the implementation and ensure the fidelity within the school. The resulting differences in implementation, as a result of the funding, produces in the variation in localized implementation of CRPBIS.

Adoption of CRPBIS. The variation that was identified in how the schools implemented CRPBIS was also predicated on how individual principals made sense of CRPBIS and then acted upon that understanding to meet the goals of the district. Principals in this study fell into one of three categories: energetic adoption, resistant adoption, and compliant adoption. These three categories are the ways in which I will organize the adoption of CRPBIS that occurred in each of the school buildings into one of three distinct categories. The three categories highlight the ways in which the local leaders approached this initiative and the velocity in which the program is introduced into the schools. The result of looking at the implementation using these three frames is that it

helps to operationalize the ways in which the principals made sense of CRPBIS and how the program was eventually implemented in the three schools within this study.

Energetic Adoption. Energetic adoption refers to the vigorous approach taken by a school leader when introduced to a new program and how that introduction to the new program spurs action. In the case of CRPBIS, the principal saw this program as the way to address cultural differences between the faculty and the students. CRPBIS was also a program, in the eyes of the principal that could be tailored to meet the needs of the school as needed and would produce results socially and academically for students in a short span of time. CRPBIS represented an opportunity to transform the school and the approach taken to address the discipline protocols. In this school, the principal brought together the faculty and staff during the summer to build an all-inclusive plan, the principal allocated funds to hire an individual that was solely responsible for implementing CRPBIS, and the principal incorporated student organizations to help ensure that CRPBIS was in the forefront of everything that took place during the school year. Principal Stenmark said that, “we made CRPBIS our number one focus over the past three years which I think provided that foundation and structure for us to have the [academic] scores that we had.” In all aspects, even in the way in which the school’s approach to CRPBIS was discussed, this principal was energetic in the implementation and inclusion of CRPBIS practices within the school. When asked if the school was progressing at a greater speed than others, the principal stated that, “yes, honestly we’re way ahead of other buildings to be honest with you” and that “we have a solid team that meets weekly to look at our students, to look at what’s happening in the building.” The energetic adoption of CRPBIS in Teocalli Elementary was fueled by the principal’s sense

and belief that CRPBIS was the intervention that the school could implement to address the rising discipline rate and declining academics. The velocity of implementation was a product of the energy and enthusiasm that this principal exhibited about the program and the impact that CRPBIS could have in improving the climate and culture of the school.

Resistant Adoption. In contrast to the energetic adoption form of implementation that can be seen at Teocalli Elementary, the activity at Monument Elementary can be seen as an example of resistant adoption. In this case, the school went along with the aims of the program but not the specific measures. At Monument Elementary, where an existing program had been in place, the principal opted to go in another direction in implantation. The implementation of CRPBIS did not occur as designed, in part because of resentment for how CRPBIS was introduced to the district principals and in part because of a difference in perspective about how successful programs find success. Principal Madsen firmly believes that good programming and good implementation occur at the local level, not as a result of a mandate from the central offices. In resistant adoption, the principal is not openly disregarding the aims and outcomes sought by the district, but taking those outcome goals and molding the goals to the program and environment in place. The principal of Monument Elementary intoned that any implementation that finds success will only happen when it comes from the teachers in the classroom who have experience first-hand in school misbehavior and the impact of discipline. For example, one of the district's main aspects of the implementation of CRPBIS is the training for staff and faculty in CHAMPS. CHAMPS is an approach to school expectations that is introduced to create continuity of expectations. CHAMPS provides structure where structure was previously non-existent or lacking. Principal

Madsen initially said that going to the CHAMPS training was not in the plans for the teachers, but eventually left open the option to attend future trainings if the teachers wanted to attend. Some did, some did not. Instead, the school, under the leadership of the principal, continued their implementation of another program and brought in a nationally renowned trainer (of the other program) to help the school continue on their own path of implementing a program to address school misbehavior. As a result of the principal's aversion to the mandate from central offices to implement CRPBIS in the manner that district leadership saw fit, the school was flirting with potential sanctions from the central offices of BMSD for a failure to implement as mandated, but as the principal stated, there are bigger issues to deal with within the implementation of CRPBIS than to punish, or sanction, a school for continuing a successful program.

District people came and visited the building and were also very complimentary and said, you know, and basically said you guys don't have anything to worry about. You're doing a great job. And that made me think, okay they're not worried about us. They're worried about other buildings

The fact that this building was going its own way may have been a concern to some of the leaders of BMSD, but it was not a significant concern to warrant any sanctions or remediation for the decision to go against the aims of the district from the perspective of the principal of the building. The resistance to the implementation of the district was in the form of not meeting the specific non-negotiable expectations set for by district officials because what was happening in the building was successful and was driven by a strong leader who saw that the main goals of the district's implementation were being

met, albeit in a different approach. As such, in this case, the resistant adoption of CRPBIS was true to the spirit of the outcomes sought, but not to the letter of the mandate.

Compliant Adoption. A third reaction to the mandate from the district to implement CRPBIS is the compliant adoption. In this form of adoption, the primary actor in the implementation neither rejected the aims of the district, nor fully embraced the plan as set forth. More of middle-of-the-road approach is taken that seeks to meet the expectations of the district, but does not fully embrace the aims of the district either. In this situation, implementation goals are met but there is not an exuberant effort undertaken to shift current practices to new approaches. At Bo Buck Elementary, Principal Mahre and faculty attended the trainings for CHAMPS, created working groups, and started to address the goals of the school district but it was done at a slower pace than other buildings. This compliance to the implementation expectations caused the school to fall behind in implementation compared to other buildings, but still was an attempt to look into the program to see how the program could meet the needs of the school. At the core of this compliance was the personal philosophy held by the principal that the principal knew best how to approach the school's misbehavior problems and that what the district was doing was nice, but not the best for Bo Buck Elementary. The result of this lack of action at the school level led to smaller groups of individuals working on the implementation within the school. Principal Mahre stated that when meetings occurred within the school, the number of participants is small, maybe four or five teachers or staff members and that almost a year into the implementation the principal, when asked to define current understanding of CRPBIS, stated that, "I can't give you a clinical description, definition. It really is an attempt to understand students' background

culturally, socioeconomically, and apply some sound practices to that.” The compliant adoption pathway makes it hard for real traction to be made in the implementation of a program because the leadership has not fully adopted the program. This may be caused by a lack of understanding of the program’s applicability or that there is an underlying lack of belief in the processes and outcomes of the program. Whatever the internal reason, or sense of the program that is held by the leaders, their lack of action for or against the program leads to the compliant adoption that produces an outcome that is neither good nor bad, but just there. In the end, as a result of the compliant approach, the program languishes due to the lack of total acceptance or absolute rejection.

Together, these three forms of adoption show how a program can have great aspirations and total understanding among implementers, but still result in variation in implementation. Each of these three lenses is created as a result of the sensemaking that occurs within the minds of the school leaders and among the faculty and staff of the schools where the programs are being implemented.

The variations in implementation, at the hyper local area of each elementary school, can be traced to a number of factors. However, three significant sources of variation can be clearly identified. First, the amount of funding made available to each school to support the implementation efforts can have, and did in this case, significant effect on the ability of the school to provide the service necessary to implement CRPBIS. Second, the amount effort and focus placed upon the implementation also plays a key role in the school buildings capacity to implement CRPBIS uniformly across the building. Last, the amount of stakeholder outreach enables the relationship building with external actors, such as parents, that ensure that the school is cognizant and respectful of

the local community. All three of these factors are key elements in the implementation of CRPBIS, but are also three identifiable causes of variation in the implementation of CRPBIS in the three elementary schools in BMSD. While there may be other factors, these three do stand out as factors that are specific to each building and are a cause of variation.

Research Question #3

An interesting finding developed during the analysis of the implementation of CRPBIS within the schools. That finding is related to how school leaders within the school system understood and interpreted the CRPBIS program and its implementation. I argue that how school leaders interpreted the program is what ultimately led to the variation in implementation. Variation in the schools is thought to have occurred as a result of how the individuals interpreted a policy. Sensemaking, as argued by Coburn (2001) in a study of reading instruction in California, is the way in which individuals seek understanding of new information through the “lens of their own pre-existing knowledge and practices” (p. 477). Coburn (2001) posits that sensemaking is mediated by how individuals interpret and transform policy messages based upon their own conceptions and experiences. While Coburn’s study is in relation to the implementation of reading policy, Coburn (2001) is able to look at how teacher understanding is mediated by principal understanding. A key gap in implementation studies, as identified by Coburn (2001), is that “studies do not address how school leaders’ sensemaking shapes strategic choices in leadership practice” (p. 480). Furthermore, Spillane et al. (2002)Spillane et al. (2002) argue that cognition is a key factor in the implementation of new program and policies in schools. Spillane et al., (2002) point out that “implementing agents’

sensemaking provides numerous opportunities, aside from any will of intentional efforts to revise policy to fit with local agendas, for the transformation of policymakers' ideas about changing local practice" (p. 391). The transformation that is spoken of is at the heart of this study, how did variation occur and why. In this study, the cognitive sensemaking made by the principals about the implementation of CRPBIS greatly affected the implementation of the program in each of the schools studied. As such, this section will be guided by the third research question:

To what degree does individual sensemaking about CRPBIS explain implementation variation at both the central office and school levels?

