CREWS, GENA S. Ed.D. An Appreciative Inquiry of *The Leader in Me*: Understanding Implementation Experiences and Program Impacts Via the Perspectives of Students, Teachers, and Administrators. (2022)
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The purpose of this study was to examine and understand the implementation experiences and program impacts of *The Leader in Me* (LIM) via the perspectives of the students, staff, and administrators at RAE Elementary School. Many teachers believe they could be more effective in the classroom if not for having to deal with classroom disruptions due to student discipline issues. Due to the increased rate of discipline referrals in schools and the social and emotional concerns of many students, schools are looking to programs developed to meet the needs of today's students. My study examined the nature of *The Leader in Me*, staff and students' perceptions of their implementation experiences, and the impact of *The Leader in Me* on student leadership and discipline.

This appreciative inquiry focused on the perceptions of the staff and students at RAE Elementary School. I conducted virtual interviews with 6 teachers (2 Encore, 2 K-2, and 2 3-5), and the school's principal. I also conducted a student focus group with 7 5th grade students who had attended RAE since Kindergarten. My goal was to learn how the LIM was implemented at RAE and how stakeholders felt about the effects of the program in order to learn the positives and negatives to better inform continued planning for sustainability as well as to provide support for other schools.

The findings indicated several key recommendations for RAE including: the need for a deeper dive into content, workshops for parents, more real life application for students, and more school-wide leadership opportunities for students. For schools considering implementation I

would recommend that the staff research the program thoroughly to ensure it is a proper fit for their school. Schools should also have a well-defined plan for implementation.

RAE Elementary School should continue to work toward sustainability of the program. The school has experienced success in implementation to this point. With continued attention and pulse checks, it is my belief the program will continue to be a success.

AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY OF *THE LEADER IN ME*: UNDERSTANDING IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCDS AND PROGRAM IMPACTS VIA THE PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather PFC Jack L. Hauser. Jack was an Army Paratrooper during World War II and was killed in action on February 5, 1945 on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. He is my hero and my inspiration to follow through when things get tough. Thank you Grandpa Jack for the lessons you have taught me. Your memory will live on forever and your sacrifice will never be forgotten.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Gena S. Crews has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The elementary school years are critical as they set the stage for later learning and the development of skills needed for success in society (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Unfortunately, "most classrooms have students with behavioral problems, but such students tend to be more prevalent in low-income urban neighborhoods" (Horsch, et al., 2002, p. 365). Teachers in these schools tend not to have adequate training or resources to meet the social and emotional needs of these students (Horsch, et al., 2002). The disruptive behaviors of students hamper the learning of all students and even more so their own learning (Johnson, 2014; Nelson, 2007) by taking up large amounts of instructional time, as much as twenty minutes per referral (Johnson, 2014). Schools have limited options for addressing these issues, therefore, suspensions continue to be used as a means of discipline despite a lack of evidence that they prevent future misbehavior, which leads to time out of class meaning fewer opportunities to access curriculum leading to lower grades and test scores (Anderson, 2009; Johnson, 2014).

A study conducted in South Carolina found that students in six middle schools lost 7,932 days of instruction to in-school and out-of-school suspensions in one academic year (Nelson, 2007). During the 2012-2013 school year, 78,941 Virginia students were suspended or expelled with approximately 20% of the suspensions involving elementary school students (Mansfield, et al., 2018). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) seeks to reduce "discipline disparities by requiring that states identify discipline problems, collect data on them, and support behavioral interventions" (Gregory & Fergus, 2017, p. 120). In order to do this the act is

> equipping school officials with an array of tools to support positive student behavior, thereby providing a range of options to prevent and address misconduct… will both

> promote safety and avoid the use of discipline policies that are discriminatory or inappropriate (Gregory & Fergus, 2017, p. 121).

School officials are further encouraged to consider social and emotional learning programs to handle student behavior (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Suspensions should be used sparingly and should not be the first choice in consequence, especially at the elementary level where suspension is developmentally inappropriate for children.

