

2-7-2013

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: Can It Help Address The Problem Of Disproportionate Minority Representation In The Emotional Disturbance Disability Category?

Jodi Abraham Porter
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: <http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Porter, Jodi Abraham, "School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: Can It Help Address The Problem Of Disproportionate Minority Representation In The Emotional Disturbance Disability Category?" (2013). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 977.
<http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/977>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact cclouser@iup.edu, sara.parme@iup.edu.

STUDENT HAS RESTRICTED ACCESS TO FULL TEXT OF THE DISSERTATION.

ONLY COVER PAGES AND ABSTRACT ARE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT: CAN IT HELP ADDRESS THE
PROBLEM OF DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN THE
EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE DISABILITY CATEGORY?

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Jodi Abraham Porter

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2012

© 2012 by Jodi Abraham Porter
All Rights Reserved

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Educational and School Psychology

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Jodi Abraham Porter

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Joseph F. Kovaleski, D.Ed., Chairperson
Professor of Educational and School Psychology

William F. Barker, Ph.D.
Professor of Educational and School Psychology

Timothy J. Runge, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Educational and School Psychology

Kathleen McQuillan, Ph.D.
Educational Specialist
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Fairfax County Public Schools, VA

ACCEPTED

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: Can It Help Address The Problem Of Disproportionate Minority Representation In The Emotional Disturbance Disability Category?

Author: Jodi Abraham Porter

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Joseph F. Kovaleski

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. William F. Barker
Dr. Timothy J. Runge
Dr. Kathleen McQuillian

This research project investigated the possibility of School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) as a way to address racial/ethnic disproportionality in the Emotional Disturbance (ED) category. The sample consisted of 114 elementary schools from a suburban school district in the Mid-Atlantic region. There were 57 SWPBS schools and 57 non-SWPBS schools. SWPBS and non-SWPBS schools were matched on four demographic factors—student enrollment, ethnicity, free and reduced lunch, and English proficiency.

Archival data collected included ED eligibility data segregated by student sex, race/ethnicity, and grade. Each student's number of special education service hours was also collected. Scores from the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET; Horner et al., 2001) and Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ; Kincaid et al., 2005) were used to determine if fidelity of SWPBS implementation influences outcomes. The statistical procedures used to analyze the data included a within group analysis of variance (ANOVA), a within group multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), a within group factorial ANOVA, and simple linear regression.

Results suggested there were no differences between SWPBS and non-SWPBS schools with respect to number of ED eligibilities, student sex, race/ethnicity, or grade. There were more students with ED who were White and male; male students from all race/ethnic groups outnumbered students who were female. SWPBS status did not impact disproportionality. Also,

there were no differences between schools' SWPBS status, students' race/ethnicity, and restrictiveness in placement. SWPBS implementation, as measured by the BoQ, was not a good predictor of ED eligibility, restrictiveness in placement, or disproportionality. When specific SWPBS features found on the BoQ were examined, there were eight significant regression models. However, results are questionable because small sample size made the disproportionality ratios unstable.

The results of this study are to be considered in light of several threats to validity that can impact how outcomes can be generalized to the target population. Internal threats such as selection and statistical regression are possible as are external threats such as population validity, multiple-treatment interference, and measurement of the dependent variable. Nonetheless, this study includes implications for how results relate to the practice of school psychology and areas for future research.