In order to understand how sensemaking effects the implementation, it will be necessary to explore how the principals made sense of CRPBIS. Using Coburn's (2001) framework of sensemaking at the classroom level and applying it to principals, I look to the way in which principals understand the policy, how this understanding leads to interpretation, and ultimately adaptation and adoption of policy. These three fundamental aspects of sensemaking apply to principal sensemaking in much the same way as they do to teacher sensemaking, but as Spillane (2002) argues, school leaders shape practices in implementation in part due to their leadership and influence. Thus it is vital to understand the sensemaking process, in this study, in light of the form of adoption that was explicated in research question two. Briefly, in this study, three principals adopted CRPBIS in three different ways and the adoption of the program by the principals led to overall program variation. One principal was energetic and believed this program was the savior of the school, another principal saw this program as an affront to the existing operations in the school, and the third principal was simply compliant with the mandate

of the school district. Getting at the reason for these adoption practices is extremely important in the hopes of understanding the impact of school leadership sensemaking in implementation. To accomplish this task, I rely on Coburn's (2001) three components of sensemaking: understanding, interpretation, and action. I will conclude this analysis by attempting to assess how the actions of each principal have a profound effect on the implementation of CRPBIS.

Principal Sensemaking. Sensemaking is the way in which individuals create meaning and then act upon that understanding to process new information and protocols through previous experiences. In this implementation, individual principals internalized the CRPBIS program in light of their own schools and their own ideologies, then acted upon that understanding. In some cases, that action by principals led to energetic adoption and in others, resistant adoption. The variations that did occur created an implementation that was not necessarily in opposition to the aims of the district, it was just that each building did it differently according to the principal's interpretation of CRPBIS and how CRPBIS would be best for their building. In the end, even though the district was clear in the expectations for implementation, each building leader approached the implementation with their own perspective about how it would be best done in each building. In order to better understand the implementation, it is important to explore how each principal understood and interpreted the impact of CRPBIS and ultimately how these interpretations and understandings effected the action taken implementation.

In the three schools where implementation of CRPBIS was studied, each principal interpreted CRPBIS, made sense of CRPBIS, and the goals of the district in their own unique manner. The interpretation by each of the principals, which is at the core of

sensemaking, is predicated on the way in which the principal of the school perceived the implementation of CRPBIS as an intervention that could positively change the day-to-day disciplinary protocols of the school. Each of the principals within this study saw the program differently during the implementation process. One saw the program as a savior for the school, another saw the program as affront to their prior efforts, and the last principal in this study saw this as a program that could be effective in addressing the existing school climate. In sum, the interpretations and sensemaking made by the principals led to the variation in implementation. This variation in understanding is what led to a difference between the district intentions in the implementation and the actual implementation of CRPBIS in the schools. It is the space between how the principals perceived the implementation of CRPBIS and the development of the CRPBIS activities in the schools that is of considerable interest.

As mentioned previously, three principals within BMSD were interviewed for this study and asked to express their understanding and interpretations of CRPBIS. Each of the principals expressed that the program was designed to reduce disproportional discipline, increase the understanding of the lived experiences of the students, and to integrate that understanding into their management of the school's approach to discipline. Each of the principals in this study also shared how the implementation occurred in their school. Through an analysis of the interviews, it is clear that the principals saw the implementation of CRPBIS as having a different impact on their schools and as such, there was a differentiation in implementation. The principal of each school offered a clear explanation of why the program was being implemented and were uniform in the

explanation of the goals of the program, but each of the principals saw the program as having a different impact on their schools.

Teocalli Elementary. In the school where CRPBIS was seen as a savior, Teocalli Elementary, the principal expressed that the prior approach to school discipline was considerably punitive and was thought to be the way in which a school could be made orderly and safe. There was an acknowledged sense that to establish order, harsh discipline was necessary. However, after the implementation of CRPBIS began, the same principal became convinced that CRPBIS was a critical factor in the school's disciplinary turnaround. Due to the academic and social success of the students after the implementation of CRPBIS, Principal Stenmark said that the systems that CRPBIS encourages was a significant factor in the overall change in the building. As Principal Stenmark said, that by "putting those systems in place, it changed the entire culture for our school behaviorally and academically because now teachers can teach...if behaviors aren't in place, no instruction is taking place." CRPBIS, as understood by the principal, created the systems and pathways for the school to move away from a disciplinary mindset to an academic mindset. The acknowledgment that the punitive approach that was taken by the principal in previous times were not beneficial to the educative environment is an important realization in the interpretation by the principal that CRPBIS represented a new approach to discipline that could lead to better opportunities for the students. This is an important reason why the principal argued that CRPBIS saved this school and as a result, Principal Stenmark continued to lead the school in the implementation of CRPBIS. Through the interview process the principal was able to

identify and support the reasons why CRPBIS represented an important shift in thought and action.

It seems to be that the leadership that was modeled by the principal, and the effort to embrace the implementation of CRPBIS, was significant in the school's ability to bridge the gap between a majority-minority student population in a building that was led by a predominately white staff. As Principal Stenmark said, "CRPBIS is more multifaceted and it takes into consideration different ideas, different ethnicities, different backgrounds, different experiences. And I think that's the most beneficial thing, especially within my school where you have majority white staff." When the principal, who as an African American, made CRPBIS a school priority and allocated extra funding to support the initiative, in a way that was above and beyond other schools in the district, the principal was exhibiting a strong belief in the interpretation that the program was going to be beneficial, created the space for others to work to implement the program as vigorously as could be done.

Monument Elementary. In contrast to the vigor shown in implementation by Principal Stenmark, another school in this study was less enthusiastic about the implementation. In fact, the principal of Monument Elementary, as evidenced in the interviews, was somewhat resentful of the implementation of CRPBIS, especially the way in which the program was introduced to the school. When CRPBIS was introduced, it was done so without regard to efforts that had previously been made in the school to address goals that were similar to the goals of the district with the implementation of CRPBIS. Principal Madsen stated that, "as we sat there and listened, you know, it was, the realization kinda washed over us that, well, wait a minute. You know, we already do

this and so then it became, well, what's the difference?" In the eyes of the school principal, CRPBIS did not do much different than what was already being done and because there was a new mandate from the central offices of the school district that all the schools were going to be implementing CRPBIS, resentment towards the implementation of CRPBIS arose. Principal Madsen said that, "there was sort of this feeling of this feeling of, wait a minute, you know, and I will use the word resentment. And I'm only speaking for myself now." Principal Madsen noted that there was an understanding of the need for continuity, but this blanket approach of implementing CRPBIS to the entirety of the school district ran contrary to the approach that the district had previously encouraged:

We understand the need for, you know, a certain amount of continuity but, you know, you've [BMSD] talked to us for a whole year now about creating our own culture and then it's like you can't snap us back and think we're all gonna be in lockstep.

It was this tension between the actions and words of the district and the existing efforts of the school that led to the differences in how CRPBIS was implemented in Monument Elementary. In Monument Elementary, the principal believed that the existing program had many of the same pieces as CRPBIS. From the approach to building community to regular check-ins with students, the existing program at Monument Elementary provided many of the same opportunities to develop understanding and community. As a result of this similarity, a hybrid model of implementation evolved.

The principal at Monument Elementary did what was thought best for the school by continuing the implementation of their program and hope that it met the expectations

of the district. As Principal Madsen stated, “there were so many things that were like, well, you know, we’re not doing that [a specific expectation] but we’re doing this. So we really felt like, okay what’s going to happen with this and I finally said to Tori⁵ [another building leader], I said, you know, it is what it is.” The principal at Monument Elementary was willing to suffer the consequences of going their own way regardless of the consequences because the building principal believed in the approach that they were taking. This belief was predicated on the assumption that implementations work best when there are designed from the ground up and not as a result of a mandate from the central offices of the school district. This principal understood the *goals* of the implementation as vital but the *approach* to the goals as malleable. Principal Madsen argued that top-down approaches are not effective and that the best way to achieve success was to work from the bottom-up.

Programs implemented by central offices, in the eyes of this principal, fail to achieve success because they are not based on the knowledge of the teachers and their experiences in the classroom. The bottom-up mentality of implementation success was highlighted by Principal Madsen when it was stated that:

There needs to be a general acceptance of the fact that we can’t all be the same.

And that what works in one school is not gonna work in another school. And

mostly because the things that work best in a building are the things that we think up ourselves.

The impact of the belief that innovations are best when they come from the classrooms, as was seen at Monument Elementary, the implementation of CRPBIS looked

⁵ This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the individual

considerably different than in Teocalli Elementary because of the way in which the principal made sense of the implementation and the program itself. It was not that the principal disregarded the goals of the initiative, just that the principal, based upon the interviews, saw the implementation approach by the district as contrary to how the school had been approaching policies to address school discipline in the past. Due to this sensemaking, the approach to implementation looked considerably different in style, but not in substance when compared to other schools. In this case, there was not an outright disagreement in the goals of the policy, but disappointment in the manner that the policy was being introduced and required by district leadership.