Education should involve teaching students to become productive citizens who are able to live in a society where people cooperate to achieve not only individual goals, but also the goals of our society as a whole. If the goal or purpose of education is to create productive citizens who can think critically and contribute to society, we must give every child equal opportunities for an education and each school must have equal resources (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). This is not to say education should be delivered in a cookie cutter approach, but instead based on each student's individual needs. Students require choice in how they are educated, including asking what they hope to achieve in their life, assisting them with setting learning goals, and offering learning pathways. Therefore, schools should listen to what students have to say about their education. Educators seek to create socially just school environments. Therefore, all students should have multiple educational opportunities, ambitious academic goals, and all families should feel welcome (Theoharis & Scanlan, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

"Over 76% of teachers believe they would be more effective in the classroom if student discipline were not such a huge issue" (Johnson, 2014, p. 13). However, student discipline issues are on the rise, leading educators to introduce and rely on specific programs in an attempt to address these discipline issues. All students des erve a quality education that allows them to

achieve their individual goals and contribute to the goals of society. However, discipline issues often inhibit this right. There are multiple factors causing the discipline issues schools experience. However, these root causes are often not discovered due to limited time to work with students with behavioral needs.

According to Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016), the discipline gap in schools occurs due to teachers' misunderstandings of students' cultures and is further widened due to teachers' responses to the behaviors, which leads to student disengagement and failure. Consideration of the teachers' expectations for students and the quality of the curriculum taught are vital to the success of the students. If teachers expect little, they may receive little. If teachers are not delivering engaging instruction, they will have issues with students not focusing and not learning.

Students' perceptions of the reasons for disciplinary actions are important in determining the type of discipline used as well. Most students do not perceive discipline as a tool to learn self-management (Nelson, 2002). Instead, they see it as a consequence for misbehavior. They tend to obey school rules to avoid consequences at home and school, to gain school and home recognition, and to avoid legal consequences.

According to Khalifa et al. (2016), the discipline gap between minoritized and majoritized students demonstrates the fact that school cultures are hostile toward minority students. Black and Latino students receive more office referrals for defiance or noncompliance than White students do. Black students are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Howard & Rodriguez-Minoff, 2017) and are more likely to receive harsher punishments than white students for similar behavior infractions (Gregory & Fergus, 2017).). Rather than punishment, we must provide students with high quality instruction

and emotional support (Singleton, 2015). Teachers of minority students tend to blame poverty, lack of parental support, culture, and the belief that education is unimportant, for their students' lack of success in school (Howard & Rodriguez-Minoff, 2017). However, students often choose not to learn when they feel they are not valued as learners. Students from diverse backgrounds are not deficient; they are just different.

The school environment in which most students spend the majority of their day often leads to student disengagement due to practices geared toward educating White middle class individuals heading for college and/or a career (Howard & Rodriquez-Minoff, 2017). When students are not engaged in the instruction provided they find other ways to engage. In other words, they will act out in ways often deemed inappropriate. When teachers do not understand the reasons behind these behaviors, they react by becoming angry with the child. This leads to low performance on the part of the student because of the treatment, discipline, and the sense of having his or her intelligence questioned through the low expectations of the teacher.

Bondy and Ross (2007) used observations and interviews to examine strategies used by three novice teachers at two different schools to establish Culturally Responsive Classroom Management during the first day of school. At both schools, more than 90% of students received free or reduced-price lunch and more than 90% were African American. Each classroom was "characterized by respectful interactions, a calm tone, and a clear focus on academic work" (Bondy & Ross, 2007, p. 332). Bondy and Ross (2007) noted important factors to consider when disciplining students of color, such as talking loudly, a common African American cultural characteristic. This is often misinterpreted as defiance in classrooms geared toward middle class White standards. This misinterpretation leads to conflict, alienation of the student, and disruption to the learning of that student and those around him or her. In order to avoid these

occurrences teachers should seek first to understand then to be understood, as well as establishing and communicating clear and high expectations. Respect should be earned not demanded and standards should be set with teachers pushing students to meet them while believing all students can learn. Classrooms should be set up to allow students to voice their opinions and concerns about their learning with procedures for solutions to issues. As cited by Nelson (2002), Wong and Wong (1998) "stated that the most successful classes are those in which the teacher has a clear idea of what is expected from the students and the students have a clear idea of what the teacher expects of them" (p. 21).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to examine the experiences and perceptions of an elementary school's staff and students, which had implemented *The Leader in Me* (LIM) program in their school. I also explored the experiences of teachers and administrators during implementation of the program, their perceptions of how LIM influences the behaviors of students in a Title I school, and lessons to be learned by other schools considering implementation of the program. The use of an appreciative inquiry model created the purpose of this study as a way to better understand the strengths of the program as well as where weaknesses might be shored up to improve implementation fidelity.

I hoped to learn more about the implementation style at this school, as the fidelity of implementation might be a factor in the results the school has experienced. Staff ownership could also be influencing the success of the program in the school. In order to determine the impact of these factors, I needed to learn more about staff perceptions of the program and its implementation in the school. An appreciative inquiry of this school, which implemented LIM

four years ago, allowed me to analyze how teachers and administrators perceived possible impacts of the program.

