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TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTRICT STUDENT CONDUCT PROCEDURES

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B.A., Transylvania University, 2014

M.Ed., University of Louisville, 2018

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
College of Education and Human Development of the  
University of Louisville  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Organizational

Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organizational Development  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, Kentucky

August 2023

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By

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A Dissertation Approved on

August 1, 2023

by the following Dissertation Committee:

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Dr. Doug Stevens

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family who has always supported me in my educational pursuits. I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, who made it possible for me to be where I am today through their support, motivation, and dedication to my future. They have unconditionally loved me and have helped shape me into the person I am today. They sacrificed so much for my education and future and I am forever thankful for them

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband who has supported me personally, professionally, and educationally. With his support, I was able to have a good balance between being a partner, a mother, a professional, a student, and a writer. He has been my biggest motivator and I would not have been able to finish this dissertation without his love and support. He also sacrificed much for my education and professional pursuits and I am forever thankful for him.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my child, Theo, and to any future children that I may have. I hope that you see the work that I have put into my education, personal life, and profession and are proud. I have worked hard not only for myself, but also for you. I want you to have endless opportunities and to have a future full of happiness and success.

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To Dr. Kyle Ingle, thank you for your feedback and support throughout this entire process, this dissertation would not be where it is without your expertise.

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To Dr. Doug Stevens, thank you for your dedication to being an educator, your classes were my favorite and I learned so much from you.

To all the educators that I have learned from, thank you for shaping me into the educator and student that I am today. I have learned how to be a better educator who supports students' needs and aspirations. A special thank you to all the educators who took time out of their life to take my survey and participated in the interview. To the members of my cohort, thank you for your constant support and encouragement.

To my family, thank you for the sacrifices you have made that have enabled me to be where I am today.

## ABSTRACT

### TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTRICT STUDENT MISCONDUCT PROCEDURES

Amy Ghibaudy

August 1, 2023

While there is a body of research about student conduct policies and procedures, there is a lack of research about how different role groups work together to implement these procedures and have a positive working interpersonal relationship. This sequential mixed methods case study design takes place in a large urban school district. In this study, I investigate the perceptions that educators have on the implementation of student conduct procedures in their school. I also explore how their perceptions of each other shape their interpersonal relationships. I used Normalization Process Theory (NPT) as my guiding theoretical framework.

This study drew upon data collected from document analysis, an electronic survey, and a semi-structured interview. The district's administrative documents and data provided background information on demographics as well as a basic understanding of district and school procedures in managing student conduct. The electronic survey provided a basic understanding of what participants perceived as contributing to interpersonal relationships positively or negatively. The semi-structured interview provided more detail on this interpersonal relationship and the perceptions that participants had in relation to implementing procedures regarding managing student conduct.



The findings showed that the teachers and administrators that participated in the study understood their role and responsibilities in managing student conduct. Administrators perceived teachers as managing student conduct daily in their classrooms in various ways, utilizing some sort of behavior management plan that incorporated building relationships with students. Based on the results of the study, teachers perceived administrators as supportive of them in managing student conduct, ensuring that teachers and students were abiding by the school and district procedures. It was also important that administrators build relationships with students. The participants' perceptions of their own roles and responsibilities aligned with what the district outlined in their handbook for managing student conduct.

It was more difficult to answer the research questions that pertained to the participants' perceptions about their counterparts' roles and responsibilities in managing student conduct due to limitations of the study. However, analysis revealed that it was difficult for participants to understand their counterparts' role fully due to lack of communication between the role groups. Participants perceived the misalignment in communication between teachers and administrators as having a negative impact on the interpersonal relationship between the two. This miscommunication also led to the participant perceptions of the management of student conduct as ineffective, inconsistently, or untimely.

*Keywords:* Normalization Process Theory (NPT), student conduct, interpersonal relationship

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture is a key element of school success. One major factor of organizational culture and school success is school improvement efforts. School improvement efforts are more likely to continue with schools that have a strong positive culture where teachers collaboratively work together with collegiality, trust, and shared responsibility (Lee & Louis, 2019). Positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators are positively associated with a number of school outcomes, including teacher attendance (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Raftar-Ozery, 2018), teacher retention (Player et al., 2017), and student learning (Mann et al., 2021). Developing a positive working environment for all staff in turn helps to develop a positive learning environment for students. Both the working and learning environment for students and staff influence a school's culture. Therefore, it is important to understand what influences school culture so that schools can continue to improve and grow for both students and staff. One factor that may influence the working environment for both teachers and administrators is the school's management of student conduct.

The large urban school district, Taylor Waterson<sup>1</sup>, which served as the context for this study, publishes a handbook every year to support student behaviors and to comply with a state mandate that every student has access to a safe school environment that promotes learning for all students. All schools and school districts in the State must have

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<sup>1</sup> I used a pseudonym in order to protect the identity of the cooperating school district.

plans and procedures in place to support students with academic failure or disruptive behaviors. State and local resources support the implementation of safety and discipline policies within the schools. Taylor Waterson intends all stakeholders to utilize its handbook for defining appropriate behaviors, identifying consequences of inappropriate behavior, and ensuring that educators administer discipline equitably, timely, and fairly. Administrators and teachers should work together to implement this handbook and ensure that student conduct is appropriate for the learning and working environments for all.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was for me to explore the interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers and their perceptions of each other in the implementation of the student conduct policies in their school. My aim in this study was not to change policy or procedures regarding student conduct. Rather, I sought to gain a better understanding of how these interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers shaped the implementation of district policies and to make recommendations for change if needed. Investigating the perceptions of the implementation of procedures regarding student conduct may lead to more positive interpersonal relationships between administrators, teachers, and students.

The research questions for this study were the following:

RQ 1: How do teachers and administrators perceive their own role in the implementation of the district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 2: How do teachers perceive the roles and responsibilities of administrators in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 3: How do administrators perceive the roles and responsibilities of teachers in

the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

### **Significance of the Study**

Positive interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers are vital for the culture of a school (Meyer et al., 2022). School culture is how people identify with the organization, respond to the environment, and develop patterns about how they work toward shared goals (Austin & Roegman, 2021; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Gruenert, 2000). School culture is shared values, rules, and behaviors that influence teaching and learning approaches (Cakiroglu et al., 2012). It is important to have a good culture in a building in order to foster a positive learning environment for all students. Not only does a positive school culture influence student learning and engagement; it also is associated with teacher satisfaction with their working environment (Player et al., 2017).

One factor that influences the culture of a school and the working environment for teachers and administrators is student conduct. Since disruptive behaviors impede student learning, it is important to support teachers in the implementation of effective management of student behaviors (Speight et al., 2021). Many schools implement school-wide behavioral supports to promote positive school culture and reduce student discipline. It is important that these interventions are proactive and focus on early interventions to reduce challenging behaviors (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Reno et al., 2017). It is incumbent upon both teachers and administrators to work together and be proactive in preventing disruptive behaviors as well as maintain a positive school culture.

Ensuring policies and procedures are implemented effectively is integral to facilitating student conduct. Effective implementation entails a collective agreement amongst all stakeholders about the purpose of the procedure and the responsibilities that



each person plays into the implementation (Banner et al., 2012; Hübner et al., 2021).

When there is not a collective agreement about the roles or responsibilities, then there can be conflict between the stakeholders. Misalignments between stakeholders not only influences the interpersonal relationship but also affects the efficacy of the policy (Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018).

Past research has highlighted the importance of perceptions and the interpersonal relationships between teachers and principals. Anderson et al. (2019) demonstrated the importance of understanding the repercussions of when teachers and administrators' perceptions do not align. Their mixed methods study surveyed 1,274 teachers and 474 administrators across 56 districts in Michigan. From those respondents, researchers used interviews with 128 teachers and 48 administrators to expand upon the results of the survey. Anderson et al. found that administrators perceived that the teacher evaluation process increased teacher well-being significantly more than teachers did. While both teachers and administrators believed that the lack of time was the primary barrier to effective evaluation, teachers perceived the evaluation process as increasing stress, fomenting unhealthy competition, and that administrators evaluated inconsistently. Anderson et al. highlights the importance of understanding both teachers and administrators' perception as well as when there is misalignment. Anderson et al. also highlighted the importance of teachers' perceptions in the consistency of implementation. Many teachers in the study stated that they perceived their principals had biases and favoritism with certain teachers. This misalignment in perception, especially in the consistency of implementation, influenced teacher well-being and the effectiveness of the evaluation process. In my current study, I plan to expand upon previous research by

focusing on teacher and administrator perceptions of the implementation of their district's misconduct procedures in order to explore how consistent or divergent their perceptions are.

Liu et al. (2021) conducted another study that highlighted the importance of the working interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators. Liu et al. drew upon data collected by the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), a survey distributed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2013. The purpose of the TALIS is to compare educational leadership, school culture, and educator attitudes across Countries. Liu et al. collected data from 32 countries within about 6,000 schools and over 100,000 participants. They concluded that distributed leadership and instructional leadership are positively associated with teacher job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Their findings support principals building a collaborative and supportive culture for educators.

Liu et al. highlights the importance of leaders' demonstrating specific behavior to support the culture and working environment for all. The gap in the research is identifying the behaviors that teachers need in order to support the culture and working environment for all. A collaborative supportive culture entails all stakeholders working together to ensure that their individual and collective responsibilities are effective. I sought to expand upon previous research by including both teachers and administrators and how they work together effectively in my study.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

I utilized Normalization Process Theory (NPT) as the guiding theoretical framework. Developed between 2000 and 2009 to help in the healthcare field, NPT is a

theory of action that can inform the exploration of implementing and integrating a new treatment or intervention and ways of organizing care in healthcare settings (May et al., 2009). It expanded as a sociological theory utilized in other institutional settings to help normalize practices in real world settings.

McEvoy et al. (2014) found that “NPT’s distinctive feature is the attention to all stakeholders’ involvement in implementation processes, the work that they have to do individually and collectively” (p. 3). This was applicable to my study because of the role that teachers and administrators individually and collectively play in the implementation of district procedures. While there are other stakeholders involved in the discipline process, this research study focused on the two role groups due to their primary responsibilities in implementing district policies in schools and classrooms (McIntosh et al., 2018).

My current study took into consideration both the intended actions as well as the actual actions that each participant has in the implementation process. May et al. (2018) makes it clear that “NPT is a theory of implementation that focuses on what people - both individuals and groups - do rather than what they believe or intend” (p. 2). This is an important distinction and I aimed at uncovering whether or not the intended actions match the actual actions of each role group in the current study.

NPT theoretical constructs have four core components; Coherence, Cognitive Participation, Collective Action, and Reflexive Monitoring (May et al., 2018; May et al., 2009; McEvoy et al., 2014; McNaughton et al., 2020). Coherence is the process of sense making and understanding that individuals and organizations have to go through in order to promote the routine embedding of a practice. Coherence is the planning phase and

includes four discrete working processes—differentiation, communal specification, individual specification, and internalization (McNaughton et al., 2020).

The differentiation process of the coherence phase clarifies how a set of practices are unique and different from one another. The internalization process signifies when people understand the value of the set of practices. Communal specification determines how people will work together to build a shared understanding whereas the individual specification determines the individual tasks and responsibilities that a person has. All four of these processes worked together interchangeably during the planning phase of my investigation.

Cognitive participation is also a part of the planning phase of NPT that highlights the importance of relational work between people. In order to implement it effectively, stakeholders must build a shared agreement and engagement around a new practice. The four working mechanisms of cognitive participation are initiation, legitimation, enrollment, and activation. Initiation ensures that people have the necessary skills needed for the work; legitimation ensures that people believe in their ability to contribute; enrollment ensures that the right people are in the right places; activation defines the actions needed to sustain the practices and people in the right places. All four of these mechanisms work together during the cognitive participation phase of NPT.

NPT's collective action is considered the doing phase of enacting a new practice. The collective action phase also has four working mechanisms that guide the doing phase. Interactional workability is the phase in which the work is being done. Relational integration is the knowledge that people do to build accountability and confidence in the set of practices and with each other. The skill set workability mechanism is the allocation

of work and tasks to the individual people. The contextual integration is the allocation of resources and the execution of procedures. All four of these mechanisms work together during the collective action phase of NPT.

The reflexive monitoring construct of NPT involves the monitoring and evaluating the work and outcomes. Reflexive monitoring should occur both individually and collectively. The four mechanisms are systematization, communal and individual appraisal, and reconfiguration. Systematization is the mechanism where all stakeholders gather collective feedback. Communal appraisal is the collective evaluation of the set of practices whereas individual appraisal is the individual evaluation. Reconfiguration is the attempt to redefine procedures and modify practices. These four mechanisms of the reflexive monitoring phase of NPT work together to monitor the work.

Within the current research topic that I investigated, I used all constructs of NPT during the data collection and analysis portion. The coherence construct helped guide and analyze the individual's role in implementing the district's procedures. The cognitive participation construct helped expand upon these individual findings to analyze the collective implementation to ensure both teachers and administrators were effectively working together. The collective action phase helped me to understand how teachers and administrators work together and helped determine any needed next steps. The reflexive monitoring phase determined the sustainability of any changes that the research uncovers.

### **Overview of Methods**

I utilized a sequential mixed methods case study design in the current investigation. Fetters (2020) explains that a sequential mixed method is useful because a researcher can modify the model based on the findings to broaden the study and to

provide results that are more comprehensive. Yin (2018) explains that “case studies are preferred when the relevant behaviors still cannot be manipulated and when the desire is to study some contemporary event or set of events” (p. 12). Utilizing a sequential mixed methods case study allowed me to collect sufficient data that helped to evaluate the perceptions that administrators and teachers have in implementing the district procedures regarding student conduct in the current school district.

I included an electronic survey in the first phase that collected quantitative and qualitative data and I collected qualitative data via virtual one-on-one interviews in the second phase. The electronic survey included demographic questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions that sought to gauge respondent perceptions. After responding to each question, an open-ended question asked participants to provide any additional information that would be helpful to the investigation.

I analyzed the quantitative data using the latest version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The second phase of the mixed methods approach consisted of virtual individual one-on-one interviews with survey respondents who indicated their willingness to participate. The qualitative analysis consisted of deductive coding (drawing upon NPT) and inductive coding, in which codes and themes emerged from the analyzed data, eventually identifying themes across the different stakeholder groups.

### **Definitions of Terms**

I use the following terms in the context of this study:

**Activation:** Part of the Cognitive Participation Mechanism; it consists of identifying the actions needed to sustain the new practice (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Assistant Principal:** The Assistant Principal is a school-based administrator responsible

for the operations of a local school, assisting the principal with supervision, management, evaluation, administration and planning for instructional programs, extracurricular activities, school personnel and school plant operation. The assistant principal serves in the place of the principal when he or she is absent.

**Cognitive Participation:** The working out participation construct is a planning phase concerned with identifying and unpacking the work that people do when trying to think through and organize themselves and other people to undertake a new practice. Includes Initiation, Legitimation, Enrollment, and Activation. (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Coherence:** The planning phase that identifies what people actually do when trying to understand a new practice. It includes Differentiation, Communal Specification, Individual Specification, and Internalization (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Collective Action:** This is the phase concerned with identifying what people actually do when enacting the practice. It includes Interactional Workability, Relational Integration, Skill Set Workability, Contextual Integration (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Communal Appraisal:** Part of the Reflexive Monitoring mechanism, this is the work that is done with others to evaluate the practice (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Communal Specification:** Part of the Coherence mechanism, this is the work people do together to interpret the new practices to come to a collective understanding (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Contextual Integration:** Part of the Collective Action mechanism, this is the allocation of resources to execute the practice (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Counselor:** Assumes responsibility for the implementation of the District's guidance program at the building level. Counselors provide systematic and on-going individual and

group counseling services related to the academic, vocational, social and personal development of students. Secondary school counselors provide information, consultation, appraisal, testing, and referral services designed to achieve appropriate program selection, placement and career planning for students. Major component responsibilities include orientation, academic planning, and class scheduling for individual students, maintenance of all student records, and the implementation of federal, state, and local educational mandates.

**Differentiation:** Part of the Coherence mechanism, this is how people understand the new practice to be unique or different from others (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Enrollment:** Part of the Cognitive Participation Mechanism, this is the work people do to organize themselves and other people so that they can collectively contribute to the work (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Handbook/code of conduct:** This document represents the primary contractual system for responding to student misbehavior (Camacho & Krezmein, 2020).

**Individual Appraisal:** Part of the Reflexive Monitoring mechanism, this is the work that is done individually to evaluate the practice (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Individual Specification:** Part of the Coherence mechanism, this is the work people do individually to interpret the new practice (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Initiation:** Part of the Cognitive Participation Mechanism, this is how people identify that they have the right skills to drive the new practice forward (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Interactional Workability:** Part of the Collective Action mechanism, this is the physical action taken to perform the task (McNaughton et al., 2020).



**Internalization:** Part of the Coherence mechanism, this is the work people do to come to a conclusion about the practice and determine whether to engage in the practice or not (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Legitimation:** Part of the Cognitive Participation Mechanism, this is the work people do to come to an understanding that a new practice is valid and that they can make a valid contribution to the practice (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Principals:** Assumes responsibility for planning, implementing, supervising, and maintaining the educational program and is directly or indirectly responsible for attainment of the District's state educational goals. The size of the school, the characteristics of the students, the activity program mandated by student needs, and community expectations, which frequently contribute to extended duty hours, determine the scope.

**Reconfiguration:** Part of the Reflexive Monitoring mechanism, this is the process that people go through to take the information and feedback and make the changes needed (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Relational Integration:** Part of the Collective Action mechanism, this is the knowledge that people have to build accountability and maintain confidence in the set of practices and with each other (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**School based Administrator:** Principals, Assistant Principals, and Counselors

**Skill Set Workability:** Part of the Collective Action mechanism, this is the work that is undertaken to make sure that the tasks are divided appropriately according to people's skill, knowledge, and expertise (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Student misconduct:** Student behavior that leads to disciplinary action if violated: (1)

disorderly conduct; (2) insubordinate conduct; (3) disruptive conduct; (4) violent or threatening conduct; (5) conduct that endangers the safety, health, morals, or welfare of others; (6) misconduct on transit to and from school; (7) academic misconduct; (8) instigating or encouraging another person to violate code of conduct (Winton, 2011).

**Systematization:** Part of the Reflexive Monitoring mechanism, this is the collecting of information and feedback about how performing the task worked (McNaughton et al., 2020).

**Teacher:** Plans, organizes and delivers the program of instruction based on approved curriculum; monitors, evaluates, and communicates student progress; maintains records and makes reports; enforces Board policies, regulations, and rules; supervises students, and secures and maintains school property and materials.

**The Reflexive Monitoring:** The appraisal phase concerned with the formal and informal processes that are involved in monitoring and evaluating the work. It includes Systematization, Communal Appraisal, Individual Appraisal, and Reconfiguration. (McNaughton et al., 2020).

### **Organization of the Study**

I organized this study as follows: In Chapter 1, I included the introduction of the topic, purpose of the study, definitions, and the research questions. In Chapter 2, I provided a comprehensive review of relevant literature. In Chapter 3, I provided a description of the research design and method used in this study. Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study. Chapter 5 summarized the study's major findings and offered implications for policy, practice, and future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I sought to answer the following research questions in this study:

RQ 1: How do teachers and administrators perceive their own role in the implementation of the district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 2: How do teachers perceive the roles and responsibilities of administrators in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 3: How do administrators perceive the roles and responsibilities of teachers in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

Reviewing the literature establishes one's familiarity with and the understanding of current research in a particular field of study in order to determine what research exists and what remains unknown. To that end, I structured this chapter as follows. First, I reviewed school conduct and its importance in schools. Second, I reviewed research on school discipline reforms. Third, I researched the implementation of district policies and interventions. Fourth, I reviewed the research studies that utilized Normalization Process Theory. Finally, I finish with a summary of the literature review.

### **School Conduct - Why it Matters**

School conduct and discipline practices are important to the educational process because they affect student and staff outcomes (Collier at al., 2019). The purpose of school conduct policies are to keep schools safe and prevent student misbehavior from occurring or recurring. Policies regarding student discipline should be supportive and

proactive rather than punitive (Philippe et. al., 2017). School conduct policies vary across states, districts, and even across schools within a district (Green et al., 2021; Winton 2011). Before examining why student conduct policies are important, it is first important to examine what they are and how they vary.

Winton (2011) examined the code of conduct policies in Buffalo, New York and Toronto, Ontario. Both codes of conduct provide general expectations for student behavior and consequences for not meeting the behavior expectations. These codes of conduct policies list specific behaviors that will result in progressive disciplinary action, some resulting in suspension. The code of conduct also requires that mitigating circumstances be considered when determining the consequences for not following the expectations outlined in the code of conduct. Such circumstances were; the student's prior disciplinary record; the effectiveness of other forms of discipline; information from parents, teachers and/or others; and other extenuating circumstances. Based on the examination of these two codes of conduct, Winton concluded that while the individual districts do have some control over discipline policies, it is hard to alter from State regulations that include exclusionary practices.

Camacho and Krezmien (2020) conducted a study that highlighted the importance of discipline practices and how these affect student conduct. Camacho and Krezmien found that school discipline codes of conduct had more negative consequences than positive consequences in their handbooks. They expected more handbooks to implement approaches to discipline that focused more on skill building and skill teaching with students. Camacho and Krezmien found that districts with more positive consequences in

their handbook had lower levels of suspension rates compared to districts with handbooks with more negative consequences or districts with no clear discipline procedure.

Green et al. (2021) utilized the Checklist for Analyzing Discipline Policies and Procedures for Equity (CADPPE) to examine the extent that current policies reflect evidence-based practices to encourage appropriate behaviors and prevent undesired ones. Green et al. determined that many policies have moved away from positive and proactive approaches to more reactive and punitive practices. Green et al. suggest that school districts must constantly review policies and review the implementation in order to have positive, preventive, and equitable evidenced-based practices for all students. To review and reform policy, Green et al. recommends evaluating current policies using tools such as the CADPEE; create and review discipline policies with key stakeholders. Green et al. recommends the inclusion of tiered methods that promote proactive practices and include direct teaching of appropriate behaviors. These appropriate behaviors include eliminating the use of exclusionary discipline for nonviolent behaviors, including clear definitions of expected behaviors and differences between major and minor misconduct, and providing comprehensive processes specific to the student population. In addition to reviewing the policies, Green et al. suggest focusing on the implementation of these policies. This requires the establishment of proactive relationships and communication systems with stakeholders, procedures for continual review of data and the ongoing evaluations, a system of ongoing training and professional development, and an awareness of vulnerable decision points, such as contextual events or implicit bias.