Bo Buck Elementary. The third school, Bo Buck Elementary, approached the implementation in a more neutral manner. As the most senior principal in the district, this principal has seen programs come and go over the years as a principal and as a result was less vigorous than Teocalli and less individualistic than Monument. In this building, based on the interviews that were conducted, committees were created and efforts were made to implement CRPBIS, but it launched CRPBIS with less speed and vigor than in other buildings. Principal Mahre did believe, as other principals in this study did, that the implementation of CRPBIS was in response to the district's goal to decrease suspensions and improve the culture of the school. While this school did meet the general expectations that were set forth by the district, the implementation of CRPBIS at Bo Buck Elementary was also influenced by the personal beliefs and interpretation of the policy initiative in the eyes of the principal. In this building, the principal approached school discipline with an approach that was dependent on the philosophy of school discipline held by the principal.

Bo Buck Elementary got off to an initially slow start in the implementation of CRPBIS and the effort that did exist within the school to implement CRPBIS was focused more on developing the building's understanding of the program than on implementing the required facets required by the district. In the words of the principal, "it is just taking the overall program and finding some of the areas that we need support in and working with the staff." The focus in this building, and in particular this principal, was more catered to how the teachers were going to implement CRPBIS and finding ways to support that initiative at the onset than getting the program operational. One way in which this school developed a foundation for implementation was through a book study among the teachers to support and understand the goals of the district. The book study, led by the principal of the school, was focused on the strategies necessary to engage and motivate the students. While the development of strategies to engage students is important and valuable, it took valuable time away from the actual implementation of CRPBIS. Over time, this school was able to move forward and begin to meet the goals of the district. Meeting the goals of the district was accomplished by having staff members attend district-wide professional developments and by creating various internal committees to address different aspects of the CRPBIS initiative within BMSD.

One of the main reasons why this school is different, in comparison to the other schools in this study is that the principal's personal beliefs about discipline were the overriding factor in how CRPBIS was implemented. The principal had a disciplinary philosophy that was centered on making "the building a safe and culturally sensitive building so that the students and parents feel good about sending their kids to school" and was less about meeting the explicit goals of the school district. When thinking about

discipline, this principal relied on a personal philosophy regarding discipline rather than the mandates of the school district. Principal Mahre stated that discipline varies based on the families of the students and the perceptions of the home life of the student.

Specifically, Mrs. Mahre stated that, “I firmly believe that kids need to be in school for most behaviors unless they’re chronic or they’re very egregious in terms of physical threats. But for a lot of these behaviors and consistent behaviors, there are other things you can do in the buildings.” The personal philosophy of the principal drove the efforts of the school, through committees and book study, to address the disciplinary issues in the classroom. It was a fusion of the CR approaches that were stated as goals of the district and the local conceptions of how discipline should be handled. While not in tension with the district, it is less aggressive than what the district was seeking in terms of implementation, but does get at the same goals.

Principal Understanding of Impact. A key finding of this study is that even though the principals within this study understood the aims of the policy that was being implemented by the district, there was variation in how the principals interpreted and understood the impact that the program would have on their school. In the interview process, each of the principals in this study saw CRPBIS as an approach to introduce school discipline reform; it was the impact on each individual building that was seen differently.

Teocalli Elementary. At Teocalli Elementary, where the principal came to the realization that this program was an essential intervention to overcome the mentality that harsh discipline was an appropriate response to misbehavior and ultimately become the most strident advocate for this program is an example of how an individual’s

understanding of a policy can trickle down to implementation. As a result of the principal's fervent belief that this program would provide the opportunity for the school to turnaround the historic punitive approach to school discipline, the environment for innovation was made possible. As a result, in the mind of this principal, CRPBIS represented a significant and profound opportunity for the school to address the existing disciplinary approach, even that of the principal. For the principal of Teocalli Elementary, the understanding and individual interpretation of the program as an agent of change led to the actions and decision to develop an environment where CRPBIS was a central piece of the school's overall improvement of the disciplinary protocols. CRPBIS, as understood, by the principal, represented the opportunity for a majority white staff to increase the cultural awareness of a non-majority population that attended the school. As an individual of the minority population, this principal understood this program as an intervention that could lead the school to the goal of reducing the disproportionate disciplinary actions that had taken place previously and would encourage the faculty and staff to explore nuanced ways to learn about and include the culture of the community into the daily operations of the building. As was seen previously, this understanding was a key component in the development of the protocols and procedures within the building to understand the community that they served.

Monument Elementary. The situation at Monument Elementary was quite different and as such the understanding of the policy also was different. At Monument Elementary, the understanding and subsequent interpretation of the policy initiative had dual meaning. At Monument Elementary, the principal understood the central goal of the policy but yet also understood the policy as an affront to the approach that had already

been taken at the school. As a policy goal, CRPBIS was clearly understood by the principal as a policy to infuse cultural responsiveness to the disciplinary approach of the school. As an intervention, the policy was understood as mandate that failed to take into account the work that had previously been embarked upon within the school. This created a tension between the goals of the district and the goals of the school. The principal was keenly aware of and outspoken about this tension, yet stood true to the existing program. These parallel understandings represent a difference between the goals of the school and the goals of the district. In one sense, the principal understood the aims of the policy, but also understood the implementation of the policy as a top-down mandate that stripped the school of local authority, which in the mind of this principal is a serious problem that limits this initiative.

Bo Buck Elementary. At Bo Buck Elementary, the principal had an alternative understanding and interpretation of this program's effect on the building, even though the principal did agree on the goals as set forth by the district. The outcomes of the implementation of CRPBIS, as has been mentioned previously, were clear and made sense to the principal, but in this building the understanding of the implementation was somewhat different. The principal of this building, as an experienced principal of the district that saw the implementation as a program, like other programs initiated by the district, that needed to be explored and vetted to ensure that the faculty and staff fully understood the program and as such was slower to be implemented. Part of the reason for the slowed implementation at Bo Buck Elementary was the commitment to a group study about the program. In time, the program was implemented on par with the expectations of the district, but the implementation of the program was moderated by the principal's own

philosophy about school discipline. In the interview process with the principal, it was stated this building did not have a long history of punitive disciplinary action and that the school really only needed to address a few individual students who were the high flyers over time. In the mind of this principal, the understanding of this initiative by the central office of the school district was to increase the cultural awareness of the school, but in this school there was little cultural difference among the students and staff. Both the adult population and the student were primarily white in this school. Due to this, the principal understood the policy of CRPBIS as an approach to addressing school discipline, but the understanding of the implementation was mediated by the principal's own philosophy of school discipline that was borne of personal experience. Understanding the central objective of the policy goal was one thing, but implementing the overall approach to the policy goals was only a piece of what the principal was attempting to accomplish within the building. In this case, the principal understood the objectives of the policy, but transferred only a partial aspect of the objectives based upon the personal philosophy and local interpretation of the need for CRPBIS in the school based on the understandings of CRPBIS by the principal of the school building.

Principal Action. Understanding how individuals acted upon their interpretations and understandings of the policy that implemented CRPBIS in the school district provides the opportunity to comprehend how sensemaking affects action. As was brought forth previously, the implementation in each of the schools can be categorized as energetic, resistant, and compliant. To better understand how the actions of the principals are mediated by their interpretations of the effects of the policy, I will attempt to match the action of the principals with the understandings of the policy uncovered in the

interview process. Beginning with how the program is introduced to the school by the principal and then by looking into the continued support for the implementation of CRPBIS, it will be evident that the interpretations of the policy in the minds of the principals had an effect on how the policy was implemented within the schools over time.

One of the most interesting factors in the implementation was the alignment of the implementation efforts to the policy understandings of each principal. In the school where the program was most advanced, the principal was the most passionate about the potential value of the program. In this school, the perceived impact of the implementation of CRPBIS was seen as a way to increase the cultural awareness of the school through outreach and connection with the community. At the forefront of this effort was the principal of the school who was effusive about the actual impact of this program. What is most interesting about this principal is at first the principal was reticent about the program but through professional development and discussion with facilitators from GRD, this principal became a outspoken believer in the program in the school and the school district. This principal spoke openly about the way in which the program provided opportunity and pathways for students and teachers to move past the traditional student/teacher relationship and find ways to get to know each other and to be able to gain a better understanding of the root factors for classroom misbehavior. The principal at Teocalli Elementary can be seen as a true advocate for the program, in actions and in words.

Due to this advocacy for the program, it is arguable that this principal was the catalyst for the advancement of the program and the reason why this particular school was able to integrate so much of the program into the daily activities. Once the principal

was convinced of the benefits of the program, it is possible that this champion of the CRPBIS was able to engage and encourage the rest of the staff to move towards the goals of the district. In looking back over the results of the program, it is clear that this school was able to benefit from the implementation of CRPBIS, but it was the leadership of the principal that was the catalyst for this positive outcome.