Research Questions

The overarching question guiding my study was: How do classroom teachers and administrators experience and perceive the implementation and effects of *The Leader in Me* at RAE Elementary school? Sub-questions under this broad topic include:

(a) What is the nature of *The Leader in Me* program in RAE elementary school?

(b) How do stakeholders (teachers, administrators, students) experience and perceive the implementation and effects of *The Leader in Me* program at RAE elementary school?

(c) What relationships can be inferred between stakeholders' (teachers, administrators, students) implementation experiences and intended impacts in RAE elementary school?

(d) How can implementation elements be improved to strengthen intended impacts?

Background Context

Educators today face ever-changing challenges including students' disruptive, disrespectful, and antisocial behaviors (Tuccinardi, 2018). These behaviors include aggression toward others, bullying, noncompliance, inability to remain seated and focused for reasonable periods of time. The learning environment is constantly disrupted by these behaviors, preventing all students from learning. Teachers spend more time trying to control behaviors rather than meeting the instructional needs of the students. Educators are seeking new ways to address these behaviors while also meeting the educational needs of their students due to accountability requirements from No Child Left Behind (2001) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) (Rocco, 2018). "The drive to meet the standards on state or national tests have generated

pressure-cooker classrooms with little time for students who need more attention or for addressing students' emotional or social needs" (Armour, 2016, p. 999). The underlying causes of these behaviors must be considered as well, such as poverty, and educators must stop neglecting the social and emotional needs of students in order to meet the needs of the whole child (Rocco, 2018).

Children today are faced with many factors that negatively influence their social and emotional well-being, including poverty, violence, bullying, and unstable home lives (Rocco, 2018). They need support and interventions geared toward positive character traits to help them be successful in school. Children living in poverty must be taught prosocial skills and the importance of building a sense of hope and self-efficacy (Tidd, 2016). When considering what appropriate classroom behavior looks like, we must consider the cultural backgrounds of the students (Bondy & Ross, 2007). Hence, teachers need to know and understand their students as cultural beings, assisting them in developing appropriate classroom-management strategies. There is one constant in all classroom management, however, and that is the need for caring classroom communities.

African American and Latino students are overrepresented in school discipline data (Armour, 2016; Gregory, et al., 2015), with African American students twice as likely to be referred to the office as their White peers (Poulson, 2017). African Americans and Latinos are more likely to receive out of school suspension or expulsion as a consequence for the same or similar behavior as White students. A longitudinal study in Texas showed that African American students were more likely to receive out-of-school suspension as a consequence for a first infraction in comparison to Latinos and Whites (Gregory, et al., 2015). Over the six-year period of the study, almost 65% of Latino students experienced some type of disciplinary action

(Gregory, et al., 2015). At the elementary level, African American students are twice as likely to be referred to the office for discipline issues (Armour, 2016). While *The Leader in Me* does not directly focus on culturally responsive pedagogy or leadership, it does highlight the importance of children as individuals, which includes celebrating their ethnic/cultural heritage. This is not a focus at all LIM schools and is often an issue for critics of the program. The ethnic/cultural heritage of students is important to understanding how they learn and respond to the school environment, therefore should be a focus of any character education program.

As children come to school unprepared for the learning environment and necessary socialization, educators are faced with more behavior problems (Tuccinardi, 2018) and the responsibility of "teaching students how to behave" (Barkley, 2013, p.1). Students shout out, ignore directions, and refuse to complete their work, purposefully bother others, and withdraw from the learning environment, creating a major disruption to the learning and success of their peers as well as themselves. In order to change student behavior, schools must stop doing things to or for students as this does not positively affect their social behavior (Mansfield, et al., 2018). In order to create positive change, schools must do things *with* students. Students need social and emotional skill development in order for authentic learning to occur (Rocco, 2018). They must "feel emotionally confident, and aware of their own feelings" (Rocco, 2018, p. 3) and the feelings of others around them in order to experience success in school. With the current focus on academic achievement, schools are seeking ways in which to offer the needed social and emotional support to students. One such resource is *The Leader in Me*, which "is a character education program that takes a holistic approach to students' social and emotional needs" (Rocco, 2018, p. 3). Students are taught leadership is for all as the staff helps them determine their areas of strength and then become leaders in those areas (Cummins, 2015).