All school conduct policies are important for schools to operate safely and linked to student social emotional wellbeing (Anyon et al., 2018) and future behavior instances

(Todd et al., 2008). Anyon et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of building relationships and treating disciplinary practices as opportunities to support students' healthy social emotional development. Anyon et al. indicates the importance of being visible to students and building supportive and genuine relationships in order to reduce problem behaviors, decrease the racial discipline gap, and create a positive school culture. By knowing and understanding the lives of the students, adults were able to respond to behavior by tailoring interventions and targeting the root cause of the problem rather than responding to the misbehavior. Anyon et al. conclude that discipline practices are opportunities to support students' social emotional wellbeing rather than as punishment.

Tiered discipline practices and student conduct policies intend to reduce and prevent future misbehaviors (Todd et al., 2008). While research has linked more proactive and tiered approaches to a decrease in future behavior instances, suspension practices have shown not to deter future behavior problems (Mowen et al., 2020). Mowen et al. suggested that school discipline practices that involve removing the student from the school environment serve as a negative and harmful turning point in the lives of adolescents. Students who were suspended had an increased chance of future suspensions. Mowen et al. also suggested that students who felt a stronger bond to their school were associated with lower levels of misconduct. The results from Mowen et al. are important to consider because it demonstrates that suspension practices do not deter future misconduct. Mowen et al. also highlight the importance of discipline practices being a tiered-system and involving a commitment to building relationships.

Not only are student conduct policies linked to student outcomes. The link is to staff outcomes also (Collier et al., 2019), such as teacher satisfaction and teacher retention (Kapa & Gimbert, 2018; Toropova et al., 2021). Administrators and teachers solve problems and build trust through social interactions (Lesinger et al., 2018). These social interactions foster trust and loyalty between teachers and administrators. Student behaviors and the management of student conduct plays an important part in this relationship and staff satisfaction. Azevedo et al. (2021) found that school culture plays an important role in how school personnel perceive disruptive behaviors at school. Azevedo et al. also revealed that school personnel who reported a better perception of school culture tended to report less disruptive behaviors. Azevedo et al. demonstrated the importance of student conduct and school personnel's response to student misconduct.

While student conduct policies seek to have a positive impact on student and adult outcomes, there is also evidence that suggests policy and its implementation can lead to negative student and staff outcomes (Collier et al., 2019). Some negative examples that Collier et al. suggested are confusion between student and staff about implementation, perceptions and realities of unfairness, and misalignment in communication between administrators and staff. Many of these negative outcomes are associated with exclusionary policies that remove students from school rather than tiered discipline policies that focus on proactive prevention and relationship building (Maeng et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2020).

Historically, zero tolerance policies came into effect in the 1990s intended to decrease weapons in schools (Kupchik & Catlaw, 2015). An unintended consequence of zero tolerance policies were universal suspensions for minor misconduct without regard

to circumstances. Another unintended consequence was that minority students receive disciplinary consequences disproportionately when compared to other student subpopulations (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Due to these unintended negative outcomes, school discipline practices have moved away from exclusionary discipline practices to more tiered proactive approaches such as positive behavior interventions and supports (Hinze-Pifer & Sartain, 2018).

Research reveals consistent trends of racial disparities in disciplinary outcomes (Barnes & Motz, 2018; Jones et al., 2020; Novak, 2022; Ritter & Anderson 2018; Wegmann & Smith, 2019; Welsh & Little, 2018). Wegmann and Smith (2019) demonstrates that discipline practices are not equitable for all students. Wegmann and Smith found evidence of racial and ethnic disparities in exclusionary (suspensions and referrals that removed students from the classroom) and non-exclusionary discipline practices (verbal warning to the student and contact with the parent/guardian). Wegmann and Smith found that black students received fewer warnings from their teacher for behavior infractions such as tardiness, arguing, or classroom misbehavior compared to their white counterparts. As a result, educators disciplined black students more frequently and gave them fewer opportunities to correct their behaviors before receiving more severe consequences.

The next section expands on student conduct by reviewing the research that is associated with student discipline reforms. It is important to understand why student conduct matters to practitioners and researchers so that future studies can make improvements and expand on prior research. By reviewing the literature on student conduct, I can expand upon or extend knowledge through my research. Having



established the importance of conduct policies in schools and identified trends of racial, gender, and income disproportionality in their administration, I now reviewed the research on district- and school-wide approaches to mitigate disproportionality and identified factors that support the equitable and efficient implementation of student conduct policies in schools.

### **Research on School Discipline Reforms**

The main way schools combat student discipline is through student handbook policies and codes of conduct (Curran & Finch, 2021). In addition to student handbooks and codes of conduct establishing what student behaviors are encouraged, what behaviors are discouraged, and the disciplinary actions that result, two school-wide and district-wide interventions emerged to mitigate trends of disproportionality. These are Restorative Justice and School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). Each of these approaches entail a comprehensive implementation approach inclusive of all school stakeholders.

In evaluating the research on the most common approaches to student conduct, it is important to examine implementation and effectiveness. The first of these, Restorative Justice, aims to create a positive school climate by emphasizing mutual respect, empathy, personal responsibility and relationship building. Restorative Justice emerged in the criminal justice system to repair the harm caused by an offense and prevent further offenses from occurring (Karp & Frank, 2016). Educators first implemented restorative practices in schools in

Australia in the early 1990s and has recently expanded to be utilized in several States in the U.S (Payne & Welch, 2018). The goal of Restorative Justice is reconciliation rather than student exclusion.

Howard Zehr and Elizabeth Elliot are two important luminaries in the development and research of Restorative Justice (Nelund, 2012; Zehr, 2004). Indeed, Zehr became the “Grandfather of Restorative Justice (Payne & Welch, 2018, p. 3). Each school can adopt their own method for implementing restorative justice practices for there is not a single procedure. Steps for implementation include creating a restorative practice team to analyze the current school culture towards disciplines and to create sustainable concrete practices for school wide practices. Such concrete practices focus on creating systems for conflict resolution for use by both staff and students (Farr et al., 2020).

Restorative justice practices include restorative conversations, circles, conferences, and peer mediation (Katic et al., 2020). Restorative conversations involve a conversation between an adult and a student directly following an incident. Restorative circles can serve as a means of community building in a classroom to help build connections among students and open possibilities for collaboration and mutual understanding. Restorative conferences can involve multiple stakeholders and is a process that includes identifying the problem and impact, addressing what needs to be done to make things right, and asking everyone to contribute towards a solution. Restorative peer mediation may help resolve conflict between two or more students.

There are some similarities and some differences between school discipline policies such as codes of conduct and restorative justice practice. The two discipline

practices are similar in the sense that school leaders are pivotal in the decision-making and implementation of the procedures. Both involve continual training and ensuring staff buy into the practices as well as are competent in the implementation (Martinez et al., 2022). A key difference in restorative justice practices and school conduct policies is that the offender and the offended are much more involved in the restorative justice practice. Restorative justice practices also focus on resolving the conflict in which the situation occurred rather than removing students from the context (Mansfield et al., 2018). Research suggests that Restorative Justice reduces problem misbehaviors, increases students' social and problem solving skills, and aims for racial equity (Davidson et al., 2022; Katic et al., 2020; Seo & Kruis, 2022).

Research links Restorative Justice Practices to many positive outcomes; decline in suspension rates, reductions in student behavior incidents, and improved perceptions of school culture (Gregory et al., 2018; Hashim et al., 2018; Stewart & Ezell, 2022). While these are positive student outcomes, there have been barriers to schools implementing Restorative Justice effectively. Stewart and Ezell (2022) interviewed staff members who felt successful implementation of restorative justice occurs when supported by a complete restorative culture. Reasons for staff not fully implementing Restorative Justice include limited resources, administrative policy inconsistencies, ongoing prevalence of racial biases, and the perception that Restorative Justice is an inadequate alternative to exclusionary discipline.

In order to combat some of these barriers to implementing Restorative Justice, Huguley et al. (2022) proposed a more comprehensive framework. Their framework focuses on the socio-emotional well-being of students, accounts for and supports mental

health challenges, includes considerations of structural racism in training and program elements, and adequately staff schools with Restorative Justice experts. Restorative Justice is a school wide approach that aims to improve school safety and reduce misbehaviors (Martinez et al., 2022). Restorative Justice can be an effective school wide approach to student discipline with enhanced staff capacity and adequate resources. Leadership capacity and decision making power is also another important element to effective implementation of Restorative Justice (Lustick, 2021).

Research has demonstrated beneficial outcomes of using Restorative Justice techniques rather than traditional punitive approaches, in response to student misbehavior (González et al., 2019; Reimer, 2020; Song et al., 2020). Research on Restorative Justice Practices in schools have focused on what school conditions make implementing Restorative Justice practices effective (Gilzene, 2021; Mansfield et al., 2018; Parker & Bickmore, 2020; Payne & Welch, 2018;) and what effects does Restorative Justice practices have on students and on discipline practices (Kervick et al., 2020; Schiff, 2018; Wang & Lee, 2019). Ingraham et al. (2016) conducted a single-case study design and qualitative method to research Restorative Justice practices in an elementary school with a high population of English Language Learners (ELL). Ingraham et al. found an 85% reduction in behavioral referrals from year 1 to year 3 of implementing Restorative Justice Practices, parent concerns about their student's graduation decreased from 67% to 47%, and empowerment and engagement of parents and students increased. Acosta et al. (2019) builds upon these results by conducting a randomized controlled trial of the Restorative Practices Intervention in 14 middle schools throughout Maine. Acosta et al. found that school wide implementation was difficult to achieve but teachers who

consistently used Restorative Justice Practices had students who reported more positive outcomes (higher school connectedness, better school climate, more positive peer relationships and developmental outcomes) and less victimization from physical and cyber bullying.

Weaver and Swank (2020) conducted qualitative case study design to explore the use of Restorative Justice Practices as a discipline practice in a middle school. Weaver and Swank discovered teachers who implemented Restorative Justice practices in their classrooms supported equitable environments that promote relationship building. Weaver and Swank also highlighted the importance of knowledge sharing, practice, and support as a crucial element in implementing Restorative Justice Practices in schools. Restorative Justice Practices requires training that helps staff members to shift their discipline practices and be open to an alternative approach.

Lodi et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of 34 studies that examined schools that used Restorative Justice Practices in 7 different countries; 6 randomized controlled trials, 1 follow-up survey, 1 correlational study, 1 interrupted time series analysis, 2 non-experimental design studies, 1 quasi-experimental pre-post test design study, 17 qualitative single- case studies, 1 literature review and qualitative research study, 2 mixed methods study, 2 quantitative studies. From this review, Lodi et al. concluded that Restorative Justice Practices were effective in both school wide implementation and not in school wide implementation. Lodi et al. also concluded that restorative interventions brought positive results in terms of ability to manage behavioral problems and school discipline, school culture, conflict management, and relationship

building. Schools that implemented a school wide approach to Restorative practices had less student misconduct and decreases in suspension rates.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) has emerged as one of the most popular evidence-based frameworks to improve culture, to improve student behavior, and to promote a safe environment for learning (Okilwa & Robert, 2017). PBIS is a multi-tiered framework for behavior support that is under the umbrella framework of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS is a framework that helps educators provide academic and behavioral strategies for students with various needs. It is a comprehensive system of differentiated supports that include evidenced-based practices, matches to student needs, universal screening, progress monitoring, formative assessments, and the use of data (Pierce & Mueller, 2018). MTSS is the umbrella framework for both PBIS for behavior support and Response to Intervention (RTI) for academic support.

PBIS is a school-wide framework that has tiers of prevention and intervention. First introduced in US schools as a response to the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the 1990s, PBIS is now present in every US state (Keller-Bell & Short, 2019). The goal of PBIS is establishing a school culture in which students accept and support appropriate behavior from each other. When PBIS is implemented with fidelity; students are provided opportunities for teaching and perceive school as socially predictable, consistent, safe, and positive (Horner et al., 2009).

PBIS is not a curriculum but is a multiyear framework for establishing district and school capacity for adopting a set of organizational systems and specific practices that make up effective and preventive behavioral interventions (Horner et al., 2014). The

PBIS framework is a research based practice that includes three tiers. Schools provide universal support for all students at tier one of PBIS. Meeting tier one occurs through school wide behavior expectations, teaching school routines and expectations, and developing a school wide recognition system for positive behavior. At tier two of PBIS, educators identify and target students within a small group setting. Meeting tier three of PBIS occurs by identifying students with the most intense behaviors (Lee & Gage, 2020).

The core features of the tiers includes staff commitment to a proactive approach to school discipline, identification of a small set of positively behavioral expectations, teaching of these behavioral expectations across all school settings, a system for acknowledging or rewarding students who follow these behavioral expectations, specification of a range of consequences for problem behavior, and use of data for decision making (Mercer et al., 2017). The use of data and making data informed decisions is essential in implementing PBIS effectively to improve academic and behavioral outcomes for all students (Malloy et al., 2018). Data should be used at all three tiers of PBIS.

PBIS is a preventive measure that has been associated with decrease in student discipline referrals and exclusionary practices (Gage et al., 2018). Implementing PBIS with fidelity has been associated with reducing problem behaviors for all students, especially minority students (Lee et al., 2021; Swain-Bradway et al., 2019). To implement PBIS with fidelity, schools must collaborate in order to establish school-wide expectations and rules for appropriate behavior. This includes direct and active teaching of the expectations and rules, acknowledging students who engage in appropriate school conduct, providing consequences for violation of rules, using data to guide decision-

making, and having administrative support at the school- and district-levels. School leaders and staff must implement PBIS with fidelity so that it is sustainable and achieves the desired outcomes, reducing the occurrence of problem behavior, enhancing academic outcomes of students, creating a positive school climate, and improving the schools' organization (Chitiyo & May, 2018).

It is important that PBIS implementation occurs with fidelity and that all stakeholders are involved in the training and implementation. Lloyd et al. (2022) used focus groups to see how middle school students' perceived PBIS in their school. Student responses focused more on the what, like how to earn rewards, rather than on the why, reasons why their school adopted PBIS. Many of the student responses also indicated that schools adopted the recommended practices inconsistently and students exposed to different aspects of critical components of the PBIS framework. Students wished that their voices were more a part of the process and had many suggestions to improve the implementation of PBIS. For example, students suggested creating more mentoring programs, student committees, allowing students to reward their peers, and more relationship building opportunities. This is just one example of how not including all stakeholders in the decision-making process as well as the implementation of PBIS can lead to missed opportunities and ineffective practices.

Research studies on PBIS sought to understand the implementation processes (Eiraldi et al., 2019; Gagnon et al., 2020; Palmer & Noltemeyer, 2019) and to understand the associated outcomes (Baule, 2020; Payno-Simmons, 2021; Ryoo et al., 2018). Lee and Gage (2020) conducted a systematic review of 20 peer-reviewed studies and 12 dissertations that included 8,700 schools that implemented PBIS. Based on the meta-



analytic results from Lee and Gage, they found that School wide PBIS had a statistically significant and meaningful effect on behavior, academics, and organizational health.

Estrapala et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of 16 research studies that examined the implementation of tier one PBIS in high schools and the associated academic and behavioral outcomes. Of the 16 research studies, only three were quasi-experimental and the rest were descriptive or longitudinal case studies. Estrapala et al. concluded that PBIS implementation takes time and that both teachers and students need ongoing support from training and administration. Six studies reported about academic outcomes; indicating that schools with higher levels of fidelity in implementing PBIS also had higher levels of academic achievement scores. All studies reported a reduction in office discipline referrals for schools that implemented PBIS.

One important element in implementing all of these policies and procedures is school leadership (Mavrogordato & White, 2020). School leaders shape the implementation of policies within a building and ensure access to equitable educational opportunities. School leaders are not able to do this in solitude but more so have to take into account the institutional and social elements that influence policy implementation. It is important for a leader to understand a policy or procedures so that they can accommodate for flexibility in implementation at the local level. School leaders play a pivotal role in deciding how educators manage discipline is and what school wide policies to utilize.

The current study did not aim to investigate school wide approaches such as Restorative Practices or PBIS. However, it is impossible to understand how teachers and administrators implement procedures for student conduct without understanding the

dynamics of these practices in a school setting. The current study acknowledged school wide efforts to support student conduct but focused on district procedures for both teachers and administrators. The next section outlines the research conducted on professional development.

### **Research on Professional Development**

It is important to examine the professional development that each role group receives in relation to managing student conduct. Both teachers and administrators, especially novice ones, should be trained properly to address student conduct (Hirsch et al., 2019). Professional development and training is an important element for teachers and administrators to build capacity and be effective in their role (Sharma & Pandher, 2018). Song et al. (2018) believe that effective professional development has three characteristics: content-focused learning, active learning, and collaborative learning. Loughland and Nguyen (2020) add that effective professional learning has explicit theory of action, an integration of theory and practice, positive teacher self-efficacy, and a collaborative culture.

Imants and van der Wal (2020) conducted a review of 36 quantitative and qualitative articles to examine effective professional development. From their analysis, they determined that there were five essential characteristics for integrating professional development and school reform from a teacher agency perspective. These included the active role of individuals, a dynamic relationship between the individuals, multiple levels in the work context, the outcomes of the professional development and school reform as a continuing cycle, and the inclusion of the context with the professional development and

school reform. In conclusion, professional development needs to be a dynamic ongoing process that involves collective efficacy.

When examining the implementation of school wide efforts to support teachers and administrators in managing student conduct, professional development plays an important role. Bradshaw et al. (2020) conducted a randomized controlled trial of multi-tiered systems of support to improve classroom management. Bradshaw et al. indicated that it is essential that schools provide ongoing training and coaching based on data-based decisions. They also emphasized the importance of building the infrastructure and systems needed to implement multi-tiered systems of support for behavior.

Scaletta and Hughes (2021) expanded upon this notion of continual professional development for PBIS. They indicated that PBIS is more effective at schools offering continual professional development targeted on the needs of the staff. These targeted professional development must have staff buy-in, data informed decision-making, and consistent practices for all stakeholders. In addition, these professional development opportunities must incorporate teacher self-reflection as well as a collective assessment to measure the status of individual and collective efficacy.

It is pivotal that teachers and administrators receive professional development that incorporates best practices. Effective professional development does not just help teachers and administrators manage student behavior, but it also helps the effectiveness of the implementation of student conduct procedures. Schools must be mindful of barriers to providing effective professional development. Some of these barriers include lack of time and lack of resources and support (Nese et al., 2020). It is important that leaders are

mindful of these barriers and take steps to prevent them. The next steps outline the research conducted on the implementation of district policies and interventions.

### **Research on the Implementation of District Policies and Interventions**

While my study focused on policies regarding student conduct, numerous studies have highlighted the importance of effective policy and program implementation. Malloy et al. (2015) investigated the implementation of a comprehensive, school wide, positive action plan that utilized Self-Esteem Enhancement Theory and social learning theories. This comprehensive plan entailed classroom curriculum and supplementary program material and activities to reinforce classroom lessons. In addition, there was a 4-hour long training for staff at the beginning of the school year and a coordinator assigned to the schools to provide ongoing consultation and support. Malloy et al. determined that teachers who perceived their school's culture to be more innovative were more likely to deliver a greater number of lessons. Malloy et al. highlighted the importance of not only establishing a comprehensive plan but also to take into account the perceptions that staff have about the culture of a school and how staff members engage with each other.

Orosco and Klingner (2010) utilized a social constructivist framework to investigate the effectiveness of a Response to Intervention Model (RTI). This framework focused on three conceptual assumptions; validated research-based practices, English language learner pedagogical knowledge, and sociocultural theory. Orosco and Klingner indicated that misalignment in assessment and instruction, a negative school culture, inadequate teacher preparation, and limited resources all result in an RTI model not meeting the needs of the students. The main detriment of the implementation was that teachers were learning to implement the RTI model at the same time as teaching English

language learner students. Orosco and Klingner noted the importance of both staff and the organization to practice several factors to make the RTI model successful. These include attitudes, beliefs, assessment and instructional methods, professional development opportunities, curriculum, and resources.

Honig (2009) conducted a multiyear, qualitative, comparative case study of two small autonomous schools initiatives in two districts, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) in California. Based on the results of the study, Honig concluded that it was important that central office personnel participated in the implementation process by being involved in activities that were consistent with “bridging” and “buffering”. “Bridging” included policy and practice development, capacity building, and communication of requirements. “Buffering” included providing school-level assistance and absorbing potential and actual scrutiny for the schools. Implementation work entails all stakeholders actively participating in the process and therefore district level leaders must take an active role.

A policy or intervention is only as effective as the implementation of it. It is important that all staff members in an organization have a positive attitude towards school culture and the implementation (Sebastian et al., 2019). Effective implementation results from alignment between implementation and assessment and holding everyone accountable (Kittelman et al., 2022). It is also important that leaders provide professional development opportunities centered on the implementation of the policy or intervention (Guerra et al., 2019). In addition to professional development, leaders must also provide adequate and continual resources and support (Fernandes et al., 2019; Hager et al., 2016).

A policy or intervention needs to be comprehensive in the implementation plan and in the execution. In my study, in order to evaluate the implementation of district policy on student conduct, I will utilize Normalization Process Theory (NPT). May and colleagues developed NPT as a middle range theory to understand problems and guide the development of intervention for practical use (McNaughton et al., 2020). NPT encourages researchers to think through issues regarding the way in which practices take action through social organizations (implementation), the process of practices becoming routine (embedding), and the process of sustaining the practice (integration). The next section will go into more detail about how NPT's application in research and practice.

### **Normalization Process Theory: Its Application in Research**

Normalization process theory (NPT) is a theoretical framework in research studies that investigate implementation processes. The vast majority of these studies have utilized a qualitative research method design or mixed methods (May et al., 2018). Historically, most of the studies that have used NPT as a theoretical framework have been in the healthcare setting (Bode et al., 2022; Burau et al., 2018; Sutton et al., 2018) and health education (Frigge et al., 2019; Gask et al., 2019). Here I review the research studies that have utilized it in studying the implementation of interventions in a variety of organizational contexts, but providing greater detail for those undertaken in P-12 educational contexts.