In a similar vein as the principal at Teocalli Elementary, the principal at Monument Elementary was also a key reason for the implementation outcomes of CRPBIS. However, in the case of Monument Elementary, the principal acted in a way that was not aligned with the explicit goals of school district's implementation CRPBIS. There are three distinct reasons why the principal failed to interpret the goals of the central offices of the school district in the same way as the principal at Teocalli. First, at the very onset of the CRPBIS initiative, the principal at Monument Elementary was not sure of the approach or the systems that were going to be required as a part of the implementation. Second, because of the pre-existing program that was in place at Monument Elementary, the principal was at first confused about the purpose of the required implementation when an operating program was already in place. Third, the principal at Monument Elementary was not appreciative that the top-down approach to implementation was being mandated from the central offices. All three of these reasons produce the action taken by the principal that varied from the vision of implementation as put forth by the school district's central office. Each of these individual factors is influential in how the principal approached the implementation of CRPBIS. For example, because the principal believes that the best innovations come from the classroom, the top-down approach to this initiative led the principal to stay true to the existing program

rather than change the approach that had been developed inside the school building over time. Second, the principal was astounded (based on the analysis of interview data) that the district had not taken into account the previous work that had been engaged in by the school to develop the climate and culture within the building. Last, the principal was not a believer in the approach, including the mandated nature of CHAMPS, as a way to implement CRPBIS. Individually, these factors may not have caused the principal to decide to continue on the existing path that the school had been on, but the combined nature of all three of these led the principal to interpret the goals of the district as distinctly different than the goals of the school. While the principal did find ways to mold the existing program to fit with the implementation of CRPBIS, the school did not actively pursue the implementation of CRPBIS as the district had envisioned.

The primary reason why this school did not actively pursue the implementation of CRPBIS in the way that the school district had intended was in part a result of the way that the principal, as the school leader, interpreted the actions of the school district in the decision to choose CRPBIS and the manner in which the school approached the implementation. It was the interpretation of the district's agenda that led to action of the principal and ultimately, the different approach that was taken in this school.

The result of sensemaking, in this study, is that individual principals have considerable impact in how an initiative is implemented based upon how the individuals make sense of the program and its impact on the school. Focusing in on the two ends of the implementation continuum, it is clear that the principals wielded considerable power in the implementation of the CRPBIS program. As school leaders, the way in which the principals interpreted the message of the school district and the intent of the program

produced different implementation approaches. In one school, the complete belief in the program led to a fruitful implementation and in the other school, the feeling that the school was supplanting the existing program with another led to an implementation that fit the needs of the district, but was not the program that the district had put forth. In sum, principals are considerably important in how a program is brought to the school building and their conception of the program has considerable impact in how the program will eventually be put into action in the school. This is an important realization for program implementers to grasp; that the understanding of the principals who are implementing the program could make or break an implementation before the program ever sees the classroom.

Conclusion. At the onset of this chapter the question was asked, why CRPBIS? Why is it important for the school district to initiate this particular intervention to address the disciplinary concerns of the school district leadership? What I have found is that an important reason why this particular program is important for the district to pursue is that CRPBIS encourages schools to look deep into their school community to explore how the school can be responsive to the localized needs of the school community. However, while this finding is important, what is most interesting and potentially more important is the identification of the significance of how individuals interpret an initiative and what that means to the implementation of the initiative. In this case, the implementation of CRPBIS in each of the school buildings within this study was greatly effected by the way in which the principals interpreted the objective of CRPBIS and how that interpretation interacted with what has been working (or not working) in their school prior to the implementation of CRPBIS. In this case, three important lenses are identified as how principals adopt the

CRPBIS program. As identified as a result of research question two, there are varying types of adoption and they are categorized as energetic, resistant, and compliant adoption. Each of these forms of adoption effect the implementation of CRPBIS, which causes variation of the initiative inside each of the school buildings. Implementation variation is the core of this study and what is important to discover is that even when all participants agree on the purpose and goals of the initiative (research question one), variation in implementation can occur. In this case, the cause of that variation was the by-product of how individuals unpacked the meaning and importance of the program. The individual meaning and importance that was ascribed to CRPBIS was dependent on the principal of the school and the perceived need for an intervention in the mind of the school principal. In conclusion, while this analysis had explored three important questions about implementation, the most important finding of the analysis is that individual sensemaking by the school principal has considerable power in the implementation and the variation of implementation, even when the goals of the program are equally agreed upon.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The implementation of CRPBIS in the BMSD school district is an attempt to address the growing discipline situation within the school district. The goal of the district is to reduce the number of disciplinary incidents in the district through the introduction of a culturally responsive approach to school discipline. This approach to school discipline seeks to improve the school's awareness of the lives of the students outside the school building and how those experiences impact the behavior of the students in the classroom. As a result of the increased awareness of the lived experiences of the students, it is thought that the school faculty and staff will be better able to address the misbehavior of the students. However, the introduction of this new policy into the schools is mediated by the interpretations of the policy by the principals in the schools. It is their role as a gatekeeper of information and driver of action that is influential in the overall implementation of the new policy. As such, gaining a better understanding of how principals perceive the policy and how those principals act on the policy is of critical importance.

In this study, the implementation of CRPBIS was a district-wide initiative, encompassing all 27 school buildings that occurred at one time was the vehicle through which the actions of the principals in the implementation effort was examined. The overt goal with this district-wide implementation was to ensure that all students, regardless of school attended, would experience the same expectations for behavior. From the district perspective, the implementation of CRPBIS has the chance to increase the continuity of approaches to school discipline for students who are transient or those who graduate from one building to another at the end of a school year. The implementation was initially a

three-year program, but has been increased to a five-year implementation to ensure that all schools have the chance to implement the program to the greatest extent possible.

Implementation of CRPBIS within BMSD was supported by an external support agency, the GRD. GRD provided expertise in CRPBIS and in implementation protocols. GRD worked, in some fashion, with each of the schools in the district to support the goal of reaching 80% fidelity. A Tiered Fidelity Instrument (TFI) measures fidelity of implementation; the TFI is an observational tool to account for the practices and procedures within each school. While the TFI is the primary tool used by GRD and BMSD to measure the implementation of CRPBIS, much of the work takes place in day-to-day actions that improve the culture and climate of the school. The TFI takes a qualitative and quantitative measurement of implementation, but other metrics are used to identify the impact of implementing CRPBIS. School discipline and academic achievement are also analyzed to determine the effects of CRPBIS.

As much as the district seeks to create continuity in implementation through an all-in mentality to the implementation of CRPBIS, the approach to implementation by school leaders in the schools is what produces variation in implementation. Variation in understanding of CRPBIS, while expected to some extent by the school district, produces differences in the way school buildings approach CRPBIS. The differences in implementation are caused by the way in which individuals perceive the need for CRPBIS. Each of the schools in the study approached the implementation with a different level of engagement and the variation of implementation that occurred produced the primary finding in this study. This variation in implementation was a product of the influence that the principal in each building had in the effort and energy that the school

approached CRPBIS implementation with. In one school, where the principal is an ardent supporter of the CRPBIS implementation and has been able to marshal the resources to lead the school in a very focused implementation of CRPBIS, considerable success in reducing school disciplinary action has occurred. In another building, the implementation of CRPBIS was less of a focus but still a part of the overall operation of the school building, which resulted in a different outcome for the implementation of CRPBIS. In this chapter, I will look at the variation in implementation across school buildings and offer recommendations for future implementations of this program. Together, these two aspects of this chapter will help to better understand the way in which this program can be implemented in the future and how to avoid the steep learning curve that occurs in the implementation process. It is important to note that this study does not attempt to address the effectiveness of the implementation of CRPBIS quantifiably, but is an attempt to better understand the role of principal sensemaking in the implementation process. Understanding the role of the principal sensemaking in implementation is considerably important in the analysis of policy implementation.

Principal Sensemaking Mediates Implementation

A critical finding of this dissertation is how principal sensemaking mediates program implementation. Previous scholars have pointed out that the specific actions of principals in schools have mediated how teachers make sense of new policy (Coburn, 2005). What is interesting to see in this study is what happens prior to the introduction of new policy to the teaching staff. In this study, it can be seen that the principals themselves interpreted and make sense of the new policy. Sensemaking at the principal level also seems to have influence on how new initiatives may be implemented. As has

been pointed out in this study, each of the principals were introduced and reacted differently to the introduction of CRPBIS. The impact of this differential interpretation of the CRPBIS program, at the principal level, led to variation in implementation. The variation in implementation can be seen in the types of adoption of CRPBIS that took place in each of the three schools. From energetic to compliant, the introduction of CRPBIS was mediated by the principals of each building.

It is important to note that each of the principals saw the central objective of CRPBIS as an approach to discipline that worked to create new systems that would honor and include the lived experiences of the students and the families of the school community. This continuity in understanding rules out the lack of clarity as a reason for variation. What was different between each of these schools was the role that the principal interpretation of the program affected the building's implementation of the new approach to school discipline. In one school, the principal saw the introduction of CRPBIS as the savior of the school. CRPBIS moved the school away from reliance upon punitive punishment and towards responsive practices that allowed students to stay in the classroom and increase instructional time. In another school, the program was a challenge to an existing approach that had been built over several years and the principal clearly was upset with the way in which CRPBIS was being presented as the new approach to school discipline for the entirety of the district. In the third and final school of the study, CRPBIS was accepted but not fully acted upon by the principal because it was not necessarily needed immediately. As such, in this third school, CRPBIS launched with relatively low energy and low interest. In sum, it can be seen that in each of these schools, the principal acted as a gatekeeper in the implementation process. In this

gatekeeper role, each of the principals' interpretation and understanding of the program is what ultimately led to the variation in implementation.