Resilience is important to the ability of students to overcome adversity (Bondy & Ross, 2007). Students must have the following strengths to accomplish this feat: social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose. Each of these strengths can be fostered in classrooms that focus on the individual needs of students. By developing caring relationships, setting high and clear expectations for academics and behavior, and providing opportunities for meaningful participation in learning, teachers will help to strengthen students' resilience (Bondy & Ross, 2007; Nelson, 2002). Giving students a voice in decisions at school builds their decision making in other contexts as well (Nelson, 2002). Teachers can do this by sharing personal information to connect with students and implementing activities to get to know each other in order to learn to respect one another. "Some teachers begin the year with an implicit assumption that students know what appropriate behavior looks like and sounds like" (Bondy & Ross, 2007, p. 337). Appropriate behavior as defined by traditional school norms holds the expectations that students will demonstrate respect for others by listening to them, keeping hands to oneself, and taking care of the property of others. Effective teachers use a variety of strategies to explicitly communicate and practice their classroom expectations and reteach as needed throughout the year (Bondy & Ross, 2007; Nelson, 2002).

One approach to addressing inappropriate behaviors and preventing them in the future is the implementation of character education programs like Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS), Restorative Practices (RP), Responsive Classroom (RC), and *The Leader in Me* (LIM). Each of these programs seeks to address students' social and emotional needs in an attempt to improve student-learning outcomes and decrease problem behaviors, which is of utmost importance considering traditional discipline strategies, do not address social and emotional skills (Poulson, 2017). Students are taught skills and habits to assist them in

becoming productive citizens in their communities and how to develop and maintain relationships with others (Barkely, 2013; Tuccinardi, 2018). The hope is that these skills will carry over into life outside of school as schools shape the whole child (Barkley, 2013).

When students are empowered to have a voice through sharing their perspective in school-based decisions, they learn how to make decisions, solve problems, and plan for the future (Berkowitz, 2011; Karaburk, 2016). Empowerment is a key factor in many school-wide discipline programs. Students' social and emotional learning must be supported directly through the instruction they are receiving as well. Overall, for a program to be effective it must be a part of the school's culture and be lived throughout the day and in all aspects of the school.

Character education has a proven record of accomplishment of promoting positive character development in children (Tuccinardi, 2018). Students have the potential to become more thoughtful, responsible, and self-disciplined after experiencing character education instruction. They learn to consider others before they react in situations as they think about how their actions will affect those around them. These behaviors must be taught explicitly in order for students to instill them in their daily lives. "Learning character education skills will equip students to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally, creating a better citizenry for all of society" (Rocco, 2018, p. 11). Poulson (2017) notes, "When students know that school communities are working with them, rather than focusing on doing things to them, positive relationships are built and trust is formed. This trust increases the effectiveness of discipline and decreases defiance and conflict" (p. 8). Traditional discipline strategies punish the child but do not teach an appropriate replacement behavior or strategy (Poulson, 2017). This leads to humiliation and shame and no opportunity to make things right. *The Leader in Me* intends to offer schools a "fresh approach to school improvement" (Cummins, 2015, p. 1) by creating "a

culture of student empowerment" (Cummins, 2015, p. 1) and by helping students reach their full potential.

The Leader in Me

Leadership programs such as *The Leader in Me* teach students how to be productive members of society, as defined by our society and government, and to take ownership of their learning (Barkley, 2013; El-Attrache, 2018) through the critical life and leadership skills learned (Cummins, 2015). LIM is a school-wide approach that emphasizes leadership, personal responsibility, and goal-setting (Barkley, 2013). This type of program also helps to create a more positive school culture by the use of a common language to create unity. This language is used in all aspects of the school, connecting the classroom and the whole school. The 7 Habits are embedded in every part of the school day and environment including instruction, traditions, and celebrations (Cummins, 2015). When these things occur, students are able to build trusting relationships among themselves, their teachers, and classmates. By improving student behavior and establishing a positive culture, the LIM allows students to learn to respect and accept each other (Cummins, 2015). Students will perform higher when they experience positive relationships in school and feel cared about as individuals (Barkley, 2013), leading to academic success as well. It is also important for staff members to model the habits in order for students to learn to live them.