McEvoy et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative systematic review of studies that used NPT in research about implementation processes. Based on the results of the investigation, researchers were able to give meaning to each construct similarly. There

was a clear emphasis on understanding and conceptualization of intervention for Coherence. There was a clear emphasis on individual and collective legitimation and buy-in for Cognitive Participation. The emphasis for Collective Action was on organizational resources, training and division of labor, confidence and expertise of the intervention. The emphasis for Reflexive Monitoring was on appraising and monitoring the implementation work. McEvoy et al. noted that researchers have applied NPT across a variety of disciplines.

Since McEvoy et al, studies using NPT have increased significantly (May et al., 2018). There are now a large number of protocols for the use of NPT. NPT plays more of an important role in empirical studies and reviews. There are also NPT studies completed by groups of people who are independent of the theory's architect. May et al. (2018) conducted a review of 108 studies that utilized NPT as the theoretical framework. From this review, May et al. justified the use of NPT as a theoretical framework for several reasons. NPT was useful in supporting the intervention design, describing the context of the trial, and supporting the interpretation of the results. May et al. also noted that NPT enabled researchers to explain implementation and outcomes through the mechanisms of NPT.

Educational researchers have noted its potential also. Fullan and Quinn (2016) created the Coherence Framework, aligning it to NPT. The Coherence Framework consists of four main components: focusing direction, cultivating collaborative cultures, deepening learning, and securing accountability. All four of these components work together in coherence to create a shared understanding about the purpose and the nature of the work. These components are the drivers for whole system change that is

sustainable for all stakeholders in education. In his discussion of barriers that constrain sustainable organizational change in schools and universities, Wood (2017) introduces Normalization Process Theory as a potential theoretical framework for use in educational research. Wood states:

The overarching potential of this theory for use in educational contexts stems from its ability to uncover and work with the complexities of practice change...The use of NPT allows for a coherent approach whilst working with emergent experiences and practices. It also stresses the need for the normalization processes to be driven by those involved, with leaders being part of the evolving dialogue, facilitating change and helping provide resources where needed and within fiscal constraints. (p. 37)

Utilizing NPT, McGeechan et al. (2019) undertook an exploration of school-based staff members' experiences in the implementation of an alcohol screening and intervention in English high schools. McGeechan et al. interviewed 12 learning mentors (LMs) responsible for delivering the control and intervention conditions to young people, and 12 teachers whose classrooms were host to the LMs and the alcohol screening and intervention. McGeechan et al. found that participants understood their roles in implementing one-to-one interventions for alcohol use, and saw potential benefits to students. McGeechan et al. found the participants' commitment to implementing the intervention, training, and student engagement as evidence of collective actions and cognitive participation. Teachers perceived LMs as ideal deliverers of the intervention due to their unique relationship with young people in the schools. LMs provided evidence



that they clearly understood the differences between their instructional roles and the intervention they implemented.

While perceived as straightforward, the alcohol screening and intervention implementation was complicated in some school settings by a lack of capacity in some schools, as evidenced by disproportionalities in appointments and the need for more LMs in these schools. McGeechan et al.'s study serves as an example of how NPT applies to interventions and initiatives implemented in an educational setting.

### **Literature Review Summary**

Research supports the importance of school culture and the interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers. In addition, the literature also highlights the importance of professional development for both of these role groups in addressing student discipline. The gap in the literature lies in the interaction between teachers and administrators in implementing student conduct policies. It remains unclear whether professional development supports the effective working interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators in addressing student conduct. More research needs to be done to investigate how key stakeholders in schools, specifically teachers and administrators, perceive the actions and interpersonal relationships between each other when implementing district student conduct policies in their schools.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this study, four research questions guided the investigation:

RQ 1: How do teachers and administrators perceive their own role in the

implementation of the district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 2: How do teachers perceive the roles and responsibilities of administrators in

the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 3: How do administrators perceive the roles and responsibilities of teachers in

the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to describe the research methodology for the sequential mixed methods design. I also justify in Chapter 3 the selection for the research questions posed. After detailing the research method and design, I discuss the context of the study, data sources, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis. In addition, I also discuss the process by which I explored my researcher positionality as well as the strategies for ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

### **Research Methods and Design – Sequential Mixed Methods**

I used a sequential mixed methods case study research design to answer the aforementioned research questions. Case studies answer “how” or “why” questions about a contemporary set of events or when a researcher has little or no control (Yin, 2018). Yin categorizes case studies as either holistic or embedded and as either single-case or

multiple-case design (See Figure 2). In the context of this study, I utilized an embedded multiple-case design. My study gathered information from multiple teachers and administrators (embedded units of analysis) at various schools (multiple cases).

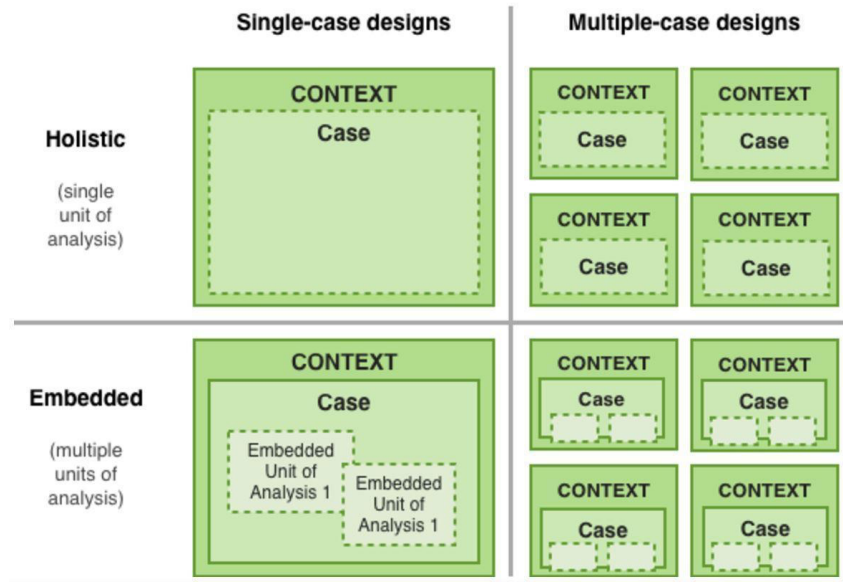


Figure 1. Yin's (2018) Typology of Case Study Designs

I integrated both quantitative and qualitative data collection during the first phase and used qualitative data collection in the second phase. The data analysis during the first phase guided and informed the data collection during the second phase to ensure the qualitative data built on the first phase (Ivankova et al., 2006). In the first phase, I included an electronic survey that collected demographic information as well as responses to multiple-choice questions (See Appendix C). Multiple-choice questions provided a quick method to collect and analyze the data into themed concepts.

These multiple-choice questions produced quantitative data that was easy for me to group into similarities and differences based on themes. In addition to the questions that produce quantitative data, I asked participants to provide additional information through open-ended electronic survey items. I coded and grouped this additional

information based on themes utilizing the latest version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). I analyzed and reflected upon the data from the electronic survey prior to the second phase of the investigation. Based on the results of the survey, I utilized the most important and common themes in the second phase of the investigation.

The electronic survey closed with an item asking the respondent if they would be willing to participate in an individual interview. If so, the survey asked them to provide their name and email for further communication. I conducted a virtual semi-structured one-on-one interview with the willing participants in the second phase of the mixed methods approach. I collected qualitative data in the virtual one-on-one interview by asking participants questions in regards to the research topic (See Appendix D).

Both phases were essential in understanding fully how administrators and teachers perceived their role in the implementation of district procedures. By using a sequential mixed methods research design, I was able to collect a comprehensive amount of data in order to analyze. Both quantitative and qualitative data provided different information that was helpful for understanding the research topic, but also in finding potential solutions. Having a broader array of information and interpreting the data adds more credibility and robustness to the research topic (Ryu, 2020). My rationale behind the investigation was to better the interpersonal relationship between administrators and teachers and a sequential mixed method research design was the best way to fully investigate the topic.

Creamer (2018) makes an important distinction between using a mixed methods approach and a mixed-up method. She says that many research designs fail to integrate the quantitative and qualitative phases in a meaningful way. In order to avoid having a

mixed-up methods, Creamer makes three recommendations: engaging in qualitative and quantitative strands at multiple points in the research process, identifying and exploring both dissonance and incongruence between the sources of data, and reading a variety of methodological literatures to diversify the viewpoints of the researcher. As an insider action researcher using mixed methods, these are the approaches used in the current investigation.

### **Strengths and Limitations of Sequential Mixed Methods**

Regardless of research design, there are always strengths and limitations. In regards to sequential mixed methods designs, one strength is that it provides a second opportunity for participants to expand upon their survey responses and provides for a more comprehensive understanding. Providing stakeholders with the option to answer electronically will increase the likelihood of participants responding to the survey. Increasing participation is useful for the study because it provides multiple perspectives from various stakeholders about the research topic. Another benefit of utilizing an electronic format is that it provides ease and convenience for stakeholders to participate in the investigation in a timely manner. In addition to the electronic survey, the interview allowed the participants to have a conversation with me in a small confidential setting.

The use of convenient sampling is a limitation for the study. With convenient sampling, the research relies on data yielded from a non-probability sampling technique; specifically, responses submitted by only willing study participants. In such instances, there is the potential for biases, specifically, sampling bias, selection bias, and positivity bias. Sampling bias could occur because some teachers or administrators are systematically more likely to participate in the investigation. Selection bias occurs when

people volunteer for a study and the participants in the study may be different from the non-participants. Positivity bias can stem from a tendency for people to report a positive view of reality rather than the truth.

These biases may limit the generalizability of the findings because they are a threat to external validity. To limit sampling bias, I followed up multiple times in order to provide multiple opportunities for teachers and administrators to participate in the study. I also provided ample time for teachers and administrators to respond to the electronic survey and kept both the electronic survey and the one-on-one interview short enough to increase participation. To help limit selection bias, I ensured to include as many teachers and administrators as possible to get a variety of participants in the study. To help limit positivity bias, I ensured that participants knew that their responses were anonymous and were not evaluative of their or their counterpart's job performance.

This investigation included teachers and administrators that work at multiple schools, which I cannot identify. This is a limitation because I was only able to conduct descriptive statistical analysis due to the small sample size and imbalances between teacher numbers and administrator numbers. This lends my study to only being generalizable to the respondents, a single context, and a single period.

I conducted descriptive analysis of respondent demographics and compared them with the demographics of the teachers and administrators within the district setting. This revealed whether there was adequate (or inadequate) representation across demographic subpopulations. It also provided a means of calculating a response rate, represented by a simple percentage of how many potential respondents there are and how many convenience responses I received in comparison. Participants might have only responded

to the survey if invested in the research topic. It is imperative that I sought as many stakeholders to participate in the electronic survey and virtual interview to limit biased responses.

Another limitation is the potential for biases that the participants may have in regards to their counterparts' role. When investigating interpersonal relationships, there are multitudes of factors that influence the working dynamic other than the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct. In order to try to limit these biases skewing the results of the study, it is important that the participants understood the research questions and the aim of the investigation. I was transparent about the focus of the study and clear in the directions in order to help limit the biased answers from participants.

### **Context of the Study**

I conducted this investigation at Taylor Waterson Public School district. Taylor Waterson Public School is the largest district in the State. The district consists of 22 high schools, 27 middle schools, and 90 elementary schools. The state has a total of 171 school districts and 1,477 schools. About 66% of the students in Taylor Waterson Public School District are economically disadvantaged.

Taylor Waterson Public School District had 84% of the student population with a behavior event, 8% of the student population had an out of school suspension, and 6% had an in school removal for a behavior event during the 2021-22 school year. Of the total behavior events, 65% of the events were black female or male students. There were about 69,500 total behavior events during the 2021-22 school year. About 32,300 of these

events were resolved through disciplinary resolutions outlined in the district handbook. About 66 of these events had to be resolved through legal sanctions (ex: arrests, charges pressed, school resource officer was involved, or a court-designated worker was involved). In total, 51 of these legal sanctions involved black students. Table 1 displays the student demographics for the district.

*Table 1. Student Demographics of Taylor Waterson Public School System, AY 2021-2022*

Student Demographics	N	%
Total number of Students	102,200	100
Total Female	50,000	49%
Total Male	52,200	51%
White	40,000	39%
Black	37,400	37%
Hispanic/Latinx	14,200	14%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4,950	5%
Other	5,650	5%
Economically Disadvantaged	67,400	66%
Students With Disabilities	13,800	13.5%
English Learner	14,800	14.5%
Foster Care	1,300	1.3%
Gifted and Talented	13,800	13.5%
Homeless	3,500	3.5%



Taylor Waterson Public School District employs 6,200 full time teachers with a 16 to 1 student to teacher ratio. The district classifies Principals, Assistant Principals, and Counselors as administrators. There is not any available data specifically about administrators. The average years of experience for teachers is about 12 years. About 4% of teachers have less than 1 year of experience and 18% of teachers have between 1 to 3 years of experience. There was a 17% teacher turnover rate in the 2021-22 school year. In regards to the teacher working conditions, 53% of the teachers find school climate favorable, 54% of teachers perceive student behavior management favorably, and 58% are in favor of their school leadership team (i.e., administrators). Table 2 displays the teacher demographics for the district. The majority of the teachers in this district are female and are white.

*Table 2. Teacher Demographics of Taylor Waterson Public School District, AY 2021-2022*

Demographics	N	%
Total	6,200	100%
Female	4,600	74%
Male	1,600	26%
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	.1%
Asian	80	1.4%
Black	770	12%
Hispanic or Latino	135	2.4%
Two or more races	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5	.1%
White	5,200	84%
Associate's Degree	20	.3%
Bachelor's Degree	1,040	16.5%
Master's Degree	2,900	47.2%
Rank 1*	2,000	32.2%
Specialist Degree	170	2.7%
Doctorate	70	1.1%
National Board Certified	530	8.5%
Emergency/Provisional Credentials	280	4.5%

\*Those holding regular certificates and who have a master's degree in a subject field approved by the Education Professional Standards Board or equivalent continuing education and who have earned thirty semester hours of approved graduate work or equivalent continuing education or those teachers who have met the requirements for Rank II and earned initial or additional National Board Certification

### **Data Sources**

I utilized three sources of data in this study. I drew upon electronic survey responses, individual interviews with teachers and administrators, and school and district

administrative data and documents (e.g., district handbook). I collected participants' responses via an electronic survey. The electronic survey collected both quantitative and qualitative data regarding demographic information as well responses in relation to the research questions. It was important to get demographic information about the participants because it presented a clearer picture of how positionality can affect responses to the research questions. The demographic information included how long the participant has been in their role and at their current location.

The electronic survey included two open-ended questions asking participants what negatively and positively contributed to the interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators. The survey also included four multiple-choice questions. There was one open-ended question at the end for participants to provide any clarification or additional information they felt was important to the research topic. It closed with a question asking respondents if they would be willing to participate in a one-on-one interview. If so, the survey provided a field so that they can enter their name and email.

In addition to the electronic survey, I also collected and analyzed the data from one-on-one interviews with willing participants. My virtual one-on-one interview provided qualitative data and was more specific towards the roles that the participants had. The interviews were important in providing a more in depth understanding as well as providing an opportunity for participants to engage in a dialogue with me. This dialogue was very important to triangulate the data from the electronic survey. Both sets of data were important in answering the research questions.

I collected background and demographic data utilizing the district's open datasets that are available on an online data portal. The district has a division that is devoted to

improving systems, research efforts, and accountability measures. This division publishes annual reports on all grade levels that include demographic, academic, behavior, and climate survey results. In addition to these data sources, the district handbook provided clarification for policies and procedures that Taylor Waterson and the schools in the district have to implement. I used this information to understand the context of the study for both the district and the school level. It was important to understand the contextual factors that correlate to the investigation in order to understand the impact that the research topic has on the environment and stakeholders fully.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

I collected secondary data from Taylor Waterson's online databases to gather information about the district. In addition, Taylor Waterson's student handbook served as documentation of the policy and procedures on student conduct. This data collection provided clarity for both student and teacher background and demographic information for Taylor Waterson Public School District.

The electronic survey I used automatically collected the data in real time. The electronic survey was anonymous<sup>2</sup> and therefore I was not able to track and monitor participation. Once administered, I sent a reminder 10 days afterwards to all possible respondents that reminded them that they had 10 days to complete the survey. Once the deadline for submitting responses passed, I began analysis. I collected and stored all data electronically for ease of analysis and ensuring confidentiality.

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<sup>2</sup> The exceptions to this will be individuals who indicate on the survey that they are willing to participate in a one-on-one interview. Agreeing to do so will require them to provide their name and email.

In addition to utilizing an electronic format for the first phase of the investigation, I collected data electronically during the individual interview. I video- and audio-recorded the virtual interviews to ensure accurate capture of the qualitative data. In addition, the electronic format automatically transcribed and saved the audio and written responses. In addition, I took informal notes during the conversation to highlight ideas and reminders for me to look back on during the analysis. All data collection occurred through convenient sampling procedures. Participants, whether in the online survey only or in the individual interviews, were provided informed consent information prior to completing the electronic survey and/or the interview.

### **Ethical Considerations**

When conducting this investigation, I was mindful of ethical considerations for the participants. It was important that I took into consideration that the participants in the study were responding about the behavior and interactions that they had with their coworkers. Each stakeholder responded to questions about their counterpart's role and the effects of these roles on the working interpersonal relationship between the two groups. With this in mind, it was imperative that participants felt that their responses, whether collected through survey responses or from individual interviews, were confidential and would be respected, protected and valued. To ensure confidentiality, I provided a preamble at the beginning of the online survey that was distributed to all teachers and administrators that participated in this study (See Appendix C). It provided basic information about the study, any potential risks, what will be done with the data they provide, and who will have access to it.

I provided a statement at the beginning of the instrument that provided participants information about participating in the investigation. The statement read as such:

By completing this survey, you agree to take part in this research study. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study, you may stop taking part at any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify.

Furthermore, I provided a means of contacting the principal investigators and the university if they have any concerns.

For those individuals who volunteered to participate in the one-on-one interview, I contacted them via the email that they provided. I scheduled the interviews at a time that was convenient to both myself as the researcher and the participant. I provided an informed consent (see Appendix A) in advance of the interview. Participants signed and submitted before the interview took place. I reminded participants throughout the investigation that their identity and responses would continue to remain confidential.

In addition to understanding the working interpersonal relationship of others in the investigation, it was also important that I understood my role as an insider action researcher. At the beginning and throughout the investigation, it was important that the participants understood my role as a practitioner and as a researcher. It was important that I was transparent about my role as an administrator but also about my role and intentions as a researcher. This ethical consideration was imperative to ensure that I was not creating biases with my participants' responses.

With understanding my role as an insider action researcher and administrator, the values that I kept in mind throughout the entire research process were critical thinking/self-reflection, self-awareness, open mindedness, being a change agent, and leadership. Critical thinking and self-reflection were important to the research process because it provided clarity to the power dynamics that I have in relation to the participants as well as the power dynamics between the participants. Self-awareness towards my own position, biases, and opinions was also important to prevent unnecessary and unexplored biases. Being open minded helped eliminate biases as well as provided the opportunity for all stakeholders' opinions to be valued equally. Being a change agent was the driving force as to why this research topic was important and needs further investigation.

These five values were organized and reviewed in the structured ethical reflection (see Appendix E) throughout the research process. These five values were not only important to me as a researcher but also as a practitioner. All five of these values align with me personally and professionally as an educator. These helped to ensure ethical research that protected the participants' voice and confidentiality.

In addition to ensuring the confidentiality of participants, it was also important to keep in mind that the investigation has an effect on the learning environment of students. Although students were not directly involved in the investigation, the working environment and culture of the building shapes their learning environment. To ensure that participants were aware of their impact on students, I asked questions in an unbiased manner and I ensured that participants understood the gravity of their responses.

## Data Analysis

Utilizing a sequential mixed methods case study lends itself to having a mixed methods analysis of the data. I conducted data analysis concurrently with data collection to ensure that the interview questions filled in any missing details that the electronic survey was not able to collect. I utilized deductive and inductive coding approaches for the qualitative data analysis. I utilized NPT to conduct deductive coding. The predetermined set of codes that I used in the current study are Coherence, Cognitive Participation, Collective Action, and Reflexive Monitoring (See Table 3)

*Table 3. Deductive Coding - NPT*

Deductive Coding - NPT	Code
Coherence	Differentiation
	Communal Specification
	Individual Specification
	Internalization
Cognitive Participation	Initiation
	Enrollment
	Legitimation
	Activation
Collective Action	Interactions between sub-groups
	Accountability
	Confidence
	Skills
	Resources
Reflexive Monitoring	Policies & Procedures
	Formal Evaluation
	Informal Evaluation



I also used two cycles of coding in the qualitative analysis—in vivo coding for the first cycle and then axial coding for the second cycle. In vivo coding directly applies the words of the participants verbatim so that the research can examine possible categories prior to starting the second cycle of coding. The second cycle of coding was axial coding where categories developed in order to sort and reduce the number of codes generated from the first cycle of coding.

I utilized the most current version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the quantitative data. SPSS computed descriptive mathematical computations for the data collected from the multiple-choice questions. Visual representations demonstrated trends in the quantitative data.

### **Process for Exploring Researcher Positionality**

My ontological assumption was that the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators were important to investigate and that the implementation of district procedures greatly affects such relationships. Student conduct affects student learning as well as the working environment for teachers. I based my ontological assumption, in part, on my own experiences as a teacher and administrator. In addition to my own experiences, I based my ontological assumption on the interactions with my peers in both of the role groups as a teacher and administrator.

My epistemological assumption was that we could better the working interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators by understanding the role that each plays in the implementation of district procedures. Throughout the research process, it was important that I understood my role as a researcher as well as a participant in the stakeholders under investigation. I reflected upon my own role and the biases at

multiple points in the research process. Reflection enabled the investigation to yield potentially transferrable findings.

In reflecting upon my own role as a practitioner and researcher, I have and will continue to consider my position of power as an administrator, race as a white person, and gender as a female. In order to be consciously aware of my position as a researcher, I implemented strategies throughout the research process to be true to my intentions. Milner (2007) suggests that researchers “should be actively engaged, thoughtful, and forthright regarding tensions that surface when conducting research where issues of race and culture are concerned” (p.388). It was important that I engaged in open conversations with stakeholders, especially with topics of race and culture.