For policy designers, acknowledgement and understanding of principal sensemaking can be important in how programs are eventually carried out in schools. From this study, it is clear that the interpretations and the understandings of the policy goals and objectives are instrumental in how the program is implemented over time. To better plan for this sensemaking that occurs at the local level, it is important that policy designers understand the need to incorporate the impact of principal sensemaking when introducing new programs or initiatives into the school buildings. While the outcomes of the policy may be clear and unmistakable to those who design the new initiative, there is a distinct need to determine how school leaders, when planning the implementation, will translate the policy objectives into action. It is this sensemaking, at the school leadership level, that will provide the setting for a full, partial, or failed implementation. The variation in implementation, as was seen in this study, is in some way predicated in the sensemaking of the principals. As such, preparing for principal sensemaking can positively affect the way in which a new program is implemented.

Program Variation

In this study, the focus has been on the variation of implementation and the causes of that variation. Gaining a better understanding of the factors that can lead to variation has the potential to better understand CRPBIS implementation variation. First, it is clear from the interviews that each individual, at all levels of the school district, understand the *reason* why the program has been introduced to the schools, to reduce the amount of disciplinary action taken in the schools and to increase the awareness of the community.

What is also clear is that there was *variation* among the school buildings of the study.

What is most important within study is that the cause of the variation may be attributable to the way in which the school leaders *interpret* the impact of CRPBIS based on their own understandings of the program.

The results of this study shed light on the impact of how school leaders interpret the meaning of CRPBIS and the effect that the interpretation can have on the manner in which school leaders adopt the implementation of CRPBIS. Previous research has looked deeply into how a school principal can impact the way in which teachers learn about and implement policies (Coburn, 2001; Spillane et al., 2006), but there has been a gap in the existing literature about the role of principal sensemaking in policy implementation. In this study, the analysis of the implementation adoption variation due to principal sensemaking leads to distinct findings in how school leaders interpret, understand, and act of policy initiatives of a school district. Factors that lead to principal sensemaking, in this study, are the way the program is introduced to the principals and the interpretation of the program effect on the school. Together, these two primary factors have influenced the manner in which CRPBIS was implemented in this environment. While it is possible that other factors may influence implementation in other locations, in this instance and in this environment, the three listed factors played a role in this implementation.

Introduction to CRPBIS. A important contributor to the variation of implementation can be seen in the way that CRPBIS was introduced to the schools within the district. In its initial iteration, CRPBIS was brought to a few schools (one at the elementary and high school levels) to test the waters. The initiative was brought to the school district by the GRD and done so as a chance to intervene in schools where

discipline was a considerable concern. The efforts of the GRD caught the eye of the district administration and from there, and quite quickly, the implementation went from a small-scale approach in a few schools to a district-wide initiative. To put this into context, CRPBIS was introduced in the spring of 2015 by GRD in two schools. Later that spring, in a meeting between the leadership of GRD and BMSD, a school district (as pointed out earlier) official felt strongly enough that the program should be implemented district-wide the following school year. Knowing that there were significant challenges that faced both the district and GRD, the decision was made that the implementation of CRPBIS needed to occur and it needed to be done despite the potential lack of resources to do so. Following this decision by the leadership of the two primary entities, a meeting was held during the waning days of the 2015 academic year for all principals of the school district where CRPBIS was introduced and the timeline of implementation was announced. The implementation of CRPBIS would be part of the following school year and was to be done across all schools at one time. This decision caused confusion among principals about why CRPBIS was being implemented. With that in mind and thinking about the schools of this study, the way in which the program was introduced to the schools in this study presented an excellent view into how the introduction to a program, in this case, CRPBIS, can lead to variation in actual implementation.

A few mitigating factors identify how the introduction to CRPBIS in this particular study led to variation. Of the three schools in this study, I will focus on the experience of two schools to better understand how the introduction to a program can lead to variation in implementation. In this study, one school was introduced to the study by a specific individual from GRD with the stated goal of providing the school a program

that would help to provide immediate and a clear outcome, reduced disciplinary action. A second school learned about the implementation during a GRD presentation of CRPBIS alongside all the other schools and with the overt, umbrella district goal of reducing school discipline. The two disparate situations for the introduction of CRPBIS is an important cue into how the program was implemented and why certain schools may have different experiences in implementation. Specifically, each school had initial responses to the introduction that led to long-term differences in how the program was received and ultimately brought into the school building. In looking at the method of introduction, it is important to note that the introduction of CRPBIS and the reaction to the introduction is a critical factor in the overall implementation of the program. Each situation offers insight into how the manner of introduction causes variation in this study. This, in turn, offers insight into how implementation can be effected by how individuals receive the information about a program or protocol. Each situation will be explored to identify the individual experiences produced differentiated outcomes.

Of the two schools that will be the focus of this section, one school experienced intentional efforts to improve the climate and culture of the school through an approach that was targeted to this school and its individual concerns related to school discipline. The other school was part of the mass introduction of the program that was facilitated not by BMSD officials, according to principals interviewed, but by GRD facilitators. It is important to note that in this implementation, the GRD and BMSD worked alongside of each other in the implementation. Though the school district, BMSD, had absolute authority to make the decision to introduce CRPBIS to the schools, it was the GRD facilitators that would be engaged in much of the early implementation efforts. Despite

the fact that the facilitators from the GRD were the experts in the program and had sufficient resources to provide support during the implementation, the introduction of CRPBIS to the entirety of the school district in the spring meeting produced variation in implementation.

Program Interpretation. The implementation of CRPBIS in BMSD was an attempt by school district administrators to implement a program to address the challenges that were created by a system of discipline that disproportionately impacted students of color. The identification of the disproportionality and the subsequent decision to implement CRPBIS happened rather quickly in this district and, as such, the interpretation of why this program was needed in the schools was different for individuals at different levels of the educational system. Due to the differentiation of understanding related to the need for CRPBIS, schools produced drastically different implementations. In each of the three elementary schools, principals who were given the responsibility of implementing CRPBIS saw the need for the program in a different light.

At Monument Elementary, where an existing program that sought to address the climate and culture of the school building had been in place for a number of years, CRPBIS was an unknown. In the eyes of the principal CRPBIS was a program without a clear purpose or plan and as a result, the implementation of the explicit goals of the district was different than in other buildings. The causes of the variation were caused by the lack of purpose in the eyes of the principal, the poor introduction of the implementation plan, and the lack of respect for the existing efforts of the school.

One of the reasons why the Monument principal felt that this program was lacking in purpose was because of their history of implementing programs to address

behavior in past years. This is a school that has long worked to introduce a program that seeks to improve the environment and the behavior of the students. In contrast to the existing program, in the view of the principal, CRPBIS was being implemented in the schools without regard for their history and as a result lacked the purpose that made CRPBIS so valuable in other buildings. According to the principal, when reflecting on a meeting with district officials, “there were a lot of people, not just us, that were sitting there kinda going, okay, wait a minute. There was, it was kinda like why, there was a big piece missing which was kind of the why are we doing this thing?” As a result, the school reverted back to the program that they knew and were already implementing. The school, not in an overt act of resistance, decided that they were already doing parts of what the district was seeking to achieve and as such sought to maintain their program of choice. The principal saw CRPBIS as a new lens to view school discipline approaches, but did not see CRPBIS as necessarily different than what was already in place so the school. Monument Elementary simply augmented the existing work to fit the mold for CRPBIS presented by the district. In the eyes of the principal, “it was kinda like, okay, well, we do a lot of stuff. So, it was a little bit like, you know they were talking to us as if this was all new and it wasn’t all new.” The frustration that was caused by the perceived lack of purpose of this new program, CRPBIS, led to the lack of fidelity to the goals of the district in the implementation of CRPBIS in Monument. As a result, this school did not actively engage in the expectations set forth by the district, the lack of active engagement does not mean they were in violation of the school district’s implementation expectations, just that this school went about the implementation in a different manner than in other schools.

The implications of this variation, for this study, mean that the overt expectations for implementation were not met with complete fidelity in this school due to the interpretation of the policy goals by the school principal. The school district, at the onset of the implementation wanted the schools to have the ability to mold the program to the needs of the school, but still implementation included three specific requirements. As was mentioned earlier, there was a set of three requirements within a larger circle of expectations. At Monument Elementary, the principal chose to bypass these requirements and implement parts of CRPBIS as they fit with the existing program. By pursuing their own interests, the actions of Monument Elementary exhibit the type of variation that can lead to outcomes that are along the lines of the goals of the school, but still account for localized needs and local approaches.