The climate and culture of a school are vital to school success. "A positive school climate will produce a school with less behavioral problems" (Barkley, 2013, p. 43). Climate is defined as a "set of social norms and expectations in a school" (Barkley, 2013, p. 11). Climate is measured by collaboration, student relations, school resources, decision-making and instructional innovation. Collaborative environments are more helpful when schools have shared goals and

shared responsibility in decision-making and accountability for outcomes. Culture is seen "as the procedures and rules of a school" (Barkley, 2013, p. 9). It is not imposed, but rather developed through social interactions over time as it is shared from one generation to the next. Schools must have a sense of community and excellence in order to create "a more desirable working and learning environment" (Barkley, 2013, p. 10). "School culture is the shared experiences both inside and outside the school (traditions and celebrations) that create a sense of community, family, and team membership for the school" (Barkley, 2013, p. 10). LIM defines culture as the "collective behaviors" (Franklin Covey Education, n.d., p. 2) of the stakeholders of the school. It is "largely represented by how people see each other and relate with each other" (Franklin Covey Education, n.d., p. 2). School culture is "manifested in the values, norms, language, and systems of the school" (Franklin Covey Education, n.d., p. 2). This is demonstrated through the physical environment of the school, what is seen; the emotional environment, what is felt; and the common language developed through LIM, what is heard (Franklin Covey Education, n.d.).

The Leader in Me does not have a one-size-fits-all implementation process. Instead, it is based on a model, which uses data about the schools' population, achievement levels, and challenges to guide implementation (Barkley, 2013). Teachers are taught to see students through a different paradigm, one that sees the capacity of students as learners and leaders versus the traditional paradigm, which sees the intelligence of students only. Schools that have implemented the program consistently report increases in students': self-confidence, teamwork, initiative, responsibility, improved school culture, and dramatic decreases in disciplinary issues. The decreases in behavior issues are attributed to the change in the culture of each school. The

decrease leads to more time in class to receive more instruction, which leads to higher levels of achievement.

The Leader in Me was first introduced to the elementary school setting when Muriel Summers, principal of A. B. Combs in Raleigh, North Carolina sought a way to turn around her struggling magnet school (Cummins, 2015). The school had a capacity of 900 students, however only 350 students were enrolled in 1999. They were in danger of losing their magnet status. The test results at A. B. Combs were below average, there was low teacher morale, and little parent involvement. Summers was given one week to restructure her school; therefore, she sought the help of Stephen Covey and his Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. The staff of A. B. Combs desired "students who had strong character and a solid work ethic" (Cummins, 2015, p. 17).

During the 1999-2000 school year, A. B. Combs piloted the process with one teacher per grade level with an increase of 84% to 87% of students passing the end of grade tests (Cummins, 2015). The following year the entire school implemented the program with 94% of students passing. The school reached a peak of 97% while continuing to experience success each year. Other schools have also experienced success including English Estates Elementary in Fern Park, Florida, which saw a drastic decrease in discipline referrals after the first year of implementation, down from 225 to 74. Fremont Elementary in California, saw a 60% decrease in discipline referrals. Research in 260 LIM schools throughout the United States and Canada noted the top improvement as a decrease in discipline referrals. This improvement was attributed to the increase of leaders in the school. Miranda Elementary in Arizona noted a decrease in inappropriate student behaviors because of the implementation of LIM (El-Attrache, 2018).

Research supports the changes in learning environment and student relationships as a leading factor in the changes to student discipline.

Brief Description of Methods

For this study, I examined *The Leader in Me* (LIM) program at an elementary school to determine staff perceptions of the program and its influence on the behaviors of students. The school is a Title I elementary school with ninety percent of its total student population falling into the racial/ethnic categories of Black or Latinx.

I conducted a survey with the classroom teachers, and specialists including Art, Music, Media, PE, Exceptional Children (EC) and English as Second Language (ESL) teachers to determine which teachers to interview. I interviewed the teachers chosen based on the survey results using the same interview protocol. Questions pertained to the teachers' perceptions of LIM, the implementation process at their school, their personal experiences with the program, and their perceptions of the influence of the program on their students' behaviors. I wanted the interviews to be with classroom teachers and the survey data to be used as a way to analyze the perceptions of the support staff. The administrator was interviewed using a similar interview protocol. This protocol was altered to include questions seeking answers from the administrative perspective. I also conducted a focus group with select fifth graders, including students who had attended the school for one or more years. I was not able to conduct observations at the school as originally planned, because students were still learning remotely. Therefore, I observed the school environment for physical evidence of LIM (visual data in the form of photographs). I analyzed documents provided to the staff to support LIM implementation and sustainability as well as the review of discipline data, focusing on the number of office referrals and the school improvement goals and progress toward meeting them, since the implementation of the program.