In addition to engaging with the stakeholders, it was important that I also engaged in being an active learner concerning race and critical race theory. Being an active learner means valuing the opinions and viewpoints of all stakeholders. Milner (2007) emphasizes this when he says that researchers need to “honor the voice and perspectives of [stakeholders] regardless of what the [stakeholder] produce” (p. 6) and that “counter narratives are needed to interrupt and disrupt voices of the dominant group” (p. 10). This statement stresses the importance of valuing all stakeholders and ensuring that my biases did not skew the impact of the research.

Milner (2007) provides a useful methodological framework by which a researcher may examine his or her own positionality. Milner’s framework consists of four components—researching the self, researching the self in relation to others, engaging in reflection, and shifting from self to system. Researching the self requires researchers to examine their own racial and cultural experiences and perspectives critically.

Researching the self in relation to others demands that researchers explore their own racial and cultural experiences and perspectives with those of others, specifically those that serve as the informants and context for their research. Reflection requires that the researcher think critically about how the diversity of life experiences may inform how various actors interpret a variety of situations. Finally, shifting from self to system demands that the researcher examine his or her own personal perspectives within the larger societal contexts. In so doing, the researcher seeks to avoid pitfalls that may adversely affect the findings of a study and how these findings may shape actions. I used this framework to explore my researcher positionality (See Appendix F).

### **Strategies for Ensuring Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability**

It was important that I ensure credibility and that there is internal validity in the research process. In order to ensure credibility, I conducted member checking during the analysis of the data in both the survey and the interview portion of the investigation. Member checking increases the credibility of the findings of the investigation. Increasing the credibility of the research ensures that there was a correct interpretation of the participant's views. I emailed a copy of the transcript to the participants for them to verify the accuracy of the audio recordings to ensure I captured their responses correctly. In addition to ensuring credibility, it was also important that I implemented strategies that promoted transferability. Strategies that I employed to promote transferability were in providing detailed information in all aspects of the investigation.

The investigation must also promote the dependability and confirmability of the results. Dependability emphasizes stability over time and ensures that participants

appreciate the findings of the investigation. Confirmability ensures that other researchers are able to derive the data and confirm the research findings. A strategy I used to help promote dependability and confirmability was describing the research steps accurately and in detail. It was important that I was transparent and that I accurately depicted the intentions of the participants' responses to both the survey and the interview.

### **Summary**

My investigation explored how the implementation of district procedure influences the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. Based on the findings from this investigation, I provided future recommendations that will benefit the wellbeing of the interpersonal relationship between these two role groups. This study is important to the educational community because it focuses on interpersonal relationships that affect the working interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. Understanding and improving the working interpersonal relationship between these two role groups is important because it affects the culture of the building and therefore indirectly the learning environment for students. I outlined the research method, context of the study, data collection and analysis, positionality, and strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in Chapter 3. I will continue in Chapter 4 to provide an in-depth analysis of the results and implementation of the research methods and design outlined in chapter three.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this study, I explored the interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers and their perceptions of each other in the implementation of the student conduct policies in their school. My aim in this study was not to change policy or procedures regarding student conduct. Rather, I sought to gain a better understanding of how these interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers shaped the implementation of district policies and to make recommendations for change if needed.

The research questions for this study were the following:

RQ 1: How do teachers and administrators perceive their own role in the implementation of the district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 2: How do teachers perceive the roles and responsibilities of administrators in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 3: How do administrators perceive the roles and responsibilities of teachers in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

In this chapter, I first summarize the data collection phase of my study. Then I discuss the findings by organizing them around my research questions and themes. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

### **An Overview of Data Sources and Analytical Strategies**

I drew upon data collected from the following sources: administrative data and documents, an electronic survey, and a virtual one-on-one interview. I used the district's

online database to collect and analyze demographic data about Taylor Waterson. In addition, I analyzed the district's student handbook to understand procedural expectations for teachers and administrators as well as to understand student conduct expectations.

I collected and analyzed data through an electronic survey (see Appendix C for survey protocol). This electronic survey included demographic information, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions related to the research topic. I sent the electronic survey via email to 79 employees at Taylor Waterson, including both teachers and administrators. I sent a reminder email to all individuals a week after to increase response rates. Out of all the possible respondents, 58 participants completed the survey, representing a 73% response rate. I used descriptive analysis to understand trends from the demographic and multiple-choice questions. In addition, I used in vivo coding to group the open-ended responses into themes based on the NPT codes.

Concurrently, I collected and analyzed data through my one-on-one semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D for interview protocol). Out of the 58 participants who completed the electronic survey, 43 of them indicated they would be willing to participate in a virtual one-on-one interview. Out of these 43 individuals, 17 of them scheduled a time to participate in the virtual interview. I recorded and transcribed the interviews in order to analyze the data. I used in vivo coding, analyzing phrases or words from the participants' responses. I utilized deductive coding (drawing upon NPT) and inductive coding processes as they emerged from the data. Table 4 outlines the data sources used to answer each of my three research questions.

*Table 4. Data Sources Aligned to Research Questions*

<i>Data Sources</i>	<i>Research Question 1</i>	<i>Research Question 2</i>	<i>Research Question 3</i>
Electronic Survey	X	X	X
One-on-One Virtual Semi-Structured Interview	X	X	X

### **Documents**

I used the district’s online database to collect and analyze demographic data about Taylor Waterson. In addition, I analyzed the district’s student handbook to understand procedural expectations for teachers and administrators as well as to understand student conduct expectations. The district’s handbook seeks to provide a clear picture to guide all stakeholders in the fair and equitable application of behavior support systems provided by the district.

The handbook seeks to clearly define expectations for appropriate behavior, identify the possible consequences of inappropriate behavior, and ensures that teachers and administrators administer discipline promptly, equitably, and when necessary.

The handbook outlines the rights and responsibilities for students, parents/guardians, teachers/staff, and school administrators. This document analysis would align with the NPT code, Individual Specification, because it defines the unique roles of the specific individuals. This specific part of the handbook also aligns with the NPT code, Interactions between Subgroups, because it mentions that both teachers and administrators involve various stakeholders in managing student conduct. I delineate the responsibilities of teachers in Table 5. It is important to understand the responsibilities of

teachers in their management of student conduct. It is important for me to be able to determine if the participant's responses in the study align with the responsibilities that the District outlines.

*Table 5. Responsibilities of Teachers and Staff in Taylor Watson's Handbook*

- Show respect and courtesy to all stakeholders
- Implement race-conscious interventions in an effort to reduce disproportional behavior outcomes for students and have plans for monitoring and evaluation.
- Foster ongoing, positive relationships with all students and families.
- Involve families in the learning process both in the classroom and at home.
- Create a positive classroom and school climate for all students, using effective classroom management strategies
- Explicitly teach, acknowledge, and reinforce behavior expectations.
- Provide social and emotional skill instruction.
- Intervene promptly when inappropriate behavior occurs. This includes providing corrective feedback, re-teaching behavioral expectations, following the Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and Behavior Support Plans of students, and adhering to procedures for student removals from the learning environment when needed.
- Work with students and their parents/guardians to develop, implement, and monitor behavior interventions that support students in changing their behavior, using a progressive system of support.
- Apply the handbook in a fair, equitable, and consistent manner and accurately record inappropriate student behavior following the established protocol.
- Respect the right of students to maintain personal privacy. Personal belongings may be searched only if the principal has a reasonable suspicion that the student possesses evidence of a crime, stolen goods, drugs, weapons, or other illegal or prohibited items
- Follow up on reports of bullying

In addition to the teacher responsibilities, I list the administrators' responsibilities from the district's handbook in Table 6. It is important to understand these responsibilities so that I could verify participant's responses to the responsibilities that the district outlines for administrators.

It is also important to understand the responsibilities of administrators and teachers so that I could compare the similarities and differences. Both teachers and administrators are expected to involve and respect all stakeholders, implement race-



conscious interventions, foster positive relationships with students and families, involve families in the learning process, adhere to procedures for removing students from the learning environment, apply the handbook in a fair and equitable manner, respect the right of students to maintain personal privacy, and respond to reports of bullying.

*Table 6. Responsibilities of Administrators in Taylor Watson's Handbook*

- Show respect and courtesy to all stakeholders
- Implement race-conscious interventions in an effort to reduce disproportional behavior outcomes for students.
- Foster ongoing, positive relationships with all students and families.
- Create a safe and caring school climate that maximizes learning.
- Involve families in the learning process both in the classroom and at home.
- Create, monitor, and assess a school wide management system.
- Welcome parents/guardians as valued partners in their child's learning. This includes creating opportunities for regular, two-way communication and active participation at problem-solving meetings by accommodating schedules and meeting language needs.
- Review the handbook with students, staff, and parents at the beginning of each school year and revisit it as necessary throughout the year.
- Guide the School-Based Leadership Team and Student Support and Intervention Team in using and reviewing school wide behavior data and evaluating the effectiveness of behavioral interventions. This includes monitoring data to identify and address disparities.
- Ensure that all school staff meet the expectations outlined in the section entitled "Teacher/Staff Rights and Responsibilities."
- Support staff in implementing appropriate behavior interventions.
- Apply the handbook in a fair, equitable, and consistent manner and accurately record inappropriate student behavior and interventions and consequences following the established protocol.
- Follow procedures for student removals from the learning environment.
- Notify parents immediately if a student's inappropriate behavior results in an out-of-school suspension.
- Notify parents, in a timely manner, of an inappropriate behavior and the consequence, if there is not an out-of-school suspension.
- Respect the right of students to maintain personal privacy. Personal belongings may be searched only if the principal has a reasonable suspicion that the student possesses evidence of a crime, stolen goods, drugs, weapons, or other illegal or prohibited items
- Respond promptly on reports of bullying
- Ensure that accurate and complete data-entry procedures are being followed and ensure that collection, monitoring, and evaluation systems are utilized at the school level. This includes using disaggregated data to allocate resources to support student behavior as well as evaluating program and staff effectiveness.

In addition to comparing the similarities, it is also important to understand how teachers and administrator's responsibilities are different. The following responsibilities are unique to teachers: creating a positive classroom and school climate for all students by using effective classroom management strategies, explicitly teaching behavior expectations, providing social and emotional skill instruction, and intervening promptly to inappropriate behavior. The responsibilities that are unique to administrators are the following: creating a safe school climate, creating and monitoring school wide management system, reviewing the handbook with stakeholders, ensuring staff meet the expectations listed in the handbook, supporting staff in implementing behavior interventions, notifying parents immediately about inappropriate behavior or out of school suspensions, and ensuring accurate data entry is followed.

The handbook also lists evidence-based best practices for the classroom and for school wide. This section of the handbook aligns with the NPT code, Differentiation, because it clarifies how a set of practices are unique based on being in the classroom setting or school wide. These are both proactive approaches as well as practices for addressing inappropriate behavior. I list the classroom supports in Table 7 and the school wide supports in Table 8. In reviewing the different supports, there are some similarities in the expectations between the two settings. In regards to both settings, the handbook lists the following as proactive supports: creating a culturally responsive climate, creating positive expectations that are clearly defined and taught, continuously teaching and re-teaching expectations, modeling and practicing expectations, setting up an acknowledgement system, and accessing additional resources. There is only one similarity in the different school settings for addressing inappropriate behavior. This

similarity is to communicate and collaborate with the student’s parent/guardian when addressing inappropriate behavior.

*Table 7. Classroom and Teacher Supports*

Proactive Supports	Addressing Inappropriate Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a culturally responsive classroom climate.</li> <li>• Create positive expectations that are clearly defined, taught, and maintained in all settings.</li> <li>• Teach and reteach classroom expectations throughout the year (e.g., routines, transitions, procedures, especially after breaks).</li> <li>• Include students in setting classroom norms.</li> <li>• Model and practice expectations in the appropriate setting</li> <li>• Use pre-correction strategies to remind students of expectations before the next task.</li> <li>• Utilize more positive than corrective interactions</li> <li>• Set up classroom and acknowledgment systems that support student engagement and increase appropriate behavior.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in their learning.</li> <li>• Provide immediate positive feedback when students meet or exceed expectations.</li> <li>• Build positive relationships with students and families (e.g., use Restorative Practices circles).</li> <li>• Communicate and collaborate with the student’s parent/guardian.</li> <li>• Teach prevention lessons (e.g., social and emotional learning, bullying prevention, suicide prevention, and trauma-informed practices).</li> <li>• Frequently provide individual and groups of students opportunities to respond to content.</li> <li>• Access additional resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine appropriate intervention for the behavior.</li> <li>• Communicate and collaborate with the student’s parent/guardian.</li> <li>• Teach replacement behaviors to address misbehaviors.</li> <li>• Change student seating.</li> <li>• Pace the lesson more quickly to promote on-task behavior.</li> <li>• Respond calmly, restating the appropriate behavior.</li> <li>• Restructure classroom practices based on student needs</li> <li>• Use progress-monitoring tools in the classroom</li> <li>• Establish and consistently implement corrective responses for rule violations</li> <li>• Use restorative affective statements and affective questions.</li> <li>• Engage in student-teacher impromptu conferencing with active listening.</li> <li>• De-escalation techniques are taught and modeled.</li> <li>• Continuously assess, seek feedback on, and develop management skills for teachers’ own behaviors and biases.</li> </ul>

Table 8 lists the school wide supports for proactively supporting student behavior and then addressing inappropriate behavior.

*Table 8. School Wide Supports*

Proactive Supports	Addressing Inappropriate Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a culturally responsive school wide climate.</li> <li>• Create positive school wide expectations that are clearly defined and taught.</li> <li>• Continuously teach and reteach school wide school wide expectations throughout the year (e.g., schedule for teaching by week/month, after breaks).</li> <li>• Model and practice expectations in appropriate settings (e.g., cafeteria, hallways, bus, restroom).</li> <li>• Establish a school wide school wide acknowledgment system with opportunities for individual and school wide school wide recognition.</li> <li>• Effectively and actively supervise in common areas (e.g., all staff in hallways during transitions, hallway sweeps).</li> <li>• Increase supervision in non-classroom settings.</li> <li>• Refer to before- and after-school programs for additional support (e.g., coaches, mentors, club activity sponsors).</li> <li>• Employ targeted strategies for groups of students (e.g., mentoring programs, bullying-prevention lessons for selected students, suicide drop-in centers).</li> <li>• Design social and emotional skills instruction groups (e.g., conflict management, anger management, aggression replacement, empathy building, resilience building, organization skills) that can be used proactively and responsively.</li> <li>• Use universal screeners and assessments to proactively identify students in need of targeted and intensive interventions and supports.</li> <li>• Establish an individual student support, response, or problem-solving team.</li> <li>• Establish in-school conflict-resolution programs (e.g., peer mediation).</li> <li>• Use Restorative Practice strategies (e.g., affective statements and questions, conflict resolution, responsive circles).</li> <li>• Use parent-engagement strategies (e.g., newsletters,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate and collaborate with the parent or guardian.</li> <li>• Use responsive interventions and appropriate referrals</li> <li>• Refer to school-based mental health professionals.</li> <li>• Mental health evaluation referral (e.g., mobile assessments, counseling services)</li> <li>• Alcohol/Drug evaluation referral</li> <li>• Threat assessment evaluation referral</li> <li>• Refer to community organizations, including conferencing and community mediation when students have issues with other students or school staff.</li> <li>• Community service</li> <li>• Restorative Practice strategies (Restorative Questions, circles, Re-engagement Plan, Return From Suspension Plan)</li> <li>• Use individual student planning tools (e.g., Behavior Support Plan, Behavior Function Identification Worksheet, Behavior Collection Form).</li> </ul>

family nights, celebrations). • Design support and advisory groups that engage parents, students, and the community. • Access additional resources	
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The handbook lists progressive discipline procedures, behavior interventions, and the definition of different consequences. There are four levels of discipline for grades K-12. Based on the behavior, a student receives a consequence according to the type of behavior. Level 1 behaviors represent minor disruptions. Some examples include, but are not limited to being out of their seat, talking in class, leaving the classroom, dress code or device violations. The goal is to correct these behaviors and limit missed instruction by utilizing classroom level interventions. If the student does not modify his or her behavior and the behavior recurs, a parent/teacher conference and conference with counselor and/or administrator is the appropriate next course of action.

Level 2 behaviors are frequent or serious enough to disrupt the learning environment. Examples include but are not limited to horseplay, nonattendance of class, leaving school, using profane or vulgar language. These behaviors always result in the involvement of a school administrator and the goal is to correct the behavior by stressing the seriousness of the behavior but keeping the student in school. Level 3 and 4 behaviors are acts against a person(s) or property that could endanger the health or safety of others. Examples of level 3 behaviors could be fighting, harassment, or possession of drugs or alcohol. These behaviors may result in short term removal of the student from the school environment. Level 4 behaviors could be assault, possession of a dangerous instrument, or terroristic threats. Level 4 behaviors result in administrative action, possible notification of appropriate law enforcement authorities, and immediate removal of the student from school. All these levels use consequences in a graduated fashion.

The handbook then defines several behavior interventions and consequences. Behavior contracts are plans constructed by staff with the input from the student. These plans include progress monitoring, reviews, and rewards. Behavior reflections are another intervention that includes a protocol that students use to reflect on their current behavior, choice making, replacement behaviors, and next steps. Staff review the student's responses, provide feedback, and assist with any identified needs. Bus suspensions are a consequence that requires students to acquire alternative transportation to and from school. Another consequence is school restitution in which the school district provides the student an opportunity to restore, repair, or improve a situation, requirement, or property that they damage.

Counselor conferences include collaboration between staff to acquire resources needed to assist the student with improving behavior and choice making. Another resource available to students is to see the mental health practitioner (MHP) or counselor. MHPs and school counselors are credentialed mental health providers and can perform a variety of services, including but not limited to, counseling, threat assessment, mental health screenings, and referrals to other relevant supports. Students can also see a Youth Services Center (YSC) coordinator or school staff may refer them. FRYSCs assist families with removing barriers to learning, providing clothing assistance, food assistance, and other social service referrals.

Mobile Assessments are for students experiencing crisis, manifesting thoughts or actions related to self-harm or harm of others. Mental health providers perform an on-site threat assessment, determine the level of response, and identify needed supports for the student. A letter or phone call is a formal communication with a parent/guardian that

functions as a meeting notice, a recap of a discussion, or a briefing about a student conference. A conference can be held with a parent/guardian and/or student that includes a discussion of an incident or information gathering about the needs of a student, a new or existing support plan, the student's progress, or various other communication about student behavior. Peer conflict mediation includes a conversation between students that have conflict.

Detention and/or Saturday school are consequences outside of the school day that students may receive. The time served varies according to the school. At my current school, detentions occur an hour after school two days a week. Detentions occur during lunch for students who do not have after school transportation, which is 20 minutes for students. Students have a week to make up for missed detention and if they do not, they must attend Saturday school, which is 4 hours long. In-School Adjustment Program (ISAP) is a consequence in which students report to an alternative location during the school day. Out of School Suspension is when a student cannot attend school for full or partial day(s) following appropriate due process procedures according to the District's handbook. Office time-outs function as an office space for students to de-escalate or compose themselves after a behavior event. Team time-outs are the same concept as an office-time out except they utilize the collaboration between teachers on an instructional team to offer a student a space to de-escalate in their classroom. Positive Action Center (PAC) is a non-instructional space in the school building where students can go to avoid escalation or increased severity of an offense. This space should be short term and staff should de-escalate and coach in an attempt to resolve the issue of concern.

The handbook also lists the following three restorative practices: conversations, formal conferences, and circles. During a Restorative Conversation, Restorative Questions are used to give students the opportunity to explain what happened from their perspective, identify who was harmed and how, and what they need to do to make things right. The school explains consequences and provides clear expectations to move forward. Restorative Formal Conferences are formal responses to wrongdoing where all those involved are affected by an incident come together with a trained facilitator to explore what happened, who is affected, and what needs to be done to make things right for everyone. Restorative Circles are facilitated discussions where students and staff have the opportunity to discuss concerns with one another and resolve conflict.

The handbook also lists the definitions of behaviors that fall into each level of progressive discipline. The level of discipline varies according to the grade level of the student. Arson in the first, second, and third degree are varying levels of severity when a student starts a fire or causes an explosion that damages property or hurts one or more people. Assault in the first, second, third, and fourth are varying levels of severity when a student causes physical injury to another person or uses deadly weapons or a dangerous instrument to hurt somebody. A bomb threat can be verbally, in written form, or via social media. The district defines bullying/cyberbullying as repetitive, unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Cheating or academic dishonesty includes students that deceive, trick, defraud and take an unfair or unethical advantage of a situation to benefit someone's grades or academic standing. Dress code violations occur when a student does not comply with the



school's expectations for what is appropriate to wear. Drug and alcohol trafficking is when a student is in possession of more drugs or alcohol that can be consumed by one person in one day and is presumed to be trafficking or distributing it on school grounds or at events. The use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, drug paraphernalia, and look-alike drugs and alcohol on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event is also prohibited.

The district prohibits extending body parts or throwing objects out of a bus and failure to remain seated on a bus. Failure to attend detention assigned as a behavior consequence. The district prohibits giving false information to a staff member. The district prohibits students activating or pulling a fire alarm device or extinguisher in a non-emergency situation. This includes tampering with bus evacuation doors or windows. Other prohibited behaviors include: fighting; the use of fireworks or explosive devices; forgery/counterfeiting; gambling; horseplay; harassment; inappropriate sexual behavior; inappropriate use of district technology; inappropriate use of mobile devices; intentionally throwing or releasing an object; ISAP (In-School Adjustment Program) removal/walkout; leaving class without permission; leaving school grounds/bus without permission, loitering on school grounds; non-attendance to class/cutting class; profanity/vulgarity; profanity/vulgarity toward a student or staff; racial slur/hate speech toward staff or student; refusal/failure to attend ISAP, robbery, sexual abuse/sexual assault; sexual harassment; spitting; striking a student or staff; talking out in class; taunting, baiting, or inciting a fight; terroristic threatening in the first, second, and third degree; theft; tobacco/alternative nicotine/vapor distribution; unexcused tardiness to class; unintentional physical contact with a staff member; use/possession of

tobacco/alternative nicotine/vapor products; violation of personal electronic/telecommunication device policy.