At Teocalli Elementary, where the CRPBIS was implemented with the most fervor, the need for CRPBIS was clear. To address the growing incidence of disciplinary action, the principal clearly realized that the concept of suspension was not effective. At one point in the initial interview, this principal, when thinking about his perspective on student discipline prior to the implementation, stated that, “I was really big on just, unfortunately, being punitive. I just really felt that being punitive in terms of discipline was the way to keep the building safe and to run a tight ship.” However, after professional development and experience in the CRPBIS approach the same principal said that:

Putting those systems in place, it changed the entire culture for our school behaviorally and academically because now teachers can teach. I mentioned earlier, behavior sets the foundation for instruction. If behaviors aren’t in place,

no instruction's taking place. Even those kids who have the desire to learn and want to learn, they can't because the behavior is so out of control. Once we got behavior under control, we started to see gains.

For this principal, the interpretation of the need for CRPBIS was based on the need to address the behavior of the students. Over time, this principal realized that punitive discipline, such as suspension, did not provide the students with the stimulus to change their behavior. What did change their behavior was the concerted effort on behalf of this principal and faculty to better understand the students and the culture from which they came. This shift in interpretation of the problem, from kids needing discipline to behave better to kids needing understanding, transformed the implementation of this program from just another system to a transformative approach to student discipline. It was a transformation that moved the principal, and the school, from one of the highest suspending buildings in the district to one of the highest academically performing buildings. It was how the leadership of the building interpreted the goal of CRPBIS and translated that into action. Teachers and staff became more empathetic to the students and in turn, the discipline problems became less of classroom disruption and turned into an opportunity to understand the challenges that students bring into the classroom that cause the misbehavior. CRPBIS and its system of cultural awareness created the space for alternative approaches to positively influence the experiences of students in the classroom. For example, the creation of buddy rooms and screeners (adults in the building that work closely with a few students) provided the students "a place to go and have someone they can trust or they can count on to avoid an out of school suspension or detention." In this school, the interpretation and reaction to the implementation of

CRPBIS produced an outcome for students that allowed for individuals to investigate the deeper causes of the misbehavior rather than simply reacting to an action and sending the student to the principal's office. It was, in the eyes of this principal, CRPBIS "pretty much saved this school." Implementing CRPBIS provided the opportunity for this principal and faculty to change the paradigm of school discipline from a reactionary approach to student misbehavior to an approach that developed community and increased cultural awareness for school staff and for the students.

The combination of the introduction and the interpretation of CRPBIS impacted the type of implementation that occurs in the schools. In one sense, these two reactions to policy lead to the overall implementation variation over time. Program variation, even with an agreed upon and theoretically valuable program such as CRPBIS, is a product of how the school leaders understand the program and its impact. Understanding that principals, even before the action of implementation, have tremendous impact on the way in which a policy is moved from the design to the deployment stage is a critical finding of this study. As such, it is important for future policy decisions to incorporate this understanding into the design phase of a policy. Having a clear understanding of how principals, and other school leaders, act as conduits for action is one thing, but having a keen understanding of how interpretation of a program affects implementation will be critical for future policy deployments.

Recommendations

As a result of this study and the findings from the analysis, there are three recommendations for any future implementation of CRPBIS. First, an expansive inventory of existing practices within the school district should be taken prior to the

implementation of CRPBIS to investigate what individual schools are already doing to address school disciplinary issues. Second, the district implementing the program needs to have a four-year implementation plan that includes a year zero plan designed to plan the implementation strategy. Third, the school district implementing CRPBIS should make available equal funding streams to ensure that all schools have the opportunity to adopt the CRPBIS program with the resources that will promote full implementation. Together these three recommendations will provide the framework to help facilitate the implementation of CRPBIS in a way that could lead to the type of outcomes seen in the top performing schools in study. The recommendations will also help to avoid some of the challenges that have been identified through this study.

Expansive Inventory. One of the primary factors of variation within this study was the setting in which the implementation of CRPBIS occurred. In one school, an existing program was in place and precluded CRPBIS from gaining a foothold. In another school, an all-in mentality allowed CRPBIS to flourish. There is little doubt that further variation occurred in other schools within the school district as well. One way in which an organization that is implementing CRPBIS in the future can avoid similar experiences would be through an expansive inventory of existing programs that are in place throughout schools where CRPBIS is thought to be a helpful program. This would require that the district that is thinking of implementing the program work with all schools to examine and explore what is already in place throughout the organization in order to see if there are aspects of existing programs that can be included into the future implementation of CRPBIS. In doing an expansive inventory of existing programs that are in place the district will also be able to softly introduce the implementation of

CRPBIS, allay fears or concerns about the introduction of the program, and gauge the responses to a culturally responsive program in schools. This will also provide an opportunity to assess how school-building leaders will react to a new program in the school system. This assessment will also allow the district leadership a chance to view the reactions through the three lenses identified in this study (energetic, resistant, or indecisive adoption).

The expansive inventory should begin the year prior to implementation through school visits and discussions about existing programs. This could also be viewed as a needs assessment approach in some schools. One of the key components of the expansive inventory assessment is an openness of those who were visiting the schools to identify and grasp the totality of the environment within the school. By approaching the schools in a manner that is open and willing to listen, it is possible that many best practices might be included into the future implementation of CRPBIS. This will provide two specific benefits. First, the ensuing implementation will include facets of existing programming that is successful and second, will open up lines of communication between the leadership of the school district and the leadership of the school buildings. As was seen in this study, both of these benefits have the potential to enhance the implementation of CRPBIS.

Four-year Implementation Plan. One way an organization could enhance the implementation of CRPBIS would be to follow a comprehensive, four-year implementation plan. All four of the years would be critical to the implementation and include a specific set of outcomes for each year. In allowing for a prolonged

implementation to occur, there is a greater likelihood that the policy will lead to positive outcomes for the students in the classroom, both academically and socially.

Year Zero. After it has been determined that CRPBIS is a program that is to be introduced to the school system, the organization responsible for implementing CRPBIS should strive to include three specific initiatives. First, in the initial year of implementation, or year-zero, it is recommended that the school district participate in three specific activities. One, the school system should embark on a system wide inventory of existing programs (as mentioned in the previous section). This, as mentioned previously, would provide the organization implementing the landscape of existing programs and how they might be weaved into the planned implementation of CRPBIS. Two, the school system needs to begin to clearly identify and articulate the benefits of the CRPBIS program for students and schools. Through a clear and transparent approach to explicating the purpose, goals, and outcomes of CRPBIS it is possible that the implementing organization could avoid confusion and resentment over the implementation of CRPBIS. Three, the implementing organization needs to begin professional development programs for CRPBIS that align with the explicit goals of the school district. These professional development opportunities should begin at the top of the organization and filter down to the classroom level, but should be informed by the results of the local inventories that are taken during the year.

Together, these three activities in the year-zero of implementation need to work in concert with one another to ensure that when the implementation does occur, it occurs with all stakeholders in alignment to the goals of the implementation. The benefits of these three components will help to introduce CRPBIS in a way that prevents any one

school or individual from being shocked at the implementation or unclear about the goals of the CRPBIS programming.

Year One. In the first year of actual implementation there are two significant implementation goals that should be introduced and met to ensure an implementation that meets the overt goals of the policy designers. First, it would be advisable for the implementing organization to start with a small cohort of schools, representing multiple levels of the school system as a sample set to implement CRPBIS. If it is also possible, an attempt should be made to have schools voluntarily opt-in to the implementation of CRPBIS, the implementation in this first year will be better off than if the sample set of schools are forced by the district to implement CRPBIS. Opting in to the implementation will help ensure that schools that are a part of the initial phase of implementation will be schools who want to be a part of the implementation. This desire, on part of the schools that opt in, will show that the schools are willing to implement and hopefully active in learning about and finding ways to help make the implementation more successful.

The benefit of beginning the implementation with a smaller cohort of willing implementers is that it will possible to test the strategies designed during year-zero and to make adjustments as needed. With a willing group of implementers it is also possible to closely observe how the program evolves during the first year of implementation and how professional development opportunities impact the implementation of CRPBIS over the course of the first year. Second, best practices that develop in the schools that begin the implementation can be infused into the full implementation in the following year. Through collaborative reflection among participating schools, it is possible that any challenges that arise can be investigated and addressed early on in the implementation.

As much as challenges are informative to the implementation process, any successes that occur in the first year can be replicated in other schools later. A final benefit of working with a small cohort of schools is that the implementation can be a central focus for the school district.

When thinking about beginning the in-school implementation with a small group of schools, it is important to realize that this year-one group of implementers will also act as the experts moving forward and as such should be paired with similarly situated schools moving forward into the third year of implementation. Through effective management of these pairs (or larger if needed) it will be possible for newly included schools in the implementation process to benefit from the experience of other schools. This collaboration among schools can help both schools work through challenges, but will be most beneficial to newly introduced schools. In the end, the smooth transition to wider group of schools implementing CRPBIS will be aided by the teamwork atmosphere by aligning schools that have experience and those who are new to the program.