Theoretical Framework

The founders of the United States wanted schools to "create a competent citizenry made up of independent and critical thinkers who could work effectively with others and contribute to a democratic society" (Greenberg, et al., 2017, p. 16). That being the case, much research has been conducted to determine how best to achieve this goal. Theorists such as Bandura have looked at social learning in order to understand how children learn about behavior and how behaviors are instilled in daily functioning. In the 1990's social and emotional learning, which is closely related to social learning, came on the scene, but with the understanding that our emotions guide how we react or behave in different situations.

Social learning theory deals with the "ability of learners to imbibe and display the behaviors exhibited within their environment" (Edinyang, 2016, p. 40). After a behavior has been observed, children may imitate this behavior whether it is deemed appropriate or not. According to Bandura (1971), behavior is learned from the environment through observation. He believes behavior and environment affect each other, in other words people affect and are affected by the world around them. People can control their behavior through self-regulation, which requires a person to self-observe, make judgements about the environment and themselves, and then respond. Therefore, social learning occurs "when an observer's behavior changes after viewing the behavior of a model" (Edinyang, 2016, p. 40) because people can learn new behaviors by observing the behaviors of those around them. This is most likely to occur when the results of the behavior are positive.

Social learning theory or observational learning has four different stages and according to Bandura "learning takes place in a social setting via observations" (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018, p. 2; Bandura, 1971). He believed that learning new information and behaviors could occur

through watching others (Karaburk, 2016). Children imitate or copy behaviors modeled by others. Learning through modeling helps children avoid needless errors as well as the fact that some things just cannot be learned without having a model (Bandura, 1971). The first stage is attention meaning, in which the learner must pay attention to the behavior to be learned (Bandura, 1971; Karaburk, 2016). The second stage requires the learner to retain or internalize what was seen. "A person cannot be much influenced by observation of a model's behavior if he has no memory of it" (Bandura, 1971, p. 7). Third, the learner must have opportunities to reproduce the behavior by converting the information gathered into action. Simply observing behavior does not mean behavioral change will occur (Karaburk, 2016). Lastly, the learner must be motivated to enact or imitate the behavior observed. Children tend to focus on the punishment when being corrected for misbehavior according to social learning theory; however, this does not teach them the correct way to behave (Kohn, 1991). It tends to teach the child to be punitive and exacerbates the behavior problems. "The learning may rarely be activated into overt performance if it is negatively sanctioned or otherwise unfavorably received" (Bandura, 1971, p. 8).

Behavior is developed by observing and then modeling it (Karaburk, 2016). Many of the values students hold are implicit and unspoken, therefore they must be taught to express them and make them explicit in order for the behaviors associated with these values to become intentional. "Humans develop character with the social context of their community" (Karaburk, 2016, p. 22). A child's family is at the core of their value system, but schools must provide an environment conducive to building social and emotional competence. In the school environment, students are given opportunities to discuss issues, develop rules and norms, solve

problems, share their perspectives, practice appropriate behaviors, and plan activities, therefore nurturing the development of appropriate behaviors.

Bandura defines self-efficacy as one's beliefs about their ability to perform at a given level (Cummins, 2105). *The Leader in Me* belief that all students are leaders is supported by this definition. Teachers hold high expectations for students and students in turn rise to those expectations. Student leadership roles also build student self-efficacy through the levels of trust built in students due to the responsibility placed on them. Wildly important goals (WIGs) are another example of the LIM's link to self-efficacy. As students build self-efficacy, they are more likely to set challenging goals and work hard to meet them. Students also model their actions after those of individuals in their environment who have obtained their goals.

Social Learning Theory (SLT) focuses on the modeling and observation of behaviors (Elias, 2008). Bandura (1973) observed how traditional behavioral learning theories were unable to explain how people learned behaviors simply through watching others. SLT focused on how individuals draw from their experiences to develop behavioral expectations. Bandura discovered a link to the environment in which one lived and the behavior exhibited through the observations of others.

While we understand students learn and develop behavior patterns from observations of others, we are most recently beginning to understand that "how we feel influences how we think, and conversely, how we think influences how we feel" (McGraw-Hill Education, n.d., p.1). Social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies are "key to building positive relationships, managing emotions, and making decisions" (McGraw-Hill Education, n.d., p. 2), skills that are essential for living as engaged citizens in the modern world (Elias, et al., 2008). It is important to remember, "neurological and physical changes dictate which SEL skills are most important at

a given developmental state and when mastery should be achieved" (Jones & Doolittle, 2017, p. 8). Through the teaching of these competencies students learn how to develop goals, how to cooperate with others, and how to deal with everyday challenges, setbacks, and disappointments (Greenberg, et al., 2017; Weissberg, et al., 2015) with the focus on the power of problem solving (Elias, et al., 2008). These skills should be explicitly taught and embedded in academic content. Teachers must teach and model them while giving opportunities for students to practice and apply them in real world situations, in order to "develop analytical communication and collaborative skills" (Weissberg, et al., 2015, p. 6; Elias, et al., 2008).