In reviewing the district's handbook, there are some connections to the NPT codes. The contents of the handbook relate to the following most relevant NPT codes: Differentiation, Individual Specification, and Policies and Procedures. The handbook relates to the NPT code Differentiation because it clarifies how a set of practices are unique for the different grade levels and for the different levels of behaviors. For example, there are only three levels of progressive discipline for elementary aged students whereas there are four levels of discipline for K-12 grades.

The handbook aligns with the NPT code Policies and Procedures because it lists evidence-based practices for the classroom and for school wide use proactively and for addressing student behavior. For example, if a student receives a suspension for an offense outlined in the handbook, there are procedures that the administrator must follow depending on the severity. A level 3 suspension is for 1 to 3 days, a level 4 is from 6 to 10 days; both require the administrator to communicate the details of the suspension to the parent or guardian.

The handbook also relates to the NPT code Individual Specification because it defines the rights and responsibilities for students, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators. In addition, the handbook relates to Communal Specification because it describes how stakeholders will interact in addressing student behavior. The handbook includes examples of both Individual and Communal Specification. A specific example of this NPT code is in the bus and transportation section, where it specifically states that the interventions used will involve support staff, administrators, and bus drivers to work

collaboratively to improve student behavior and overall transportation safety. A proactive support that is unique to the bus setting is for the individual adult to set a good example by following the rules of the road themselves by obeying traffic laws, being punctual, and keeping the bus clean.

### **Electronic Survey**

The electronic survey provided insight into each participants' demographics as well as their unique perspective about the relationship between teachers and administrators, how comfortable they are in managing student conduct, and their perceptions about the training involved with managing student conduct. Out of 79 participants emailed, 58 of them completed the survey. Per the district's approval of the project, I could not ask the respondents to identify whether they were a teacher or an administrator. Therefore, I cannot compare these respondent demographics to those of the district's demographic data. I outline the results of the demographics of the participants in Table 9. It is important to know the demographics and the educational experience of the respondents because it provides background information in understanding why the participants answered the way that they did. Most of the respondents were White (71%) and were females (74%).

*Table 9. Demographics of Electronic Survey Respondents (n=58)*

Demographic	n (%)
Female	43 (74%)
Male	15 (26%)
White/Non-Hispanic	41 (71%)
Hispanic	2 (3%)
Black or African-American	10 (17%)
Native American	1 (2%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	1 (2%)
Multiracial	1 (2%)
Preferred not to say identity of race/ethnicity	2 (3%)
Less than 10 years of experience in education	16 (28%)
10 or more years of experience in education	42 (72%)
Has been at 5 or less schools	45 (78%)
Has been at 5 or more schools	13 (22%)

After the demographic questions, the remaining eight questions pertained to the research topic. There were three open-ended questions and four multiple-choice questions. The last question asked participants if they wanted to participate in a virtual one-on-one interview. I display each survey question and what research question and NPT code aligns with it in Table 10. In addition, for each open-ended question, Table 10 shows the frequency of each NPT code.

Table 10. Research Questions and NPT Code Alignment to Survey Items

Survey Item	Research Question Alignment	NPT Alignment (frequency)
What positively contributes to the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators?	RQ 2 and 3	Communal Specification (50) Skills (30) Policies & Procedures (20) Accountability (14)
What negatively contributes to the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators?	RQ 2 and 3	Communal Specification (51) Policies & Procedures (25) Accountability (13) Skills (11) Individual Specification (10)
How comfortable are you in your role in managing student conduct?	RQ 1	Individual Specification
How was the training you received in managing student conduct?	NA	Initiation
How often have you received training in managing student conduct?	NA	Initiation
How would you describe the effect of managing student conduct on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators?	RQ 2 and 3	Communal Specification
Is there any other information that you can provide that would help me better understand the factors that affect interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators?	RQ 2 and 3	Communal Specification (27) Policies & Procedures (16) Individual Specification (10) Accountability (8)

I conducted descriptive analysis on the multiple-choice questions in the survey.

The descriptive analysis included measures of central tendency and measures of variability for each question. Table 11 displays the descriptive statistics for each question.

*Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for Multiple-choice Question in Survey*

Survey Question	Scale	Standard Deviation	Mean
How comfortable are you in your role in managing student conduct?	1 - 4	.71	3.66
How often have you received training in managing student conduct?	1 - 5	1.09	3.00
How effective was the training you received in managing student conduct?	1 - 5	0.98	2.63
How would you describe the effect of managing student conduct on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators?	1 - 4	1.21	2.28

The first question had four answer selections based on a scale from 1 to 4. Most of the participants selected that they fully understood their role and felt comfortable in that role which was a 4 on the scale. The mean was 3.66, which was the measure of central tendency. The standard deviation was .71, which was the measure of variability.

The second multiple-choice question had five possible responses scaled from 1 to 5. Based on the answer selections, the distribution was symmetrical or there was a normal distribution. Therefore, the best measure of central tendency is the mean, which was 3.00 and the measure of variability was 1.09 for the standard deviation.

The third multiple-choice question asked participants how effective they perceived the training of managing student conduct. There were also five answer selections and therefore was based on a 5-point scale. Based on the answer selections, the distribution was symmetric and therefore the best measure of central tendency is mean, and measure of variability was standard deviation.

The last multiple-choice question asked participants how they perceived the effect of managing student conduct on the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. There were four answer selections scaled 1 to 4. The standard deviation was 1.21 and 2.28 was the mean.

The first open-ended questions asked what positively contributes to the relationship between teachers and students. Participants were encouraged to answer the questions based on the role rather than thinking about specific individuals that they work with. Based on the participants' responses, I used NPT to code the phrases into themes. The four themes that emerged from participants' responses for what positively contributes to the interpersonal relationship were Communal Specification, Skills, Policies and Procedures, and Accountability. Some of the common phrases used included "trust", "transparency", "communication (consistent, open, timely, constructive, direct, clear, frequent)", "consistency", and "respect".

With the first open-ended question, the NPT code Communal Specification can be seen from one respondent that stated, "Open and transparent communication between groups, that allows teachers to have input and ask questions regarding school based decisions". This quote exemplifies Communal Specification because it suggests that people work together by communicating effectively. A quote that aligns with the NPT code, Skills, includes one from a respondent who stated, "When administration initiates positive interactions with educators on a daily and informal basis". This quote suggests that an administrator must be willing and capable of connecting with staff on a personal level in order to have a positive interpersonal relationship with them. An example of the NPT code Policies and Procedures can be seen from the respondent's statement, "a sense

of clear hierarchy and systems in place that make it obvious what the next steps are when facing adversity” because it suggests that a positive relationship between the stakeholders requires clear guidelines that has been outlined by the school or the district.

The second open-ended question was what negatively contributes to the relationship between teachers and students. This question addresses RQ 2 and 3. The NPT codes that emerged from the participants’ responses were Communal Specification, Policies and Procedures, Accountability, Skills, and Individual Specification. Some pertinent quotes that relate to the research questions and that negatively contribute to the relationship are from two separate participants who said, “when teachers feel like administrators are not listening to their concerns, and when teachers feel as though administrators do not support them in decisions, specifically regarding student behavior” and “lack of support for student behaviors”.

With the second open-ended question, all the NPT codes are evident in the participant’s response that stated, “When administration is only present for walkthroughs or formal observations. When only negative or constructive feedback is given rather than highlighting on what teachers do well or showing interest in a teachers work/effort”. This quote exemplifies Individual Specification because it states the role of an administrator conducting an individual task, a walkthrough or formal observation. The quote also exemplifies Communal Specification because it states how the administrator should work with the teachers in order to have a positive interpersonal relationship. This quote also is an example of the code Skills because the participant provides the skills that they believe an administrator should have when providing feedback.

The next four questions in the survey were multiple-choice. The first multiple-choice question asked participants how comfortable they were in managing student



conduct. This question relates to RQ 1 and coincides with the NPT code Individual Specification. The answer selections were as follows: I do not fully understand my role and do not feel comfortable in my role, I do not fully understand my role but feel comfortable in my role, I fully understand my role, but do not feel comfortable in my role, I fully understand my role and feel comfortable in my role. Many of the participants indicated that they understood their role in managing student conduct and felt comfortable with their responsibilities. I display the results to this question in Table 12.

*Table 12. Comfort Level of Participants in Their Role in Managing Student Conduct*

Answer Responses	I do not fully understand my role and do not feel comfortable in my role	I do not fully understand my role but feel comfortable in my role	I fully understand my role, but do not feel comfortable in my role	I fully understand my role and feel comfortable in my role.
Number of Responses (%)	1 (1.7)	5 (8.6)	7 (12.1)	45 (77.6)

The second multiple-choice question asked participants how often they had received training in managing student conduct. Respondents selected from the following options: I was never formally trained through district-led professional development, I was trained only at the beginning of my career (either by the school or district), I was trained inconsistently throughout my career (either by the school or district), I receive training yearly, which is led by either the school or district, I receive training yearly, which is led by both the school and district. There was no pattern in responses or consistency about when and how often participants received training about managing student conduct. The highest number of responses suggest the provision of inconsistent training throughout the participants' careers. I display the results of the participant's responses in Table 13.

*Table 13. Frequency of Training for Managing Student Conduct*

Answer Responses	I was never formally trained through district-led professional development.	I was trained only at the beginning of my career (either by the school or district).	I was trained inconsistently throughout my career (either by the school or district).	I receive training yearly, which is led by either the school or district.	I receive training yearly, which is led by both the school and district.
Number of Responses (%)	7 (12.1)	9 (15.5)	23 (39.7)	15 (25.9)	4 (6.8)

The third question asked how effective the participants perceived the training they received for managing student conduct. The participants had the option to respond between the following selections: not effective at all, slightly effective, moderately effective, very effective, or extremely effective. While one participant did not respond, the majority of the participants said that the training they received was moderately effective. Since the question was multiple-choice, there was not much explanation or rationale behind the participant's responses. Both Question #2 and #3 in the electronic survey did not directly align with any research question but is important to ask for future practice. These two questions align with the NPT code Initiation. I display the results for question 2 in Table 14.

*Table 14. Perceived Effectiveness of Training for Managing Student Conduct*

Answer Responses	Not effective at all	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Extremely effective	Did not answer
Number of Responses (%)	9 (15.5)	13 (22.4)	27 (46.6)	6 (10.3)	2 (3.5)	1 (1.7)

The last multiple-choice question focused on the relationship between teachers and administrators. Specifically, it asked how the participants describe the effect of managing student conduct on the interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators. This question relates to RQ 2 and 3 and aligns with the NPT code Communal Specification. The selection responses were managing student conduct has had a negative effect, has had no effect, has had an improved effect, and has had a positive effect on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators. One participant did not respond while several believed that managing student conduct had a negative effect on the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. I report the results in Table 15.

*Table 15. Perceived Effectiveness of Managing Student Conduct on the Interpersonal Relationships*

Answer Responses	has had a negative effect	has had no effect	has had an improved effect	has had a positive effect	Did not answer
Number of responses (%)	23 (39.7)	7 (12.1)	15 (25.9)	12 (20.6)	1 (1.7)

The last question was an open-ended item asking participants to provide any other information that would help me better understand the factors that affect interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators. This open-ended question relates to

RQ 2 and 3 because there were responses that pertained to perceptions that the participants had of administrators and teachers. Thirty-one participants provided detailed responses to this question. Drawing upon NPT for deductive coding, most of the responses again fell into the Communal Specification, Policies and Procedures, Individual Specification, and Accountability. For example, one respondent stated, “when teachers do not feel that they are supported regarding consequences for student behavior that disrupts learning, tension can result that negatively impacts the working relationship between teachers and administrators”, suggesting alignment with Communal Specification.

An example that demonstrates Accountability and Policies and Procedures is from the following participant that said, “when an administrator steps into help manage conduct (whether in an altercation or when a referral has been made), the teachers rarely get feedback about the result of that interaction or the purpose behind the inaction. This breeds distrust between teachers and administrators and a negative feeling from teachers that the administrators do not have their backs when it comes to student behavior”. This demonstrates Accountability and Policies and Procedures because it pertains to providing feedback and ensuring that teachers receive feedback from administrators as part of the process of managing student conduct.

Out of the total responses, ten of the participants discussed a disconnect in communication between teachers and administrators causing there to be issues in the interpersonal relationship. Eight of the participants’ responses included the use of consistency or the lack of consistency being a relevant factor in affecting the interpersonal relationship between administrators and teachers. For example, one participant stated, “there have been countless times where inconsistency between staff has

been the main problem when developing or working on a management problem”. Another participant said, “There are not clear lines of procedural expectations and consequences”.

In regard to the theme of communication being a major factor in affecting the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators, one participant stated:

As classroom teachers, we often feel powerless when it comes to the management of student behaviors. When we see administrators not correct a behavior happening right in front of them, we too choose to look the other way. When we are not supported when action is taken, it no longer benefits us to take the extra steps to involve them in managing behaviors. When procedures are out in place with little or no teacher input and a procedure isn't logical from a classroom standpoint, resentments form. I believe transparency and communication are two fundamental aspects of fostering pleasant and functional relationships between teachers and administrators.

This participant's response highlights the perspective from the teachers' side of managing student conduct. They emphasize the importance of the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators and the ways in which strains in the relationship develop.

A Black female participant said:

When students aren't held accountable by administrators, it hurts the teacher/administrator relationship because more than often it is the teacher that has requested the disciplinary action against the student. When the administrator doesn't follow through, the teacher feels undervalued by that administrator.

This quote emphasizes the importance of consistency and follow through from an administrator. The absence of these can affect the interpersonal relationship between

teachers and administrators. All of these participant's responses highlight the applicability of NPT in the survey responses of the participants.

### **Virtual One-on-One Interview**

The last question in the electronic survey asked participants whether they would like to participate in a virtual one-on-one interview. Out of the 58 participants that answered the survey, 43 indicated they would be willing to participate in a virtual one-on-one interview. Among these, 17 followed up by scheduling and participating in the interview with me (See Table 16 for demographics of interview participants). Most of the participants worked at the High

*Table 16. One-on-One Interview Participants*

Interview	Participant	Location	Race	Gender
1	Participant A	High School 1	Black	Male
2	Participant B	High School 2	Black	Female
3	Participant C	Middle School 3	White	Female
4	Participant D	High School 4	White	Female
5	Participant E	High School 4	White	Female
6	Participant F	High School 5	White	Female
7	Participant G	High School 6	White	Female
8	Participant H	High School 5	White	Female
9	Participant I	High School 6	White	Female
10	Participant J	High School 6	White	Female
11	Participant K	Elementary 7	Black	Female
12	Participant L	High School 5	White	Female
13	Participant M	High School 8	White	Female
14	Participant N	High School 6	White	Female
15	Participant O	High School 4	White	Female
16	Participant P	High School 9	White	Male
17	Participant Q	High School 4	White	Female

School level, were female, and were white. The interviews were semi-structured with eight structured questions and one concluding question asking for any further information that would be relevant to the research topic. The virtual platform that I used automatically transcribed and recorded the interview.

In order to have accurate transcripts, I reviewed every recording and made sure that the transcripts aligned with what the participants said. To check the accuracy of the transcription, I emailed a copy of the transcript to the individual participants to review

and provide feedback as necessary. The semi-structured interview provided insight into each participant’s unique perspective and experience in managing student conduct.

As I was conducting the interviews and preparing transcripts for member checking, I coded the transcripts concurrently. The coding process began by inputting the participant’s statements line-by-line from the transcripts and sorting by alignment with each NPT code. I used the participants’ terminology in the first level of coding, *in vivo*, to identify which NPT code aligned with the responses. The NPT codes used for the first round of coding were Coherence, Cognitive Participation, Collective Action, and Reflexive Monitoring.

Through the second cycle of coding, I was able to code the data into more specific NPT codes: differentiation, communal specification, individual specification, internalization, initiation, enrollment, legitimation, activation, interactions between subgroups, accountability, confidence, skills, resources, policies and procedures, formal evaluation, informal evaluation. Table 17 displays each survey question, the NPT code that became the most apparent (three most frequent NPT codes), and the research question that was addressed.

*Table 17. Coding Alignment to Interview Questions*

Interview Question	NPT Alignment (frequency)	Research Question
1. Describe how student conduct is managed at your school?	Differentiation (17) Policies & Procedures (16) Communal Specification (11)	RQ 1, 2, 3
2. What does student conduct effect?	Communal Specification (15) Interaction between subgroups (10) Skills (8)	NA



3. What does the management of student conduct affect?	Communal Specification (13) Skills (8) Resources (7)	NA
4. What role do teachers play in managing student conduct?	Individual Specification (16) Skills (15) Communal Specification (11)	RQ 1, 2, 3
5. What role do administrators play in managing student conduct?	Individual Specification (13) Communal Specification (12) Skills (11)	RQ 1, 2, 3
6. How do you engage with other people during the process of managing student conduct?	Resources (11) Individual Specification (11) Interaction between subgroups (10)	RQ 1
7. What aspects of managing student conduct do you feel are effective and working? How do you know or what evidence do you have?	Resources (13) Skills (13) Policies & Procedures (11)	RQ 1, 2, 3
8. What aspects of managing student conduct do you feel are not working? How do you know or what evidence do you have?	Policies & Procedures (12) Resources (10) Skills (7)	RQ 1, 2, 3
9. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the management of student conduct at your school or across the district? (11 respondents out of 17)	Resources (6) Policies & Procedures (6) Communal Specification (5)	RQ 1, 2, 3

I list the NPT codes, their definitions, and exemplary texts that represent the codes in

Table 18.

*Table 18. NPT Codes with Exemplary Texts*

NPT Phase	NPT Processes Code	Exemplary Text From The Interview
Coherence	Differentiation	“If we see positive behaviors, one thing specific we do is something called Bulldog bucks”
	Communal Specification	“We have some teachers who strictly adhere to the matrix that we've provided them and they do a great job of managing behaviors in their classroom”

	Individual Specification	“Most teachers use relationships and that connection to help manage their classrooms”
	Internalization	“I do feel like our behavior stuff is inconsistent, which I understand because it's constantly a trial and error about what's going to work with kids and what's not going to work”
Cognitive Participation	Initiation	“My formal training was helpful but I think that the biggest thing that was most helpful in my first year teaching was, I had a Collab class and my co-teacher was amazing”
	Enrollment	“We can sit in training and we can be taught trauma, informed care and all of these things, but I think that implicit bias is a big thing with managing behavior”
	Legitimation	“I do feel like I have a pretty good grasp on classroom management. I feel like my classroom is fairly well managed overall”
	Activation	“So I don't send kids out often. I try and do everything in my power to keep them in the classroom so specifically some of my favorites are like letting them move from a spot”
Collective Action	Interactions between subgroups	Each kid is unique, and I think if you don't establish those routines, those rituals, those expectations early and be consistent with it, you're gonna have issues”
	Accountability	“We also are collecting that data... to help us devise a plan to help continue supporting”
	Confidence	“I'd like to think peer mediation for me anytime that I've done them works. I know in certain situations or other people have facilitated peer mediations and they've gone completely South”
	Skills	“Teachers don't know how to manage some minor behaviors in the classroom, like students who speak out of turn or students who are loud in the classroom or maybe a little squirrely”
	Resources	“People tell us to get creative and it comes to a point where we feel that we've done everything that we can”
	Policies & Procedures	“We have a behavior matrix kind of like a flow chart that is provided to our teachers that gives them kind of tiered

		behaviors and tiered consequences that align with those. And that is based on the District handbook”
Reflexive Monitoring	Formal Evaluation	“A lot of these programs that we have that are district mandated are not working because they're not being run correctly”
	Informal Evaluation	“I feel very black and white, strict discipline doesn't work and I've tried that and It's never worked for me”

Question 1 from the interview asked participants to discuss the management of student conduct in their school. The three NPT codes that emerged were Differentiation, Policies and Procedures, and Communal Specification. Differentiation and Communal Specification are part of the Coherence phase while the Policies and Procedures are part of the Collective Action phase. Policies and Procedures is the execution of the set of practices, Differentiation clarifies how a set of practices are different from each other, and Communal Specification is how people work together to build a shared understanding.

Examples of Policies and Procedures, Differentiation, and Communal Specification emerged in 3 out of the 17 respondents who mentioned having a tier system of support. While the participants did not go into detail about what that tier system of support looks like; a tiered system of support has three layers. Tier 1 is universal support that every educator does for every student. Tier 2 are targeted supports provided to a small group based on specific behaviors. Tier 3 is intensive intervention to an individual student that needs support for their behavior.

Two participants mentioned that teachers had a management plan for their classroom and that it was individualized based on the teacher but adhered to the school and the district guidelines. Two participants mentioned using progressive discipline.

While they did not go into detail, I have used progressive discipline as an educator also. My example in the classroom was that a student got three chances to correct the behavior during a class period. The first time they did not follow my management plan, they received a redirection to correct the behavior. The second time they displayed the same behavior, they would get a phone call home and a student one-on-one conference in the hallway. The third time that a student displayed the same behavior, I would write a referral to the administrator. All of these strategies mentioned by participants appeared in the district handbook on managing student conduct.

Two participants mentioned that teachers had a behavior matrix to follow which would be similar to a behavior management plan and progressive discipline. Two participants mentioned using a handbook to guide discipline, and two participants mentioned using a code of conduct. One participant mentioned that their school used restorative practices, mentioning the use of a holding room to help de-escalate a student, protecting the instructional time, and then returning the student back to class once the student has de-escalated. Four participants mentioned having some kind of positive behavior recognition system (two of which specifically said PBIS) in which students that followed the behavior expectations, such as having no tardiness to class, were rewarded in some way.

Two of the participants (Participants C and D) discussed perceiving that teachers and administrators managed student conduct inconsistently. Some quotes that highlight this point are from the participants who said, “I do feel like our behavior stuff is inconsistent, which I understand because it is constantly a trial and error about what's going to work with kids and what's not going to work”. Another participant stated, “For

certain kids, I think that Assistant Principals don't always back up the teachers with the consequences". The inconsistency presents through the variability of the responses. The most consistent theme among the responses is that ten participants said that teachers were the first to manage student conduct and two mentioned that administrators followed up with support.

Question two and three were very similar. Two NPT codes emerged from the responses to these questions: Communal Specification and Skills. The third NPT code that became the most apparent for question two was Interaction between Subgroups whereas the third NPT code for question three was Resources. Both questions elicited responses from the participants that indicated that the major effect is on missed instructional time and academics for both the student conducting the misbehaviors and for other students.

