

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** THE RELATIONSHIP OF SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS TO MALE STUDENTS' STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES, OFFICE DISCIPLINE REFERRALS, AND SUSPENSIONS IN AN URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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The purpose of this study was to examine differences between academic and behavioral outcomes for three cohorts of sixth grade boys enrolled at Starlight Middle School, a large, urban school in the Midwest. A comparison was made between pre-, partial, and full intervention data, during three consecutive years of implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) as a Tier 1, Response to Intervention (RTI) strategy. This study used an ex post facto design to examine relationships among variables in three cohorts of sixth grade boys. The dependent variables were office discipline referrals (ODRs), suspensions, and statewide standardized test scores from over 200 students in each cohort. The independent variables were ethnicity, special education, and socioeconomic status (SES).

Quantitative data analysis revealed a significant reduction in the percentage of boys suspended and in the percentage of boys who received ODRs by Year 3, the year of full SWPBS implementation. During the study, state standardized test mean scores showed no statistically significant differences overall or within demographic groups. However, students who received ODRs or suspensions had statistically significant decreases in mean test scores, compared to

boys with zero ODRs or suspensions. Boys who passed the ELA or mathematics portion of the state test had statistically significant lower mean rates of ODRs or suspensions, compared to boys who failed. SWPBS implementation resulted in statistically significant decreases in ODRs and suspensions for the general population of sixth grade boys, however students who were Black, receiving special education services, or low-SES status received disproportionate numbers of suspensions even in Year 3, as other research has found.