The SEL competencies are organized into three types:

(1) cognitive regulation- "the ability to focus attention, plan, solve problems" (Jones & Doolittle, 2017, p. 5), and make appropriate decisions;

(2) emotional processes- "the ability to recognize, express, and regulate one's own emotions and understand the emotions of others" (Jones & Doolittle, 2017, p. 6);

(3) social and interpersonal skills- the ability to accurately interpret others' behaviors, effectively navigate social situations, and have positive interactions with others (Jones & Doolittle, 2017).

Instruction in this type of learning is student-centered, uses character education, focuses on grit, and developing positive mindsets through project based learning (Weissberg, et al., 2015). In schools focused on SEL, students' thoughts, feelings, and voices are valued as students experience personalized and deep learning with connections to the real world.

Students learn best in respectful, orderly, safe, academically challenging, caring, engaging, and well managed classrooms (Elias, et al., 2008). Teachers and school leaders must exhibit and model SEL skills in order for students to successfully do so. Programs grounded in

SEL reduce the emotional barriers to learning. The focus becomes students' understanding and management of emotions. Programs like PBIS, RP, RC, and the LIM have at their foundation social and emotional learning as this is used to help students experience academic and behavioral success.

Researcher's Role

The improvement in my school's academics and behavior since the implementation of *The Leader in Me* has led me to an interest in how the LIM has influenced these improvements. Student discipline issues in elementary schools are on the rise. Educators have introduced and relied on specific programs in an attempt to address these discipline issues. Therefore, through my study, I would like to examine the influence of LIM on the behaviors of students in Title I schools. I kept a reflexivity journal to assist with monitoring my bias created through my work at a LIM school.

Significance

The significance of my research study is that it will help explain why *The Leader in Me* may be perceived as being more successful at some schools than at others. It will allow one school to determine areas for improvement and change as well as assist with the creation of a plan of action for future use. This research will also be beneficial to other schools that are considering implementing the program now and in the future. Schools that are planning to adopt the program will have results from one local school to base their decisions on as well as being able to learn from the mistakes or implementation difficulties of other schools. This will allow schools to implement the program with increased chances for success. I hope that the program will have improved longevity in new schools as they learn the best way to implement the LIM with success. Currently the research on the LIM is limited; therefore, this study will serve as a

way to increase the amount of research available as well as to narrow the gap in understanding the program, and ways to increase the success of implementation in other schools.

Overview of Chapters

This study is organized into five chapters. In this chapter, the problem is introduced and background information provided on issues with student discipline and the need for a school-wide program to teach social and emotional skills to help in the reduction of these issues. In Chapter 2, I review related research literature that concerns character education, social and emotional learning, and several character education/social and emotional learning programs currently used in schools. Chapter 3 includes a detailed description of the methods used during the study. Chapter 4 features a presentation of the data while Chapter 5 continues that presentation and provides an analysis and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The need for a school-wide program that allows students to develop social and emotional skills to help them develop moral character as they grow into responsible citizens is evident from the data gathered from studies about student discipline issues. Schools have implemented a variety of school-wide programs, such as Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS), Restorative Practices (RP), and Responsive Classroom (RC) in attempts to teach students these needed skills. In most recent years, schools have begun implementing *The Leader in Me* (LIM), which is a program that focuses on developing leadership in students while also teaching them to care about and consider others as they learn to interact with those around them.

Schools should offer some form of character education to assist children in dealing with the various forms of trauma they experience, such as isolation, poverty, and broken homes (Rocco, 2018). As more and more students enter kindergarten unprepared to learn, due to the demands of school, and lack of social skills, they are unaware of the negative effect this has on themselves and others. Character education has become more vital to student success (Johnson, 2014). "Just focusing on academics is not enough for sustainable school improvement" (Rocco, 2018, p. 41). Whole school programs like the LIM, which focus on the school environment and culture, may lead to positive outcomes, such as leadership opportunities for students and teachers and a school culture that creates a positive learning environment for all. Character education can bring about increases in positive behavior and interactions between staff and students as well as decreases in discipline referrals.