Responding to question two, six interview participants (Participants B, D, G, I, J, M) mentioned the effect on safety and three participants (A, N, Q) mentioned that the culture and climate of the building is affected for both students and teachers. Some of the responses that highlight the effect of student conduct are from the following participant's quotes. One participant stated, "We have a lot of students and families who contact us saying they're fearful of their safety". Another one said, "It affects everything. It affects the way that you feel in your building, if you feel safe". Participant I, a White female that worked in a high school said:

I would say that conduct affects three main things. It's their own learning and their own success Academically, the learning and success of others around them, like if

there are other peers that are with them at that time, And kind of the emotional well-being and security of any human in the premises.

The responses for question three also indicated that the management of student conduct affected relationships in the building, teacher effectiveness, and morale.

Participant C, a white female working in a middle school stated:

The teachers' perceptions of certain assistant principals that are dealing with the kids, so you know some of them, I think go by that Code of conduct more and so the teachers know the expectations, but when the teachers are told we're gonna follow the code of conduct and then that's not actually followed and the kids don't have the consequences that they're expecting.

This response highlights not only the inconsistency in administrator's action, but also the effect that follows from that inconsistency. In addition to the inconsistency in the follow through, the following participant's response highlights discrepancies among certain student groups. Participant J, a white female that worked in a high school responded:

Staff could see how the different student groups are being treated and take that as policy and take that as the way that they are supposed to react. They may see certain student groups, for instance students with special education accommodations, being treated differently, and especially as those seem to be the students with the greatest behavioral incidents can makes staff, if they're just talked to and then sent back to class and that makes staff feel unappreciated, unvalued and frankly very demoralized. But if it's handled well, it makes staff feel like they're working as part of the team and have confidence in the administration to influence student behavior.

This participant not only highlights the inconsistencies, but also the effect it has on the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. Participant D, who works at High School 4, highlighted the effect that managing student conduct has on the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students when they said:

It's really stressful having to manage other people's behavior. And I think it creates animosity in the adults because not everyone always agrees with the way things are managed and you're constantly having to adapt to a new system because they're constantly changing it because the kids behavior is constantly changing or it's not working or it's not equitable or for whatever the reason.

All these quotes highlight how the management of student conduct affects the interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators.

Question four and five ask participants what role do teachers and administrators play in managing student conduct. These two questions address RQ 1, 2, and 3 and both responses elicit the following most adamant NPT codes: Individual Specification, Communal Specification, and Skills. Most of the responses for both questions shared the same idea that teachers were the first to manage student conduct and administrators were there to support and follow up from the teacher's actions. Both questions also highlight the importance of building relationships with students in the process of managing student conduct. In regard to the interactions between teachers and administrators, there were many different opinions.

Some important quotes highlight this discrepancy in how administrators and teachers manage student conduct. Participant L that worked at High School 5 said, "I do think if I go to certain administrators, I know it will be handled and others it may not. It

may be kind of brushed under the rug”. A quote that not only highlights the interaction between administrators and teachers but also the inconsistencies in the procedures in managing student conduct is from Participant E, a White female that worked at High School 4:

There are supposed to be policies and structures and we are told this is the procedure. You do this, we do this, but I have found over my years of teaching no, it is not consistent...I will get a copy of the referral back eventually. I have found it just varies from year to year and it depends on who the assistant principal is and what all they have going on. Sometimes I get a response or a referral back right away, sometimes a month later I get a copy of a referral, and in that case, if it is taken that long to address that kids. In my opinion, that's kind of worthless because if a kid doesn't have a response or a consequence immediately by the time two or three weeks go by, they don't even remember what they've done. To me it's ineffective. So that happens sometimes to and again it just depends on the administrator and what they have going on.

This quote not only highlights the inconsistencies, but also bring to light how ineffective managing student conduct can be because of the discrepancies in procedures.

Question six asked how participants engage in managing student conduct. This question answers the RQ 1, 2, and 3 and the most apparent NPT codes that came about from the participants' responses were Resources, Skills, and Policies and Procedures. The biggest takeaway from the responses were that both role groups interact with multiple individuals in the process of managing student conduct including parents, guardians, school resource officers, security guards, and counselors.



Question seven and eight asked participants what aspects were effective and not effective in managing student conduct. These two questions answered all three of the research questions and had the same NPT codes: Skills, Resources, Policies and Procedures. Several of the participants said that the most effective way to manage student conduct is building relationships with the students and having frequent contact with the parent or guardian especially about positive behaviors. In regards to the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators, Participant P stated, “I feel like when the collaboration and communication between admin and staff is good, then we generally have good results. When the communication is not there or the collaboration is not there, it causes some pretty major issues.”

As to what was not effective in managing student conduct, most participants indicated that ISAP and out of school suspensions were not effective in changing student misbehavior. Participant Q, a white female working at High School 4, said, “We don't have a lot of tools in the toolbox” and based on the participants’ responses; this applies to both teachers and administrators. In addition, four of the participants (Participant C, E, K, O) said that educators have a lack of skills to help students’ social emotional wellbeing and that student apathy was the hardest behavior to support.

The last question of the interview asked participants to provide any additional information that they believed was relevant to the research question. Out of the 17 interviews, 11 participants provided additional information. Based on the participant's responses, the NPT codes that were the most apparent were Resources, Policies and Procedures, and Communal Specification. One quote that was the most relevant to the research topic is from Participant A, a Black male from High School 1. He said, “One

thing that separates one school from the other is the training. The more the staff are trained, the more consistency that they have.” Another quote from Participant B, a Black female from High School 2, was “I just feel like a firm foundation has to be put in place where everybody consistently across the board is aiming towards the same goal for the betterment of the students”.

### **Research Questions**

The first research question asked how teachers and administrators perceive their own role and responsibilities in the implementation of the district procedures on student conduct. The second and third research question asked participants how they perceived their counterpart’s role and responsibilities in managing student conduct. Due to limitations from the District, I was not able to ask participants what their role was to differentiate who was a teacher or administrator. Therefore, it is hard to differentiate between whether the participant’s response addressed RQ 1, 2, or 3.

In reviewing the administrative data and documents, the research questions were not necessarily answered. The research questions were not addressed in the administrative data and documents because the research questions asked about participant’s perception. Perceptions and opinions were not addressed in the district’s handbook on managing student conduct. However, the district’s handbook does clarify the role that teachers and administrators have in managing student conduct. What is missing from the handbook is better clarification on how these two role groups interact with each other in the process of managing student conduct. While the district does conduct surveys and collect data on perceptions, they have not conducted any that address the research questions.

While the research questions were not addressed in the administrative documents and data, they were answered in both the survey and the electronic survey. The electronic survey provided a baseline idea of how the participants perceived their own and their counterpart's role in managing student conduct and the interview provided more details about those perceptions.

### **Perceptions of Role and Responsibilities in Implementing Student Conduct Procedures**

RQ 1 asked how teachers and administrators perceived their own role and responsibilities in managing student conduct. Item #3 in the survey addressed RQ1 because it asked how comfortable participants were in their own role in managing student conduct. Based on the results of the survey, the majority of the participants indicated that they fully understood their role and felt comfortable in that role. The electronic survey did not address the specifics of what each participant perceived their role was in managing student conduct. Because there were no specifics about what each participant's role was in managing student conduct, there was no way to corroborate whether or not participants truly understood their role and whether or not there was consistency in responses. There also was no way to differentiate whether teachers or administrators felt more comfortable or understood their role better.

All but two interview protocol questions addressed RQ 1. Again, a limitation to the responses is that I was not able to identify the participant's role and therefore differentiate between administrators and teachers. Therefore, the participant's responses could be addressing RQ 1, 2, or 3 without me being able to clarify whether or not a participant was talking about themselves or their counterpart.

The first question in the interview asked participants to describe the management of student conduct at their school. This question addressed the research questions because multiple participants indicated how they perceived the role that teachers and administrators play in managing student conduct. Again, this was hard to differentiate whether these responses addressed RQ 1, 2, or 3 because I did not know if they were talking about themselves or their counterpart. The following quotes stood out as important in addressing the research questions.

In interview 4, Participant D said:

We have a tiered system where we have teachers' responsibility. It's our responsibility to take care of this in the classroom and these types of behaviors. Then we have the list of behaviors that we can call administration for and then what their protocols are from there.

This response highlights the tiered system as well as the role of both a teacher and an administrator. However, the participant did not go into detail about the tiered system, their specific responsibilities in the classroom, or the protocols from administrators.

Participant E that worked at High School 4 describes the role of teachers in managing student conduct by saying:

So there's a procedure for managing students' conduct and behavior in classrooms. It starts with the teacher, of course, with an effective management plan, building relationships with the students, getting to know who they are as soon as possible, using their names frequently, building positive relationships, greeting them every morning...then if you feel like you have to get administration to intervene and then it goes from there.

This quote was important because it reinforces that there is a procedure and describes how teachers and administrators are involved. I did think it was important that the participant said that relationships are an important component. This aspect appeared in the District's handbook. Participant N said:

Though we try to handle as much as we can in the classroom, teachers are given a behavior matrix and they are expected to follow that within their classroom. Once they have gone through the entire matrix, which just in simplified terms, it's probably anywhere from like 3 to 4 warnings and then once they hit all those warnings, usually they talk to them outside the classroom. They give them a second chance. Then the student will get written up and SRT is called to pick up the student and the referral with them and brought to the Academy AP.

Participant N's response is important because it highlights the use of a behavior matrix and some strategies that teachers can use to manage student conduct. Participant H had a quote that highlights the role of a teacher:

Student conduct starts at the classroom level and then if it becomes more than the teacher can handle, or outside our realm of comfort, we can call for security, and at that point it moves into an administrative role primarily with the assigned assistant principal.

Participant H's response demonstrates the point where managing student conduct switches from the teacher to the administrator's responsibility. It also is an important response because it clarifies that this happens at a point that is subjective to the individual's comfort level and therefore is different for each teacher. Another participant (Participant J) said something very similar:

Student conduct is managed in the classroom by the teacher. If it gets to the point where the teacher can no longer manage that conduct or it takes place in common areas, it is managed by assistant principals and behavioral specialists.

Participant J's response highlights the transition from the teacher's responsibilities to the administrators. I wish I asked for some examples of when a teacher can no longer handle it so that I could get some clarification on the consistency of when the management of student conduct transitions between the role groups. Another participant (P) stated:

Each teacher has a classroom management plan they submit to their administrator. They kind of follow similar procedures, most of the discipline is handled in the classroom, there's really not a ton of need for administrator involvement.

Comparatively from the last school that I was at, there's a huge difference in the amount of disciplinary referrals that the administrators receive. So that frees up the administration to do lots of different things. Most of the discipline is really done in the classroom and I'd say it will be handled there.

This participant's response not only answers the research questions but also sheds some background information about how the management of student conduct is different from his previous school, which was in the same district. Participant L focused on administrators by saying:

We have our assistant principals, we have a referral process that goes to them if you have an issue with the student, you write up the student and the referral goes to their AP and then they have either a conference with them or their parents or whatever they feel is necessary.

Participant L's response leaves room for interpretation in regards to the administrator's responsibility in managing student conduct. By saying, "whatever they feel is necessary" makes it seem that an administrator can discipline students based on their opinion rather than any handbook or guidelines. Based on all of these responses in the interview, I believe there is a level of subjectivity in both the responsibilities of teachers and administrators in managing student conduct.

The fourth and fifth questions asked participants to describe the role of teachers and administrators in managing student conduct. Again, because I did not know what role that the participant had in relation to answering the questions, I could not differentiate whether their response answered RQ 1, 2, or 3.

Since all responses could address all research questions, I will organize participant responses based on the perception of teachers and then administrators even though I do not know whether the participant was talking about themselves or their counterpart's role. The following quotes highlight the role of a teacher and addresses all three of the research questions. In interview 2, Participant B said, "they are the first line of contact with the students and they have the most communication and interaction with the students. So I believe their role is what's most important". Participant G, who works in High School 6 responded, "They manage it within their own classroom environment and then outside of the classroom, sometimes they have to step outside their doors and be available in the halls". Participant N, also from High School 6, said, "I think that their first role in a school building is to give good academic instruction". The response from Participant M from High School was:

They are the front lines, so how they set up their classroom and their own personal management within their room in addition to their willingness to follow school rules and be consistent with their colleagues are a huge part of positive and discipline type behaviors

This quote not only highlights the importance of the individual responsibilities of a teacher. It also underscores how those responsibilities correspond with school level obligations.

Participant L from High School 5 stated:

I think they play a big role because they're the ones that are with the students every day. Then they spend the majority of their day with them. Building those relationships and positive relationships is key and also having a positive classroom environment and culture to help manage with their conduct and behavior.

This quote is important because it aligns with what the district's handbook says about the importance of building relationships with students. Participant J from High School 6 responded by saying:

Teachers play a really big role. They set the expectations within their classroom. They are kind of that first line of defense. They help the students understand the school wide expectations as well as their individual expectations, and they are the first ones generally to see any behaviors that are either really concerning or that are really positive and that it is their responsibility to manage those behaviors or to communicate them to those that need to manage those behaviors.



Participant J highlights how the individual teacher is responsible for their classroom but also for school wide management of student conduct. The next two responses not only indicate the teacher's role but also the administrators. The response from Participant E from High School 4 was:

It's almost all on the classroom Teacher. We are the ones in the classrooms with them and we have administrators, of course, who are the final part of discipline, but the administrators are not in the classes with them. So we are in the room, it is almost 100% up to the teacher to manage behaviors, manage personalities, figure out what works, because ultimately it's our responsibility as classroom teachers to teach them to educate them and to get them involved and engaged. Now, obviously we go to administrators for support if what we are doing in the class isn't working. The administrator's responsibility is to support when teachers say, OK, I've done everything I can, now I need you to intervene.

This response not only describes the individual roles that teachers and administrators have but also describes how these two role groups interact when managing student conduct. A second quote from a participant (H) describes the interaction between teachers and administrators is:

We're the first round of that when it's in the classroom. Obviously, student conduct in the hallway is a little bit different or in our common areas, but in the classroom were the first people who deal with it. So we have an effect on whether it goes positive or negative. We can defuse it and turn it and make it into at least not a big deal or we can feed into it. And when people feed into it, that's typically

when the administration has to get involved. When we're unable to defuse it ourselves

This quote is important because it describes that managing student conduct takes place in multiple areas in a school building and a teacher's responsibility is not just in the classroom. This quote also describes some strategies that help a teacher be more effective in managing student conduct. All of the quotes mentioned from the participants indicate the importance of the role of a teacher in managing student conduct.

In reviewing the responses about the role of administrators, the following quotes demonstrate their perceived responsibilities in managing student conduct. Participant D from High School 4 said:

I think that administrators are there to support teachers and to just help teachers make their classroom jobs as easy as can be. I think they should both collaboratively make the rules. Teachers should enforce the rules in their classrooms and when they can't be followed with parental help, like if you call home and it's not working and administrators should be there to support teachers in ensuring that the conduct is followed.

This participant describes the role of an administrator as more of a support person in managing student conduct. While this person states that they think rules should be a collaborative effort, I am curious if that collaboration actually happens when creating procedures for managing student conduct.

In addition, Participant F's response was:

I feel like a lot of the time it's not anything that the administration gets involved with until it's something very serious or the student needs to be removed from the

classroom for some reason or is just not coming to class. I know some of our students honestly don't even know who their AP is because they've never been in trouble.

This quote is important because it makes a point about students not knowing their administrators. Participant I from High School 6 shared their perspective on the different ways that they interact with different administrators:

So I think it kind of depends on how you're defining administrators. So when I need help with conduct, I go to counselors versus principals, very differently. So I go to counselors for things that I feel the underlying cause is something that I, as a teacher, don't have the resources for a kid, started sleeping in class too much, a kid has started suddenly being rude and disrespectful, a kid who never spoke is now being really talkative, or kid who was very talkative is not doing anything anymore. So those are all indicators to me that something's going on that they might talk to me about, but I'm not actually a counselor like I don't have that experience or the training to really handle that situation... For principals, their role for me in my perspective, is kinda like the buck stops here. The teacher has set a boundary, the student has crossed that boundary, and it's a non-negotiable.

Participant I's quote is important because it differentiates the different ways that an administrator supports student conduct based on the needs of the teacher and the student.

The next quote highlights another way that administrators interact with teachers in managing student conduct. Participant L said:

I think they play a big role because they kind of have to back up the teachers and support the teachers or if they don't feel like the teacher made the right move, they

have to communicate that and then how the teacher can change moving forward so they know how to handle things appropriately. They may not be as directly involved on a daily basis.

These participants reiterate the importance of the administrators' role in managing student conduct.

The sixth question asked participants how they engage with other people in managing student conduct. This is the only interview question that definitely only addresses RQ 1 because it is asking about the participant's role in managing student conduct. A limitation is the inability of knowing whether the participant is a teacher or administrator due to the district's precondition for the study's approval, although I could infer from the content of some of the responses. Participant H stated, "The only other people that sometimes would engage would be our security guards, the people that are coming to remove the student. They're often the person that will take them to the assistant principal". Participant I from High School 6 said, "So I'm a big proponent of talking to as many people as possible before getting them in trouble".

The following participant's response highlights the importance of getting multiple stakeholders involved in the process of managing student conduct. Participant D's response was:

I always try to get the guardian's support first, like contacting the guardian and see if I can get some help there and some background information. I'll reach out to our counselor, usually 1st to see if they have any suggestions and then if it's a discipline issue, then definitely will reach out to my AP. A lot of times, the AP's don't have time to deal with stuff unless it's like a big discipline issue, or unless

there's a referral involved so I try not to reach out to the AP unless I have exhausted other options. I talk to other teachers about the student to see if they have similar instances in their classroom or if they have any suggestions or if they have a better relationship or find somebody that the kid has a relationship with in the building that can help me usually.

Another response that demonstrates the collaboration between teachers in managing student conduct is from the following participant. Participant E from the same High School as Participant D said:

So sometimes, I will look at a student's schedule and sometimes I'll look at their grades and I'll see. Well, they seem to be doing well in these classes, so I will sometimes reach out to those teachers and say OK, I'm having this issue with this student. I see they seem to be successful in your class. Tell me what you're doing.

A different participant (G) also said that they engage with multiple people. Participant G stated:

So I engage with the students one-on-one. We tried to set goals and things differently and how we can do better. I speak with teachers on how students are performing in the classroom, what they're missing, how they can get caught up, what we can do together to get students where they need to be. I meet with families and other outside people that may support the student.

While these quotes vary, they all have a common theme of working with multiple other role groups in supporting student needs when managing student conduct.

The seventh and eighth question asked what was and was not effective in managing student conduct. In regards to the research questions and what the perceived

roles of each individual or their counterpart's role, the following responses provide some clarity. However, the quotes do not clarify whether the participant is referencing teachers or administrators. I also do not know whether the participant is talking about themselves or their counterpart. Therefore, it is hard to distinguish whether the participant is answering RQ 1, RQ 2, or RQ 3. The following quotes demonstrate what participants perceived as effective management of student conduct. Participant G said that, "when the teachers do have expectations set and stick to their routines there's less problematic issues in those classes". Participant J stated, "I think it's really effective to help students understand the why of the policies". Participant P responded, "I feel like the collaboration and communication with the admin and the collaboration, communication between admin and staff is good and then we generally have good results". Some of the other strategies mentioned by the participants were peer mediation, seating charts, positive student relationships, one-on-one conversations with the students, and engaging activities in the classroom. The following quote reiterates the importance of relationships with the students and with multiple stakeholders when managing student conduct. Participant G stated:

I think the more communication you have with their families for the ones that have family members involved in their lives really does work when we talk with families. And then just making sure we have attendance meetings where we work together as an attendance team, we have admin meetings where we discuss the suspension rates and the students who are being suspended often and see what we can do to support them;

Building relationships first. Or just like having a positive classroom environment, like trusting to where students feel safe in your classroom and know that they can come to you for things and you know you're not gonna ridicule them for an answer being wrong or anything like that. I think just having that positive classroom is definitely a big one. I do think rewarding and making sure students see that their accomplishments are being recognized. I do think that's a big one too, but I think just building those positive relationships is key.

Participants also discussed what they perceived as not being effective ways to manage student conduct. Participant K stated, "When students have deeper emotional issues. Our teachers are not adequately trained to deal with that". Participant M said, "I think district wide that the management of conduct is not being managed the same". One participant felt that the inconsistencies in the procedures in managing student conduct are not effective. Participant H responded:

I think the inconsistencies are a big struggle at our school. Again, they might be justified, but we don't all know that. It is a big building, so people are not really on the same page. I think the expectation maybe of what can be handled in the classroom and what is too much, even though that's individual with the teacher, I don't think that's clearly communicated...like at what point is it inappropriate to call for a cell phone violation.

This participant not only shared about the inconsistencies being an issue. Communication can be ineffective if it is not clear. Another participant felt that the use of a holding room is not an effective way to manage student conduct. Participant J said:

What isn't working is pulling them out of the classroom for things like ISAP. Instead of trying to mitigate the reasons that students aren't in class and making the effort to get them in there. If I have a kid who's been cutting my class, it doesn't do me any good and it doesn't do the student any good to throw them in a holding room.

Participant P highlights the problem with inconsistent procedures and inequities among certain student subpopulations. Participant P stated:

African American males are disproportionately affected by referrals for things like dress code violations or African American females too. Dress code violations or school ID's, things like that. We kind of as the admin team had some arguments about this. There's some administrators that are really kind of sticklers about dress code. Other administrators, not so much.

As you can see from the examples provided, participants perceived the use of ISAP and out of school suspension as ineffective ways to manage student conduct.

### **Perceptions of Counterpart's Implementation of Student Conduct Policies**

While I have already explained how the interview addresses the second and third research question, I will focus this section on the survey questions that specifically address these research questions. I cannot distinguish between the two research questions since a limitation in the study is that I was not able to identify survey respondents by roles (teachers or administrators). RQ 2 and RQ 3 asks how teachers and administrators perceive the roles and responsibilities of their counterpart in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct.



The first and second question in the survey asked participants what positively and negatively contributes to the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. In regards to the research questions, the following quotes demonstrate the perceptions that participants had in regards to the roles and responsibilities in managing student conduct.