Year Two. In the third year of implementation the program should be rolled out fully to all schools in the district. In this rollout of the CRPBIS programming, schools that have previously implemented the CRPBIS program will act as the guides for newly introduced schools. During this year, all schools will be working together and operating with the same knowledge about the program that has been developed over the previous two years. During this year of adoption, principals and school district officials need to be constantly monitoring the process of implementation, looking for any challenges that have previously been observed or any new challenges that arise.

One of the most important processes that should occur during this year of full implementation is the development of dedicated time for school leaders to collaborate amongst each other to reflect on the implementation. Because the implementation of CRPBIS can be quite challenging for schools, the district needs to ensure that school leaders have the opportunity to work together to assess and improve implementation. For this to occur, as seen in BMSD, reducing the number of initiatives taking place at the same time within the district is vital. Through the reduction of other programs that take away time available, implementation of CRPBIS will be in a better position than if multiple initiatives were taking valuable time away from the efforts in the school buildings to introduce CRPBIS.

Last, during this year of full implementation, it is important that the district begin anew the comprehensive inventory of schools to assess the challenges and successes that are surfacing. From these inventories, the school district should be working closely with the schools to develop further professional development related to CRPBIS implementation. In doing so, it will be possible for the school to institutionalize the practices and procedures that allow CRPBIS to become an integral part of each school's day-to-day operations.

Year Three. In the fourth year of implementation, the schools and the school district should be at a point where the program is institutionalized and where it is not, this year provides an opportunity for the school district to monitor and aid schools that need extra care in their implementation efforts. During this year, professional development should be centered on developing further capacity of schools to increase their ability to meet the needs of the students.

Implementation Funding. One of the more important aspects that must be attended to is the allocation of funding for schools to implement CRPBIS. As was seen in this study, the school that allocated funding to the efforts of CRPBIS saw considerable benefits as a result. While the success that was identified cannot be simply because of the funding, it is important to note that the school was able to make great strides as a result of the allocation of funds. For example, the lesson learned in this study is that the one school that dedicated a full time employee to implement CRPBIS protocols did see academic and social growth for the students. There are two ways that funding can be used to support the implementation of CRPBIS. One, the implementing organization should find a way to provide each school with a full time CRPBIS facilitator, and two, the district should use funds to provide meaningful professional development for the principals, the faculty, and the support staff of the schools.

Full Time CRPBIS Facilitators. Due to the fact that CRPBIS is a time intensive implementation, when done appropriately, having a full time staff member dedicated to the development of CRPBIS related activities are critical. From planning CRPBIS events within the school building to analyzing data, a full time employee dedicated to the implementation is critical. This individual would be responsible for organizing the approaches to CRPBIS, communicating with faculty and staff members about the progress being made with students, and to ensuring that the principal is able to lead the school rather than be a disciplinarian. Another benefit of dedicating an individual to the development of CRPBIS within the schools is that the school district would have a cohort of dedicated implementers who will act as conduits of information both to the district about the implementation and from the district to the schools. Having this person in place

will be a significant cost for districts, but based upon the existing study, it is an important cost to bear when the decision to implement CRPBIS.

Professional Development. While many programs argue that supporting professional development is important to the implementation of any program, CRPBIS may be more reliant on professional development. One reason for this is that the CRPBIS program challenges many preconceived notions an individual possesses about culture and the influence of culture on an individual's actions. Due to the fact that CRPBIS forces systems to investigate the racialized nature of school discipline, CRPBIS implementation can lead to very personal conversations. Those conversations need to occur, but it is important that the conversations happen in environments that are conducive to positive action and not negative results. Another why that professional development can be important to the implementation is that it can be the framework that the district utilizes to establish a single language across the school district when implementing CRPBIS. Both of these examples of how professional development can enrich the implementation of CRPBIS.

Addressing Preconceived Beliefs. At its core, CRPBIS asks school leaders and faculty to investigate and explore the disciplinary history of the school. In some instances, as was found in this study, schools and school districts might find that the discipline history in the school can look racially biased even when members of the school ardently assert that they are not racist nor is their approach to school discipline. Because of this, it is important that professional development be designed to assuage the initial reactions of participants to data that could show a racialized pattern and work to embrace the potential of CRPBIS to develop greater awareness of the cultural background of the

students and the community. Using professional development to create opportunities for teachers and school leaders to learn about how to reimagine the school discipline protocols that seek to understand the root cause of the actions of the students and not simple act in response to singular action is an important goal for the outcomes of professional development in schools.

Continuity in Approach. One way that professional development can be a source of support in the implementation of CRPBIS is through the creation of a continuity of messaging and approach. Professional development that is designed and deployed by central district leaders has the potential to shape the approach to CRPBIS that is taken in the individual schools. As was noted in the interviews for this study, one point of action that the BMSD hoped to take in future professional development was to create pre-made presentations for principals to share with their faculty and staff. The goal of BMSD was to create the presentations at the central offices and then share the presentations at principal meetings. The principals would then take the presentations back to the schools and share the presentations with their community. In doing this, BMSD was taking an active role in developing a singular messaging pattern across all schools. In other implementations of CRPBIS, this should be a starting point for the dissemination of messaging and goals, not a realization in year three. Should an organization begin the implementation of CRPBIS using this form of professional development it will be easier to spread the central message of the program and similar approaches to developing CRPBIS programing.

While there are many approaches to professional development, the most important factor is that the professional development opportunities provide the

implementers of CRPBIS the chance to learn about the program and then implement the program as best as possible. It is very important in the implementation of CRPBIS that those who are pushed to challenge preconceived notions about the potential for a racialized nature of school discipline to exist, that there is an effective form of professional development that provides an opportunity to have difficult conversations, but more importantly find ways to develop systems within the school to move forward in a way that improves the overall environment of the school building. One of the ways this can accomplished is through the provision of adequate funding to make sure that professional development is a key component of the implementation and not an afterthought.

Conclusion. CRPBIS is a relatively new approach to school discipline and had been introduced into the BMSD as a way to address the growing number of disciplinary actions, particularly for students of color. The implementation is being implemented across the entirety of the school district and is showing early promise to reduce the number of punishments for students due to the cultural awareness that the program is developing amongst the school leaders and faculty. When the program was introduced to the school system, it was clear that the intent of the implementation was to address the growing disciplinary issue within the school system. The plan for the implementation of CRPBIS was originally going to begin in a select number of schools, supported by a local agency with expertise in CRPBIS and implementation, quickly was upgraded to a system wide implementation based on the school district's desire to implement CRPBIS in all school at one time to give this program to all schools at once. In the first few years of implementation, a few key findings have emerged. The first is that the implementation

across schools produced noticeable variation, despite the intended goal of a continuity across all schools, and that the variation is partially caused by the way in which school leaders interpreted and made sense of the goals of CRPBIS. This sensemaking that occurred at the local level is viewed through the lens as adoption. The energetic, resistant, and compliant adoption of CRPBIS in the school buildings of this study provide an important glimpse into how implementation of a program can vary as a result of school leadership. Even when the program is well understood and the goals of the program are clear, it is still possible to produce variation that impacts the overall development of culturally responsive practices at the local level.

What is important to take from this study is that school leaders, even when in agreement to the outcomes, still have considerable influence on the implementation of a new program within a school system. This individual influence is of great importance to individuals or organizations that seek to introduce any new program. Understanding this influence and how to mitigate the influence through effective communication and preparation when implementing a program of this scale. Further research should continue to investigate this finding and provide more clarity about the influence that school leaders, in particular principals, have in the overall implementation of CRPBIS.

APPENDIX

GRD participants – Round 1

Interview protocol for Investigating CRPBIS implementation:

Introduction: This interview consists of 12 questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question as we proceed. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to produce an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able.

Questions:

1. Can you briefly state your role within the Ingham ISD and how long you have served in this role?
2. Can you explain the role that you have in the planned implementation of CRPBIS?
3. Can you describe the behavioral problems that exist within the high schools as you see them?
4. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. How did you come to this understanding?
5. Can you briefly articulate why you believe it is important for the school district to introduce CRPBIS as a form of behavioral intervention in the high schools?
 - a. What factors do you believe led to the decision to implement CRPBIS?
6. Can you describe your perception of how CRPBIS, as a form of behavioral intervention, can address behavior problems in the classroom and the high schools?

7. There are some who argue that a key feature of CRPBIS is the involvement of key stakeholders in the development of protocols to address classroom misbehavior. Will you reflect on and share your perceptions on the role of Ingham ISD in the implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Will you also reflect on the role of the school district leadership in the implementation of CRPBIS?
 - b. Will you also reflect on the role that principals and other school leaders have in the implementation of CRPBIS?
8. Professional development is often looked at as a crucial step in the implementation of any new program; can you articulate how professional development opportunities provide principals and other school leaders the tools necessary to implement CRPBIS?
9. What are some of the challenges that you predict in the implementation of CRPBIS in the high schools? How can the facilitators from Ingham ISD address challenges that arise?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to add that could help to better understand the overall goals in the implementation of CRPBIS?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

GRD participants – Round 2

Interview protocol for Investigating CRPBIS implementation:

Introduction: This interview consists of 12 questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question as we proceed. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to produce an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able.