The following quotes demonstrate positive contributions to the relationship but also addresses RQ 2 and 3. A white female that had 14 years of experience in education responded, “Open and direct communication; clear expectations; consistency in the implementation of processes and procedures”. A white male that also had 14 years of experience in education said “The ability of the administrator to build capacity among their staff and create, support, and monitor systems for that same staff to be successful in”. A Hispanic female with 10 years of experience in education stated, “When administrators actively go into classrooms and interact with the students and the teachers on a regular basis”. A male participant that had 8 years of experience in education said it is effective “when admin is honest about situations and how they handled issues with students”.

The following quotes demonstrate negative contributions to the relationship but also addresses RQ 2 and 3. A black female with 9 years of experience in education said, “A lack of support, resources, and guidance from administration. A lack of systems and processes that empower teachers and also establishes and maintains accountability”. A white male with 12 years of experience stated, “Administrators who are not seen often and are out of touch with the behavior of the students”. A white male with 14 years of experience in education reported, “The administrators not consistently implementing systems across all staff and professionally holding everyone accountable to expectations of excellence”. A white female that has 9 years of experience in education stated that “seeing administration

not addressing other teachers not holding kids to the school rules” negatively contributes to the relationship between teachers and administrators.

The last two questions in the survey also address RQ 2 and RQ 3. The multiple-choice question asked participants how they would describe the effect of managing student conduct on the interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators. Most of the participants said that managing student conduct has had a negative effect on their interpersonal relationship. As a multiple-choice question, participants did not rationalize their selections, only identifying their perceptions.

The last question in the survey asked participants to provide any additional information that was relevant to the research topic. This question answered RQ 2 and RQ 3 based on the participant’s responses. A white female with 23 years of experience said, “Teachers oftentimes feel as though the administration does not do anything when students get in trouble”. A white female with 12 years of experience in education responded, “When teachers do not feel that administrators are appropriately handling student discipline it creates a divide between the two role groups”.

A white female with two years of experience in education said:

I believe that tension is created when administration doesn’t communicate details of their part of addressing student conduct. I think there needs to be more clear communication between the two roles to create a better relationship. When a student has a negative behavior and the teacher feels that needs to be addressed by an administrator, they should feel comfortable to ask for that support. But it seems that usually this does not occur because teachers don’t see the administrative side of a situation.

This response reiterates the importance of communication between teachers and administrators when managing student conduct. The next response also reiterates the importance of communication:

When an administrator steps into help manage conduct (whether in an altercation or when a referral has been made), the teachers rarely get feedback about the result of that interaction or the purpose behind the inaction. This breeds distrust between teachers and administrators and a negative feeling from teachers that the administrators do not have their backs when it comes to student behavior.

The next participant highlighted the use of data:

There have been countless times where inconsistency between staff has been the main problem when developing or working on a management problem. There has also been countless times that I have brought data to the admin showcasing a problem and it has been agreed there is a problem and then it is never actually solved or even an attempt made.

All of these responses from participants help get a better understanding in answering RQ 2 and 3.

### **Chapter Summary**

The district's administrative documents and data provided background information to help understand the district's demographics as well as policies and procedures on managing student conduct. The survey questions provided insight about the participant's unique perspective about the relationship between teachers and administrators, how comfortable they are in managing student conduct, and their perceptions about the training involved with managing student conduct. The semi-

structured virtual one-on-one interview expanded upon the participant's perspective about managing student conduct. This chapter primarily focused on the type of data collected and how it aligns with the research question and NPT codes. The next chapter will provide a summary of the findings and the implications.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, I explored the interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers and their perceptions of each other in the implementation of the student conduct policies in their school. My aim in this study was not to change policy or procedures regarding student conduct. Rather, I sought to gain a better understanding of how these interpersonal relationships between administrators and teachers shaped the implementation of district policies and to make recommendations for change if needed.

In this study, I sought to answer three research questions. These were:

RQ 1: How do teachers and administrators perceive their own role in the implementation of the district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 2: How do teachers perceive the roles and responsibilities of administrators in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

RQ 3: How do administrators perceive the roles and responsibilities of teachers in the implementation of district procedures on student conduct?

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the findings for the research questions. I then discuss the implications of my findings for policy, practice, and future research.

## **Summary of Findings**

In reviewing the district's online database and the district's handbook on student conduct, I sought to answer the three research questions. In addition to analyzing these documents, I conducted and analyzed results from 58 electronic survey responses and 17 semi-structured interviews. After analyzing the data from these sources, the most apparent NPT codes were Individual and Communal Specification. Individual Specification in the Coherence Phase helps individuals understand their specific tasks and responsibilities around a set of practice, specifically in this study about teachers and administrators individually managing student conduct. Communal Specification has to do with collective sense making, when individuals work together to build a shared understanding around a set of practices. Specifically in this study, how teachers and administrators work together in managing student conduct.

### **Research Question 1**

In seeking to explore how teachers and administrators perceive their own role in the implementation of the district procedures on student conduct, my analysis revealed that many of the participants fully understood their role in managing student conduct and felt comfortable in that role. When participants described how they managed student conduct at their specific school, the responses aligned with elements in the district's handbook on student conduct.

Based on the results of this study, participants indicated that teachers' primary responsibilities are to manage behaviors in the classroom based on their own autonomy and with the guidance from the school and district policies and procedures. Administrators' primary responsibilities are to manage behaviors school wide and to

support teachers in managing student behavior. One of the main responsibilities reported by participants in managing student behavior is building positive relationships with students and providing multiple opportunities for students to correct their behavior and stay in the learning environment. It was important to all participants to protect the instructional time for all students. The district delineated these responsibilities in the district's handbook as proactive approaches to managing student conduct.

My study highlight the importance of building relationships with students, but so does previous research. Previous research supports building relationships with students as an important element in managing student conduct (Anyon et al., 2018; Mowen et al., 2020). While the district's handbook does not explicitly outline how teachers and administrators build relationships with students, participants in the interview provided some input. Participants in the interview suggested that both teachers and administrators build relationships by recognizing positive behaviors, getting to know little details about the students, using their names frequently, and greeting them during every interaction.

In addition to building relationships with students, my study indicated the importance of keeping students in the learning environment. Participants' responses in the interview indicated some strategies that they used to keep students in the classroom. Both teachers and administrators used one-on-one conversations with students, frequent communication with parents/guardians, and clear expectations that are taught and retaught consistently and equitably. Previous research also supports keeping students in the classroom and not using ISAP and suspensions as a means to manage student conduct (Camacho and Krezmien, 2020; Hinze-Pifer & Sartain, 2018).

The importance of my study is that it has taken previous research and used personal accounts from educators to reiterate the importance of building relationships and protecting instructional time for all students. In addition, the participants in the study also indicated the use of PBIS and Restorative Practices. These strategies appeared in the district's handbook as proactive approaches to managing student conduct. My study indicated that the participants understood their role and responsibilities, and that their perceptions aligned with the district's handbook. This is important for leaders in the district to know that their building level leaders and staff understood the handbook on managing student behavior.

### **Research Question 2 and 3**

In seeking to explore how teachers and administrators perceived their counterpart's role in the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct, participant's perceptions indicated that both teachers and administrators were involved in the management of student conduct. Teachers were perceived as managing student conduct daily in their classrooms in various ways; utilizing some sort of behavior management plan that incorporated building relationships with students. Based on the results of the study; administrators were perceived to be supportive of teachers in managing student conduct, ensuring that teachers and students were abiding by the school and district procedures. It was also important that administrators build relationships with students. My analysis in answering these research questions aligned with the elements outlined in the district's handbook on managing student conduct.

My analysis also revealed that the lack of communication made it difficult for the role groups to truly understand and appreciate their counterpart's responsibilities. The

participant's responses indicated that communication is not only important in managing student conduct effectively but also in having a positive interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators.

Participants perceived that administrators were not effective in managing student conduct when they were not consistent with student and teacher expectations, did not provide quick feedback to students and teachers, and were not transparent with their decisions and management of student conduct. The study indicated that participants perceived that teachers that did not have effective classroom management plans were not effective at managing student conduct. All participants perceived the importance of both teachers and administrators building relationships with students as effective strategies for managing student conduct.

### **Implications**

I will now discuss the implications of my study. First, I touch upon the implications of my study for policy, focusing on policies at the district level. I then turn my attention to the implications of my study for practice, focusing on the actions that educational leaders and teachers should undertake. I ground and rationalize these recommendations based on my findings. Finally, I make recommendations on the directions for future research, suggesting ways in which future research may improve upon the limitations of my own research (e.g., inability to differentiate respondents' roles).



## **Policy**

The aim of my study was not to change policy or procedures that the district or the school has in regards to managing student conduct. The aim of the study was to understand how administrators and teachers work individually and together in managing student conduct and how that factors into the interpersonal relationship between the two. While it was not the aim of the study, it is hard to answer the research questions without understanding the procedures and policies in place at both the district and the school level.

The participants' responses aligned with the procedures outlined in the district's handbook. My analysis revealed the implementation of these procedures at the building level. There were many variations in how they implemented the district's handbook at the building level. Based on the participant's responses, my analysis revealed that both teachers and administrators have guidelines but also autonomy in managing student behaviors.

One suggestion that I would recommend, based on the majority of the participant's responses, is to provide other consequences or resources other than ISAP or suspensions for students that misbehave. While the participant's responses did not have alternate suggestions, I would encourage this district and other districts to avoid the use of ISAP or suspensions in their policies. Another suggestion is to outline the expectations for teachers and administrators on how to communicate with each other in the process of managing student conduct explicitly. My analysis revealed that the lack of communication made it difficult for the role groups to truly understand and appreciate their counterpart's responsibilities. The participant's responses indicated that

communication is not only important in managing student conduct effectively but also in having a positive interpersonal relationship.

### **Practice**

I am an educator that cares about my relationships, not only with my students but also with my colleagues. As both a teacher and as an administrator, I see how student behaviors can affect the day-to-day operations and interactions that I have. Therefore, my hope is that this study influences the profession of educators that manage student conduct daily and want to have a positive interpersonal relationship with their colleagues.

A suggestion that I would have for future practice, based on the participant's responses, is to take into account the balance between autonomy and consistency. Several participants mentioned the lack of consistency being an issue when managing student conduct. On the other hand, participants also mentioned that they enjoyed the freedom to be able to manage behaviors in the classroom based on their professional judgment. While this balance is hard to achieve, based on the recommendations from this study, it is possible with communication and transparency (within reason).

In addition to increasing communication between teachers and administrators in managing student conduct, I would also recommend that districts and school leaders provide adequate resources to help teachers and administrators manage student behavior. The analysis indicated that both teachers and administrators did not want or believe it was helpful to remove students from the learning environment. The analysis also indicated that many teachers and administrators did not know what else to do besides put students in ISAP or suspend them when managing their behaviors. While the participants did not have specific examples of alternative ways to manage student conduct, many did

recommend the need for better resources to support student's social and emotional wellbeing.

Based on my recommendations for future practice, I would also recommend frequent professional development (PDs) centered on managing student conduct. PDs would provide teachers and administrators more resources, input, and support in managing student conduct. Teachers and administrators would learn how to implement district and school procedures effectively and work together in managing student conduct. The PDs would also incorporate facilitating and modeling conversations between teachers and administrators so that both roles knew the expectations for effectively communicating and managing student behaviors together.

### **Future Research**

A limitation to the study is the fact that I was not able to identify more specifics about the participants, particularly their role as an educator. This limitation hindered my ability to answer the research questions because I was not able to report whether the participant's perceptions were in regards to the role of an administrator or a teacher. This indication is important for future research because it helps practitioners understand the role of their counterpart's responsibilities in managing student behavior.

I hope that future researchers can have more freedom in the type of questions they can ask and be able to be more specific with their questions. The results of this study would have had better implications if I was able to know the participant's role and if I was able to ask questions about their perceptions. Specifically, I wished I asked more questions about the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. However, due to ethical reasons perceived by the district in their review of my study

application, I could not ask the participants to comment about their colleagues' ability to execute the district procedures regarding managing student conduct. They also were not able to comment about their colleagues due to the power dynamic between an administrator and teacher.

In addition to the limitations set by the District, another limitation that I had was inexperience in creating my own electronic survey and conducting the semi-structured interview. After analyzing the results, I wish I could have asked follow up questions to get more detail. For instance, I would ask the participants their perceptions on how to improve training on managing student conduct. This question would have allowed me to be able to give better suggestions for future practice. In addition, I wish I asked follow up questions asking for more detail when participants mentioned a management plan, behavior matrix, or writing a referral for a behavior incident.

Another limitation of my study was the lack of diversity of the participants. I used convenient sampling and as a result, most of the participants were white females and educators that worked at the high school level. Future research should include not only the role that the individual has in education but also strive for a more diverse sample not only in demographics but also in their work setting. A positive that my study had was that I used NPT as the theoretical framework for researching implementation processes in education. I hope that researchers find the benefit of using NPT in relation to educational research and utilize it as their theoretical framework.

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## APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Investigator(s) name & address:

Advisor and Principal Investigator:

W. Kyle Ingle, Ph.D.

Educational Leadership, Evaluation, & Organizational Development

The University of Louisville

1905 South 1st Street

Louisville, Kentucky 40292

(502) 852-6097

Amy Ghibaudy

University of Louisville

7315 Maria Avenue

Louisville, KY 40222; [a0ghib01@louisville.edu](mailto:a0ghib01@louisville.edu)

Site(s) where study is to be conducted: Teachers and administrators in a large urban school district

Phone number for subjects to call for questions: Amy Ghibaudy at (859) 327 - 4226

### ***Introduction and Background Information***

You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by Amy Ghibaudy (doctoral student) under the direction of W. Kyle Ingle, PhD. The study is sponsored by the University of Louisville, Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and Organizational Development (ELEOD). The study will take place at a large urban school district. The estimated sample size will be teachers and administrators at various schools in the large urban school district (approximately 100 or less participants).

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this study is to collect and analyze data on teacher and administrators' perceptions of implementing district procedures on student conduct in the high school setting.

### ***Procedures***

In this study, you will be asked to answer an electronic survey. The survey will ask for demographic information as well as include Likert questions on a scale of 1 - 4. You will also be asked to participate in an interview to identify themes pertaining to implementing the district procedures regarding student conduct (60 minutes). You will have the opportunity to review the final research findings.

### ***Potential Risks***

While the use of pseudonyms will help keep the privacy of participants confidential, total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to limited sample size.

### ***Benefits***

The possible benefits of this study include the opportunity for school districts to include my findings as part of their implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct. The possible benefits to society include informing and potentially changing how school personnel implement district procedures regarding student conduct. The information collected may not benefit you directly but may be helpful to others.

### ***Compensation***

You will not be compensated for your time, inconvenience, or expenses while you are in this study.

### ***Security***

Total privacy cannot be guaranteed. Your privacy will be protected to the extent permitted by law. If the results from this study are published, your name will not be made public; pseudonyms will be used, and participants will be identified by letter. While unlikely, the following may look at the study records:

### ***Security***

All data will be stored on a password-protected computer. Hard copy documents will be stored in a locked file at the investigator's home. Everything will be destroyed within six months of the study's completion.

### ***Voluntary Participation***

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study you may stop taking part at any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify. You will be told about any changes that may affect your decision to continue in the study.

As a voluntary activity, the subject will not be rewarded with, or penalized by withholding, educational or professional opportunities or credit (e.g., grades; field trips; promotions; trainings) as a condition for participation in the activities/methods (e.g., surveys; interviews) identified in this informed consent form.

Due to collective bargaining agreements for certified staff in the district, any request for participation in research-related activities outside of the scope of their regular job responsibilities must be voluntary during or outside of contracted hours.

### ***Contact Persons, Research Subject's Rights, Questions, Concerns, and Complaints***

If you have any concerns or complaints about the study or the study staff, you have three options.

You may contact Amy Ghibaudy at (859) 327 - 4226 or at a0ghib01@louisville.edu

You may contact W. Kyle Ingle, PhD at (502) 852-6097 or at william.ingle@louisville.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a study subject, questions, concerns or complaints, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPPO) (502) 852-5188. You may discuss any questions about your rights as a subject, in secret, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the HSPPPO staff. The IRB is an independent committee composed of members of the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as lay members of the community not connected with these institutions. The IRB has reviewed this study.

If you want to speak to a person outside the University, you may call 1-877-852-1167. You will be given the chance to talk about any questions, concerns or complaints in secret. This is a 24 hour hotline answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

This study and all methods were reviewed and approved by the district's Institutional Review Board. For more information about participation in a research study and about an institutional review board (IRB), which is a group of people who review the research to protect your rights, please visit the district IRB's website. You can access more information about your rights as a participant and the protection of human research participants at the federal Health and Humans Services at that website. If you do not have access to the internet, copies of these Federal regulations are available by calling the district at 502 - 485 - 3036.

***Acknowledgment and Signatures***

This informed consent document is not a contract. This document tells you what will happen during the study if you choose to take part. Your signature indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in the study. You are not giving up any legal rights to which you are entitled by signing this informed consent document. Your signature also ensures that participants understand that participation in the research is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any point without penalty. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

_____	_____	_____
Subject Name (Please Print)	Signature of Subject	Date Signed
_____	_____	_____
Printed Name of Investigator	Signature of Investigator	Date Signed
_____	_____	_____

List of Investigators: Phone Number: Amy Ghibaudy 859 - 327- 4226

## APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT CORRESPONDENCE

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Amy Ghibaudy and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and Organizational Development (ELEOD) at the University of Louisville. I am writing as I am conducting a sequential mixed methods study to collect and analyze data on teachers and administrators' perceptions of implementing district procedures on student conduct. The primary goal of my study is to investigate how the perception of implementing district procedures regarding student conduct influences the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. Your opinion is important to the study and for the implications on the school and district level. My hope is that you participate in both completing the electronic survey and in the virtual interview about your perceptions of implementing the district procedures. Your input could help better the implementation and the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes and the interview will take 60 minutes. If you have any questions, please contact me via email at [a0ghib01@louisville.edu](mailto:a0ghib01@louisville.edu) or call 859 - 327 – 4226

Thank you in advance and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Amy Ghibaudy

Doctoral Candidate, Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and Organizational Development (ELEOD)  
University of Louisville

## APPENDIX C: ELECTRONIC SURVEY QUESTIONS

You are being invited to participate in a research study by answering the following online survey about the perceptions you have about yourself and your counterpart's role in the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct. There are no known risks for your participation in this research study. The information collected may not benefit you directly. However, the information learned in this study may be helpful to others. The information you provide will be collected and analyzed to assess whether there are differences in perceptions of implementing district procedures regarding student conduct among school leaders and teachers within your school. Your completed survey will be collected using the Qualtrics survey software and stored on password protected, university owned computers. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Individuals from the Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation, and Organizational Development, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPO), and other regulatory agencies may inspect these records. In all other respects, however, the data will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Should the data be published, your school, district, or individual identity will not be disclosed.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. By completing this survey you agree to take part in this research study. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study, you may stop taking part at any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact Dr. Kyle Ingle at 502-852-6097.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 852-5188. You can discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject, in private, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also call this number if you have other questions about the research, and you cannot reach the research staff, or want to talk to someone else. The IRB is an independent committee made up of people from the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as people from the community not connected with these institutions.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to give your name, you may call 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24 hour hotline answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

If you are willing to complete this survey, please select YES.

Background Information:

What is your gender?

Male (1)

Female (2)

Non-binary (3)

Prefer not to say (4)

How do you identify in terms of race/ethnic identity?

White, non-Hispanic (1)

Hispanic (2)

Black or African American (3)

Native American (4)

Asian/ Pacific Islander (5)

Multiracial (6)

Prefer not to say (7)

What is your level of education?

Bachelor's

Master's

Specialist's

Doctorate

How many years have you been in education?

How many schools have you worked at?

What positively contributes to the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators?

What negatively contributes to the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators?

Questions on managing student conduct

(when answering these questions about others, please consider the role rather than the individual person)

**How comfortable are you in your role in managing student conduct?**

I do not fully understand my role and do not feel comfortable in my role

I do not fully understand my role but feel comfortable in my role

I fully understand my role, but do not feel comfortable in my role

I fully understand my role and feel comfortable in my role

**How often have you received training in managing student conduct?**

I was never formally trained through district-led professional development.

I was trained only at the beginning of my career (either by the school or district).

I was trained inconsistently throughout my career (either by the school or district).

I receive training yearly, which is led by either the school or district.

I receive training yearly, which is led by both the school and district.

**How effective was the training you received in managing student conduct?**

Not effective at all

Slightly effective

Moderately effective

Very effective

Extremely effective

**How would you describe the effect of managing student conduct on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators?**

Managing student conduct has had a negative effect on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators.

Managing student conduct has had no effect on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators.

Managing student conduct has had an improved effect on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators.

Managing student conduct has had a positive effect on interpersonal relationships between teachers and administrators.

**5. Any other information that would help me better understand the factors that affect the interpersonal relationship that you have with other teachers and administrators?**

**6. Would you be willing to participate in a one-on-one interview? If so, please provide your name and personal email in the field below:**



## APPENDIX D: VIRTUAL ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### **Stage 1: Introduction & Statement of Purpose (10 minutes)** *Time started:*

---

Thank you for taking part in this virtual one-on-one interview. My name is Amy Ghibaudy and I am conducting research on the perceptions that teachers and administrators have of their own and their counterpart's role in the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct. Prior to participating in this one-on-one interview, you completed an electronic survey. The purpose of this interview is to understand your perceptions and experiences related to the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct. The feedback you provide me today will help me evaluate the perceptions, the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct, and the interpersonal relationship between teachers and administrators. This interview offers me the opportunity to impact the future of the profession as well as future research.

I want to let you know that I will be recording our conversations and the recording will automatically be transcribed by the digital service that we are using. I will be analyzing the transcripts as part of my data analysis. You have reviewed and signed the informed consent prior to completing the electronic survey. As a reminder of informed consent, your identity will not be revealed in any reports, conference presentations, or publications that might result from this study. A pseudonym will be used to identify you, your school, and the district in any conference presentations of this research project or any manuscripts submitted for publication. The principal investigator and I are the only ones who will have access to the file linking the participants with the pseudonyms. All documents and data submitted to the evaluators will be password protected. Files will be destroyed no later than January 2025.

Do you have any questions? [Allow time for questions]

Before we begin, please share your name, your school, and your role within the school.

### **Stage 2: Ground Rules (10 minutes)**

I am glad that you are able to participate in this virtual interview and I value the work that you do for the schools. Before we begin, I want to lay down some ground rules for our discussion.

- I want you to know that I am mindful of your time and plan on keeping us for 60 minutes. I have purposely kept the number of questions short for this purpose.
- There are no right or wrong answers to the questions that I ask.
- Since we have limited time, I'll ask that questions or comments off the topic be discussed after the interview.
- As the Facilitator, I might move our conversations along to ensure that we cover all of the questions that we have in the interest of time.

- It is safe for you to freely express your opinions. Your experiences and opinions are important.
- Please feel free to ask questions for clarity if you do not understand something.

Are there any questions so far?

Stage 3: Interview Questions (40 minutes)

If there are no further questions or concerns, we will start with the questions. Coherence - Planning Phase Questions

1. Describe how student conduct is managed at your school?
2. What does student conduct effect?
3. What does the management of student conduct affect?

Collectively Interpreting It (Communal Specification)

4. What role do teachers play in managing student conduct?
5. What role do administrators play in managing student conduct?
6. How do you engage with other people during the process of managing student conduct?
7. What aspects of managing student conduct do you feel are effective and working? How do you know or what evidence do you have?
8. What aspects of managing student conduct do you feel are not working? How do you know or what evidence do you have?

Is there anything else that you would like to share about the management of student conduct at your school or across the district?

## APPENDIX E: STRUCTURED ETHICAL REFLECTION

Basic Values	Developing Partnerships	Constructing Research Question	Planning Project/Action	Recruiting Participants	Collecting Data/ Taking Action	Analyzing Data/ Evaluating Action	Member Checking	Going Public (Presentation & Publication)
<p><b>Critical-thinking:</b> the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue</p> <p><b>Self-reflection:</b> serious thought about one's character, actions, and motives</p>	Searching for a variety of perspectives and people from different backgrounds to ensure everyone's opinion is represented	Ensuring that the research questions are useful to practitioners and critically examine the issue	Critically preplanning and anticipating aspects of the project. Ensuring that there is continual check ins to process the project	Looking to involve and recruit ll stakeholders that have an investment in the research topic	Collecting a variety of data that is sufficient in quantity and quality,	Critically examining the data and practicing ethical analyzing procedures	Being flexible with participants and eliciting feedback at multiple points in the process to reflect upon.	Reflecting upon people's responses from the findings and reflecting on the process, the presentation, and future implications
<p><b>Self Awareness:</b>conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires</p>	Understanding my own role in the relation to the participants and reflecting on the power dynamic	Understanding my role within the research question to ensure that it is not leading for participants to answer a certain way	Reflecting upon my role in the planning and ensuring that I am being a responsible researcher in all aspects of the project	Being aware of my own biases and position in the research topic to ensure that there is equal representation of all stakeholders	Being aware of my position in the collection of the data and ensuring that I am meeting all of my responsibilities	Being aware of my own role in the analysis part and ensuring that I am not skewing the data or misrepresenting by making errors	Ensuring there is open communication so that I can listen and reflect upon all participants' voices	Being aware of my role in the entire process and how that may be perceived by the public.
<p><b>Open Mindedness:</b> receptive to new ideas</p>	Ensure I am reflecting upon my own biases and ensuring I am open to other perspectives that might counter my own opinions	Being open to changes in the research questions, no matter what point in the process that may be	Being open to changes in the project and in the planning	Being open to all stakeholders and not leaving anyone out based on personal opinions and experiences.	Not just collecting data that is convenient but ensuring that there is a variety of data to analyze	Not judging responses and being open to all data. All data that is valid is useful in the analysis.	Being open to all narratives	Being open to the responses that might come after presenting the data

<b>Change Agent:</b> initiates and manages change in an organization	Ensuring that all stakeholders have a space in the investigation to voice concerns and provide recommendation	Developing questions that either lead to awareness or change	Ensuring that the planning and project reflect the examination of the research topic	Recruiting stakeholders that believe in change and are open to investigating the research topic	Revisiting data as the process goes on to ensure all themes and interpretations match the goals of the study	Ensuring that the voices of the participants is seen in the analysis of the data	Providing participants with multiple opportunities to participate in the research	Ensuring that after I reflect upon people's reactions, that I take those into consideration for practical uses for myself and others
<b>Leadership:</b> the action of leading a group of people or organization	Leading the discussions in the Group Level Assessment to ensure everyone's voice is heard and respected	Ensuring that the research questions are important enough to be investigated by the people that are affected by the results	Leading the project in an ethical manner that represents the participants	Being a leader in recruiting and presenting the research topic to stakeholders to increase buy in to participant	Collecting data in an efficient but accurate way so that all data is accounted for.	Being the leader of the analysis of the data and ensuring that the data doesn't just represent what I would want it to but instead the voices of the participants	Representing the voices of the participants accurately	Owning my research process and being vocal about the process and the results. Leading the discussion around presenting it to the public

## APPENDIX F: EXPLORATION OF RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

### **Researching the Self**

I enrolled in the doctorate program for several reasons. First, I love learning and will always be an active learner throughout my life. Valuing education was instilled in me at a young age by both my grandparents and parents; who all graduated from college with a bachelor's degree. I understood the sacrifices my family made to ensure that my sisters and I got a good education. I did not take for granted that my mom worked on a factory line at Toyota to make enough money to provide us a financially stable home. I did not take for granted the amount of hours my dad took to take my sisters and me to school and to participate in any extracurricular activities. I did not take for granted that my grandparents took money out of their retirement to ensure we had enough tuition for the private school we attended.

Three out of my four grandparents are Czechoslovakian and my grandpa on my dad's side is Italian. I do not know much about my heritage or cultural background because it was not talked about a lot when I was growing up. The small details that I know is that my grandparents came from big families and are from Illinois. There was a lot of turmoil between my extended and nuclear family and therefore a lot of history was not passed down from generation to generation. I was only close to my dad's side of the family growing up and now as an adult, all of my grandparents are deceased. I currently only have one living parent, my mother, who is distant from her extended family. I would love to do genetic testing, like 23andme, to find some more detail but without the stories to go with them, I will still only know a little about my heritage and cultural background.

While my cultural background influences the way, I view and experience the world, my upbringing is more influential. My culture and race are a part of who I am and how I experience the world. However, my upbringing is why I am the way I am and why I experience the world the way that I do. My home was filled with love and joy but also turmoil and heartbreak. My parents divorced when I was in middle school and my two sisters, because of the age gap, were in college by the time I was in middle school. There are details of my life throughout the years that are constant reminders of why I act, feel, and behave the way that I do now.

I am from Lexington, Kentucky and while I do not feel comfortable sharing all of my life experiences, all of them have influenced me to get to where I am today. I went to a small private high school and college that predominantly had white students and white staff members. While the demographics were not diverse, my learning was. I felt that I had a good educational foundation in multicultural competency and had multiple opportunities to have collaborative conversations centered on race, culture, and equity. The experiences I had growing up and my family have shaped who I am and why education is so important.

Education is important to me not only because I understand the sacrifices my family made, but also because of my lived experiences. With an older sister that is special needs, I knew the hardships she and my parents went through with her education. There was little to no support or guidance for both my sister and my parents. At a young age, I saw the inequality in treatment and was motivated to fight for better opportunities for her and others. I knew education gave me opportunities that not everyone was able to get and while I was thankful, I wanted to do something about it for others.

Not only did my background influence me to go into education, but so did my love for learning. I have always loved learning new things, especially if they make me a better person or influence me as an educator. While I continually learn informally through my lived and professional experiences, I find it important to learn in an institutional setting also. This eagerness to learn has led me to continue my education by first starting with my M.Ed. in school counseling. This degree set the precedent in how much of a better educator I was by continuing my education. I was able to serve the needs of my students better, collaborate in conversations and lead my colleagues in better serving the needs of all students. This degree gave me the motivation to continue with my education with an Ed.S. in Educational Administration and now my Ed.D.

My educational journey has helped me be a better educator that is able to use my knowledge to better support students and help other educators. As an educator, I try to use my background and education to understand the students' perspectives, backgrounds, and needs. A part of being a better educator is understanding my own biases and positionality as an educator. In questioning my own biases throughout the years, I have understood that I have to be conscious of being a white female that does not look like the majority of the students I serve. It has been important to me to question what it means to be a white female in education and as an advocate for my students that have a different culture and upbringing.

All three schools that I have worked at professionally have not resembled the schools that I went to as a child. I have worked at three different schools in a large urban school district. The district is the largest, most diversified district in the State. I was a teacher for seven years at my first school, Seneca. Seneca was a Title 1 school, minority

students were the majority in the school, and there was a high population of English Language learners (ELL). As a teacher, it was important to me to engage in open conversations with my students about race, culture, and biases. It was important to confront events that were happening in my students' communities that affected them. I also made it a priority to get to know my students by sharing about myself and investing in who they were.

I was a Counselor for a short time at Valley High School. This school was a much smaller Title 1 school, minority students were the majority, and there were a lot more behavior incidents than I had ever experienced. The largest school I have worked at is my current location as a Counselor, Ballard High School. Now, as a Counselor, I continue to engage with my students about race, culture, and biases. In addition, I also now lead conversations with teachers about the importance of practicing similar strategies in their own classrooms. I ensure that I participate and lead yearly training on equity and participate in book studies that push myself and others as educators to work with diverse populations.

While I strive to continually be conscious about my positionality as an educator, I now have to understand my positionality as a researcher. If my goal of research is to be a change agent, then I have to check my biases and understand how that affects my impact on others. In checking my biases; I have to continually consider my position of power as an administrator, race as a white person, and gender as a female. In order to be consciously aware of my position as a researcher, there are a couple of strategies I can implement throughout the research process to be true to my intentions and to true to the research questions.



In regards to being a white female, it is imperative that I understand my position in relation to the stakeholders in the research process. Milner (2007) suggests that researchers “should be actively engaged, thoughtful, and forthright regarding tensions that surface when conducting research where issues of race and culture are concerned” (p.388). It is important that I engage in open conversations with stakeholders, especially with topics of race and culture. In addition to engaging with the stakeholders, it is important that I also engage in being an active learner in regards to race and critical race theory.

In addition to being actively engaged in conversations about race, I will also ensure to provide informed consent and to be transparent with all stakeholders. Having open conversations with stakeholders is critical to ensuring that all of their voices are valued in the research process. Milner emphasizes this when he says that researchers need to “honor the voice and perspectives of [stakeholders] regardless of what the [stakeholder] produce” (p.6). This statement stresses the importance of valuing all stakeholders and ensuring that my biases do not skew the impact of the research.

In understanding my position as a researcher, I not only need to be aware of being a white female but I also have to consider my position of power in the research process. As a counselor, it is important that I understand each stakeholders’ position and understand how that position is affected by my own position. With this understanding, it is important that all stakeholders see me as having an insider perspective that is working towards the benefit of others and education. My position as an administrator cannot get in the way of the stakeholders participating in the research process and therefore needs to be monitored and evaluated.

## **Researching the Self in Relation to Others**

In my research study, I am seeking to study administrators and teachers at multiple schools in a large urban school district. I will know more details about the participants once my study begins because both my electronic survey and virtual interview will include demographic information. These demographic questions will provide me with more information about who they are and what their experience is. This information is important to understand their answers and how race, culture, and their background influences their decisions, actions, and perceptions.

The racial and cultural background of my research participants influences how they experience the world, interact with each other, perceive and implement district procedures regarding student conduct. I know this to be true because I am an insider researcher who has been in their role as both a teacher and as an administrator. Both teachers and administrators are in places of power when it comes to implementing district procedures regarding student conduct. While their degree of power varies, they both make decisions that influence how the implementation happens and which students are affected by the implementation (McIntosh et al., 2018).

A barrier to this study is limiting my participants to just teachers and administrators. While these are two stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct, they are not the only one. Policy makers, District Board members, parents and guardians, and students are important stakeholders that will not be taken into account in my study. These stakeholders' perceptions about student behavior and how it should be managed is important in the implementation. In addition, their perceptions about race and equity also influences the implementation.

While these are all important stakeholders, it will be important that I am transparent about not including them in the research study due to circumstances that I cannot control.

While I have been in similar roles as the participants of the study, I have to balance my interests and opinions as both a researcher and as a practitioner. It is important to be consistent with my questions and reactions during the process so that I do not unintentionally influence the participants. Each participants' experience with race and culture is different and so is their experience with students and student discipline. This is why not only are my demographic questions important but so are the questions in my survey and interview. The questions I utilize must be impartial and not lead the participants to a certain bias or conclusion. I must ensure that the questions utilized in my study answer the intended research questions. Both my research method and theoretical framework will help answer my research questions.

I will utilize a sequential mixed methods case study design in the current investigation to answer the research questions. I will utilize an embedded single-case design because case studies are used when answering "how" or "why" questions about a contemporary set of events or when a researcher has little or no control (Yin, 2018). The sequential mixed methods will include an integration of both quantitative and qualitative data collection during the first phase and qualitative data collection in the second phase. The sequential mixed methods will help the credibility and robustness to the research topic (Ryu, 2020). This will help ensure that the data collected and analyzed will be comprehensive and equitable.

Throughout the research process, Normalization process theory (NPT) will be utilized as the theoretical framework. NPT theoretical constructs have four core

components; coherence, cognitive participation, collective action, and reflexive monitoring (May et al., 2018). These four constructs are used to understand the implementation process of a new practice or procedure. All components of NPT will be utilized in the data collection and analysis to understand the implementation of district procedures regarding student conduct. In understanding the implementation of district procedures, the equity of the implementation will also be evaluated to understand how race and culture influence the process.

NPT will be used during the data collection and analysis portions of my current investigation in order to answer the research questions. The coherence construct will help guide and analyze the individual's role in implementing the district's procedures. The cognitive participation will help expand upon these individual findings to analyze the collective implementation to ensure both teachers and administrators are effectively working together. The collective action phase will help to understand how the teachers and administrators work together and help determine any next steps that are needed. The reflexive monitoring phase will determine the sustainability of any changes that the research uncovers.

Milner (2007) highlights the importance of a framework that interprets and represents communities in a way that honors and maintains their integrity. Milner says that who conducts the research as well as "*how* education research is conducted may be just as important as *what* is actually discovered in a study" (p.10). As a researcher and practitioner, I will be mindful of Milner's advice and ensure that my analysis and conclusion is true to the participant's responses rather than my opinion.

### **Shifting from Self to System**

The racial discipline gap has been growing since the 1970s (Gregory et al., 2011; McIntosh et al., 20018). The racial discipline gap highlights how black students, more specifically black male students are disproportionately disciplined more than their white counterparts. This racial discipline gap has been correlated to negative outcomes for students of color; truancy, missed instructional time, lower academic achievement, and dropout rates (Arcia, 2006). It is important that key stakeholders work together in order to combat this racial discipline gap so that all students can be successful in education.

Not only does the racial discipline affect students of color, it also affects the culture and climate of a building. “School climate and safety shape the educational lives of students. Feeling unsafe at school negatively affects student achievement” (Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018, p. 209). Students have to feel safe in their learning environment in order to feel a sense of belonging and be successful in school. Not only do students need to feel safe in their learning environment but teachers also need to feel safe in their working environment. This sense of safety stems from policies and procedures that key stakeholders create and enforce at the building level.

Policies and procedures not only need to be equitable but so does the implementation of these by key stakeholders. Key stakeholders in education have a responsibility to improve equity for all students by ensuring policies and practices address racial disparities (Perna & Finney, 2014). Past research has shown that while many educational policies are well intended and seek to address racial inequality, they fail to meet their desired results (Felix & Trinidad Adrián, 2020). It is not only important that the policies are equitable at the beginning but also throughout the implementation

process. Stakeholders need to monitor the progress of implementation and ensure there are equitable outcomes that match the intended outcomes.

Many of these well intended policies fall short of achieving equitable practices for all students for numerous reasons. A key consideration is which cultural group decides which student behaviors are challenging and warranting disciplinary action (Gibson et al., 2014). School districts and key stakeholders have to be intentional about who is involved in creating and implementing these policies to ensure that they are reflective of the diversity in the student population. It is also important to evaluate the implementation of these policies and practices and ensure there is alignment in the intended results. Evaluating the outcome of implementation is important to ensure there are no issues in schools lacking the capacity to fully implement or misinterpreting the intended goals (Felix & Trinidad Adrián, 2020).

Milner (2017) warns against the unforeseen dangers in the development, maintenance and implementation of policies under which students continue to be suspended and expelled based on their race and culture. Some of these dangers stem from generalizations, misnomers, stereotypes, and biases that teachers and administrators have in controlling and correcting students. One strategy that Milner suggests is for researchers and participants to engage in reflection together to think through what is happening in a particular research community, with race and culture placed at the core. While I plan to reflect during the entire research process, this will be especially important during the virtual individual interview that I have with my participants.

The district in this study strives to promote equitable academic programs and services that respond to the needs of a diverse student population to prepare students for a

changing workplace in a global economy. One strategy that the district has implemented in order to support all students is by creating a Division devoted to diversity, equity, & poverty. The purpose of the department is to ensure that there are equitable programs, services, and policies in place to support the needs of a diverse population. In addition to this department, the district has three pillars of success that help guide policies and the work of each stakeholder. The three pillars of success are a backpack of success skills, racial equity, culture and climate.

The current research study aims at understanding the implementation of student conduct policies and how this implementation affects the relationship between administrators and teachers. In investigating this relationship, it is also important to understand whether or not the implementation of this district policy is equitable. There will be research questions that address whether or not teachers and administrators feel that the implementation is equitable for all students.

It is important that the district considers equitable practices especially when it comes to student conduct and discipline. It is important because it affects the culture of a building, the working environment for staff, and the learning environment for students. The student demographics in the 2019- 20 school year consisted of 37% Black students, 45% White students, 11% Hispanic, and 6% identified as other for race and ethnicity. When you analyze student discipline data for the same year, the suspension rates were not proportional to the student demographics. There were 1139 white male students suspended compared to 2732 Black male students. In addition, there were 547 White female students suspended compared to 1937 Black Females. While the district strives

for equitable practices and policies, this data demonstrates that there is still a need for improvement on practices, policies, and implementation.

While my research study does not aim to change policies or procedures, I do aim to ensure that the implementation is effective and equitable for all students. Ensuring that the implementation is equitable and effective in attaining its intended outcomes will help the relationship between the stakeholders involved. By better understanding how the implementation of procedures regarding student conduct affects the relationships between teachers and administrators, there will be a better understanding of how to improve the culture of a building as well as for future practices that are equitable.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Amy Ghibaudy

### **Education and Certification**

*Transylvania University*, Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics/ Minor in education for certification, 3.5 cumulative GPA, *Graduation: May 2014 Cum Laude*

*Praxis Certifications: Mathematics: Content Knowledge, Mathematics: Proofs, Models, and Problems, Part 1, and Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades 7-12.*

*University of Louisville*, **M.Ed. in School Counseling**, 3.983 cumulative GPA, *Graduation: May 2018*

*University of Louisville*, **Ed.S. in Educational Administration**, 4.0 cumulative GPA, *Graduation, May 2020*

*School leaders Licensure Assessment*, score: passed

*University of Louisville*, **Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development**, *Expected Graduation, 2023*

### **Professional Experience**

**Freshman Academy Counselor at Valley High School**, November 2021 to June 2022

- I. Conducted guidance lessons that fostered social emotional learning to students during the 2021-22 Summer Backpack league
- II. Collaborated to organize the Freshman Academy Commitment Ceremony in order to help students commit to their academic future
- III. Lead and participated in Academy wide meetings to ensure the success of every student and consistency amongst teachers
- IV. Lead and participated in Team Lead meetings to organize cross curricular planning and academy wide activities
- V. Help organize systems and incentives based on academic, attendance, and behavioral expectations set for students
- VI. Used Infinite Campus to create schedules that aligned with upperclassmen student preferences and graduation requirements
- VII. Created schedules in Infinite Campus for incoming middle school students so that ninth grade requirements would be met.

- VIII. Read and utilized student's IEPs in order to schedule them into classes as well as facilitate conversations with students about accommodations and modifications
- IX. Conducted classroom guidance lessons to inform students of the scheduling process, graduation requirements, and the KEEs program
- X. Reviewed transcripts in order to guide students through the scheduling process as well as create systems for recovery and intervention
- XI. Used peer mediation and bullying protocols to ensure students would resolve social issues.
- XII. LEAD report Coordinator; Ensured that teachers were up to date with their certifications and taught the correct classes with the correct students
- XIII. Distinguished College Scholars (DCS) Coordinator; recruited potential candidates, organized program requirements, hosted events, and monitored student participation
- XIV. 504 Coordinator; Lead 504 team meetings to ensure students received adequate accommodations and ensured teachers followed 504 plans
- XV. Lead the pilot of 3DE by all freshmen teachers to plan cross curricular content and coordinate with business partners
- XVI. Conferenced with Seniors about graduation requirements as well as post-secondary plans
- XVII. Gifted and Talented Coordinator; Identified students, collaborated with teachers about progress monitoring, and followed district and state guidelines.
- XVIII. Member of the attendance committee to ensure school wide systems tracked and responded to student data
- XIX. Collaborated with the Assistant Principal and Behavior Coach to mediate and implement restorative practices as well as track data

**Certified Teacher at Seneca High School, August 2014 to 2021**

- Effectively co-taught Pre-Algebra and Algebra classes with a resource teacher in order to meet the needs of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP).
- Taught a Career Exploration class that helped students learn school policies and procedures, life lessons, character building, and career and college preparation
- Team Lead for five years; Organizing meetings and collaborating with cross curricular teachers in order to manage behaviors and effectively differentiate instruction
- Participated in Project-Based Learning by doing a teacher externship with the YMCA, developed a well-planned project, and executed the project for students to complete
- PLC leader for four years; organized the collaboration of algebra 1 teachers to design instruction and ensure all students are successful in their learning.
- Taught and led Algebra 1 PLC to implement the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum in order to have a student-centered classroom environment.
- Knowledge of how to navigate MAP data and use it to guide teaching, differentiation, and regrouping in an Algebra 1 classroom.
- Coordinated Summer School for five years; Organized teachers to create standards based curriculum so that students had an opportunity to become proficient in content and recover classes
- Coordinated Extended School for two years to ensure that students were able to get tiered instruction

- Organized the Extended School and Summer School budget in order to accommodate over fifteen teachers
- Ensured adequate advertisement and two-way communication was established with parents, teachers, and students about Extended School and Summer School
- Created systems to ensure accurate data about student attendance and grade verification was kept.