Questions:

1. Can you briefly state your role within the Ingham ISD and how long you have served in this role?
2. Can you explain the role that you have in the implementation of CRPBIS?
3. Can you describe the behavioral problems that exist within the high schools as you see them?
4. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. How did you come to this understanding?
5. Can you briefly articulate why you believe that it is important for the school district to introduce CRPBIS as a form of behavioral intervention in the high schools?
 - a. What factors led to the decision to implement CRPBIS?
6. Can you describe your perception of how CRPBIS, as a form of behavioral intervention, has affected behavior in the classroom and the high schools?
7. How have you observed CRPBIS affecting the interactions between students and school leaders within the high schools?

8. There are some who argue that a key feature of CRPBIS is the involvement of key stakeholders in the development of protocols to address classroom misbehavior. Could you reflect on and share your perceptions on the role of the school district in the implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Can you also reflect on the role that principals and other school leaders have in the implementation of CRPBIS?
9. Professional development is often looked at as a crucial step in the implementation of any new program; can you articulate how professional development opportunities have provided principals and other school leaders the tools necessary to implement CRPBIS?
 - a. How would you improve the professional development opportunities related to the implementation of CRPBIS in the future?
10. What are some of the challenges that have been experienced in the implementation of CRPBIS in the high schools? How have these challenges be addressed?
11. Can you describe the relationship with Lansing School District and the implementation of CRPBIS this year?
 - a. How have the school leaders (principals, assistant principals, and BIMS) responded to the implementation of CRPBIS?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to add that could help to better understand the overall goals in the implementation of CRPBIS?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

BMSD participants – Round 1

Interview protocol for Investigating CRPBIS implementation:

Introduction: This interview consists of 12 questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question as we proceed. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to produce an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able.

Questions:

1. Can you briefly state your role within the school district and how long you have served in this role?
2. Can you explain the role that you have in the planned implementation of CRPBIS?
3. Can you describe the behavioral problems that exist within the high schools as you see them?
4. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. How did you come to this understanding?
5. Can you briefly articulate why you believe that it is important for the school district to introduce CRPBIS as a form of behavioral intervention in the high schools?
 - a. What factors led to the decision to implement CRPBIS?
6. Can you describe your perception of how CRPBIS, as a form of behavioral intervention, can affect behavior in the classroom and the high schools?
7. How do you see CRPBIS affecting the interactions between students and school leaders within the high schools?

8. There are some who argue that a key feature of CRPBIS is the involvement of key stakeholders in the development of protocols to address classroom misbehavior. Could you reflect on and share your perceptions on the role of the school district in the implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Can you also reflect on the role that principals and other school leaders have in the implementation of CRPBIS?
9. Professional development is often looked at as a crucial step in the implementation of any new program; can you articulate how you see the professional development opportunities offering principals and other school leaders the tools necessary to implement CRPBIS?
10. What are some of the challenges you predict might be experienced in the implementation of CRPBIS in the high schools? How will these challenges be addressed?
11. Can you describe the relationship with Ingham ISD and how you see their involvement in the implementation of CRPBIS?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to add that could help to better understand the overall goals in the implementation of CRPBIS?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

BMSD participants – Round 2

Introduction: This interview consists of 12 questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question as we proceed. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to produce an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able.

Questions:

1. Can you briefly state your role within the school district and how long you have served in this role?
2. Can you explain the role that you have in the planned implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Has your changed over time or varied from your initial understanding of the role?
3. Can you describe the behavioral problems that exist within the high schools as you see them?
4. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. How did you come to this understanding?
5. Can you briefly articulate why you believe that it is important for the school district to introduce CRPBIS as a form of behavioral intervention in the high schools?
 - a. What factors led to the decision to implement CRPBIS?
6. Can you describe your perception of how CRPBIS, as a form of behavioral intervention, has affected behavior in the classroom and the high schools?
7. How have you observed CRPBIS affecting the interactions between students and school leaders within the high schools?
8. There are some who argue that a key feature of CRPBIS is the involvement of key stakeholders in the development of protocols to address classroom

misbehavior. Could you reflect on and share your perceptions on the role of the school district in the implementation of CRPBIS?

- a. Can you also reflect on the role that principals and other school leaders have in the implementation of CRPBIS?

9. Professional development is often looked at as a crucial step in the implementation of any new program; can you articulate how professional development opportunities have provided principals and other school leaders the tools necessary to implement CRPBIS?

- a. How would you improve the professional development opportunities that are offered for principals and other school leaders in the future?

10. What are some of the challenges have been experienced in the implementation of CRPBIS in the high schools? How have these challenges be addressed?

11. Can you describe how the partnership with Ingham ISD has affected the implementation of CRPBIS this year?

12. Is there anything else that you would like to add that could help to better understand the overall goals in the implementation of CRPBIS?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

BMSD participants – Round 3

Interview protocol for Investigating CRPBIS implementation:

Introduction: This interview consists of six questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question as we proceed. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to produce an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able.

Questions:

1. Can you briefly state your role and how long you have served in this role?
2. Can you explain the role that you have had in the implementation of CRPBIS?
3. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. Do you think that this has changed over time?
4. Can you share your perceptions on the role of the school district in the implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Can you share your perceptions on the role of the about the ISD?
 - b. Can you share your perceptions on the role of the individual schools?
5. How has CRPBIS been implemented in your school?
 - a. What specific components of CRPBIS have been implemented?
6. What factors led to the decision to implement CRPBIS?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRPBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

School Building Leadership participants – Round 1

Interview protocol for Investigating CRPBIS implementation:

Introduction:

This interview consists of 10 questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to record an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able to.

Questions:

1. Can you state your role within the school and how long you have served in this role?
2. What is your role in the planned implementation of CRPBIS?
3. Can you describe the behavioral problems that exist within the school as you see them?
4. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. How did you come to this understanding?
5. How do believe that CRPBIS can alter the existing behavioral intervention protocols within the school and classrooms?
6. Some suggest that a key feature of CRPBIS is the involvement of various stakeholders in the development of protocols to address classroom misbehavior. Could you reflect on and share your perceptions on the role that the school district will have in providing the supports for the implementation of CRPBIS?
7. How do you believe the students will respond to the implementation of CRPBIS?

8. How do you see CRPBIS affecting the interactions between school leaders (principals, assistant principals, and BIMS) and the students within the school?
9. What challenges do you think will be experienced in the implementation of CRPBIS?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to add that could help to better understand your understanding about the CRPBIS program?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

School Building Leadership participants – Round 2

Interview protocol for Investigating CRPBIS implementation:

Introduction:

This interview consists of 13 questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to record an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able to.

Questions:

1. Can you state your role within the school and how long you have served in this role?
2. What is your role in the current implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Has this changed since we last met? In what way?
3. Would you describe the behavioral problems that exist within the school as you see them?
4. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. How did you come to this understanding?
 - b. What has led to this understanding?
5. Have you participated in professional development opportunities related to the implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Did the district provide any of these professional development opportunities? If not, who?
 - b. How have these opportunities helped you to implement CRPBIS?
6. Some would argue that a key feature of CRPBIS is the involvement of various stakeholders in the development of protocols to address classroom misbehavior. Could you reflect on and share your perceptions on the role that the school district has played in providing the supports for the implementation of CRPBIS?

7. How have the facilitators from the Ingham ISD assisted in the implementation of CRPBIS? What tools or supports have they provided to you?
8. How do believe CRPBIS has addressed the existing behavioral problems within the school and classrooms?
9. How have the teachers have responded to the implementation of CRPBIS in your opinion?
 - a. How have the students responded to the implementation of CRPBIS?
10. How do you see CRPBIS affecting the interactions between teachers and the students within the school?
 - a. How have the interactions between school leaders and students been affected by the implementation of CRPBIS?
11. What challenges have been experienced in the implementation of CRPBIS thus far and how have these challenges been addressed?
12. Based on your experiences this year, would you change anything about the way in which the implementation of CRPBIS? How? Why?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to add that could help to better understand your understanding about the CRPBIS program?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

School Building Leadership participants – Round 3

Interview protocol for Investigating CRPBIS implementation:

Introduction: This interview consists of six questions. You may choose to answer or decline to answer any question as we proceed. This interview should last roughly one hour. I will be recording this interview so that the interview can be transcribed to produce an accurate record of your responses.

In an effort to understand the implementation of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CRPBIS), I have a few questions that will help me better understand your perceptions and your role in implementing CRPBIS. Please answer the questions that follow as best you are able.

Questions:

1. Can you briefly state your role and how long you have served in this role?
2. Can you explain the role that you have had in the implementation of CRPBIS?
3. Can you describe your current understanding of CRPBIS?
 - a. Do you think that this has changed over time?
4. Can you share your perceptions on the role of the school district in the implementation of CRPBIS?
 - a. Can you share your perceptions on the role of the about the ISD?
 - b. Can you share your perceptions on the role of the individual schools?
5. How has CRPBIS been implemented in your school?
 - a. What specific components of CRPBIS have been implemented?
6. What factors led to the decision to implement CRPBIS?

Thank you for your participation and time in this interview. The information you have contributed will be useful in continued study of CRPBIS implementation programs and their impact schools and communities. Thank you.

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