"The Office of Special Education Programs defines discipline 'as the steps or actions teachers, administrators, parents, and students follow to enhance student academic and social

success'" (Green, 2009, p. 458). Schools struggle with the discipline of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, those living in poverty, and those with mental health needs. This often results in the use of exclusionary and punitive discipline methods, which have little value, as they do not tend to correct the behaviors (Osher, et al., 2010). Punitive discipline, such as office referrals, suspensions, and transfers to specialized schools tend to worsen issues, especially when the receiving students view them as unfair. What can be done to support positive student behavior when schools are faced with situations where students' negative behaviors are interfering with the learning of others, distracting administrators from their other roles and responsibilities, and are contributing to teacher burnout (Green, 2009; Osher, et al., 2010)? One way to support student success is through attention to social and emotional learning, which is important due to how we process and respond to our own emotions, which influences the educational experience of students (Brackett & Rivers, n.d.). The goal of social and emotional learning (SEL) is to strengthen the ability to understand, manage, and express social and emotional aspects of life (Kress, et al., 2004).

PBIS, RP, RC, and the LIM are a few of the school-wide behavior programs that have demonstrated positive results for schools. Each of these programs focuses on positive relationships and respect for others. They all teach students to work together for the common goal of success for everyone. Relationships with others are important in each program as students are taught how to interact in social situations, preparing them for the future. "Programs and approaches to enhance social and emotional growth hold promise for improving classroom social processes, peer interactions, and academic learning" (Rimm-Kaufmann & Chiu, 2007, p. 397). They have been linked to improved academics, social skills, and positive feelings toward school (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007). When considering which program to implement in a

school, consideration must be given to the school's culture and climate to determine the best fit for strengthening and promoting mutual trust, acceptance of individuality, and school discipline (Nelson, 2007). Teachers must then consider their classroom environments in order to meet the individual needs of all students simultaneously. "For students to maximize learning opportunities, they must feel safe in their schools and trust the people around them" (Bruhn, et al., 2014). However, there are critics of character education and school-wide discipline programs who claim children are being taught to be submissive to authority rather than thinking for themselves (Kohn, 2018).

In the following review of current research, I will further explore character education and social emotional learning and their impact on student success in school. I will also give detailed attention to PBIS, RP, RC, and the LIM. Critics of these programs will be reviewed as well.

Character Education

The question of why we should teach character education comes up quite often in discussions of what is best for our students today. One only needs to look at our society and the adverse conditions in which many of our students must live to see the need for character education (Jeynes, 2019; Koontz, 2003). We see increases in school shootings and violence in schools, and people seem to no longer know how to have good relationships with each other, creating conflicts. "Individuals from Cicero to Martin Luther King believed that the most dangerous people on the face of the earth were those who were highly intelligent and schooled, but were not virtuous" (Jeynes, 2019, p. 35-36). Proponents of character education believe our goal as educators should be to create classrooms in which students learn to care about others and interact safely. If we create such environments, we will increase the chances of students being successful in their educational experiences. Students must feel comfortable and motivated to

learn and teachers need to feel respected and encouraged to do their job (Karaburk, 2016). Positive behavior encourages students to come to school, stay focused, work hard, and learn more.

Character education is defined "as an umbrella term referring to 'the education of children in a manner where the learning process will help them develop as socially-acceptable, well-mannered human beings'" (Benninga, 2010, p. 2-3 as cited by Karaburk, 2016, p. 25). Schools that implement character education intend to create safe, caring, and inclusive environments in which students develop socially, emotionally, ethically, and academically. True character education allows for peer interactions and discussions of issues relevant to the students (Berkowitz, 2011). The focus of instruction is on building relationships, empowering students, and discussions about behavior and consequences as a means of preventing undesirable behaviors. Students are taught how to change behaviors over time with the end goal being the development of more desirable and effective behavior choices. Research shows that caring relationships are vital to the success of students as well as setting high expectations for academics and behavior. Simply setting high expectations is not good enough; teachers must monitor students' progress and allow adequate time to meet those goals. Behavior programs based on character education stress the importance of expectations.

Teachers often do not teach character education because they are focused on testing, lack time in their busy day, and do not have adequate training (Jeynes, 2019). This highlights the importance of programs that integrate character education throughout the entire school day and embed instruction in the content areas (Karaburk, 2016). In 1962 and 1963, the US Supreme Court made two decisions that drastically altered education in public schools: the removal of voluntary prayer and Bible reading (Jeynes, 2019). Although it was not specifically stated that

moral instruction was being removed from schools with these decisions, character education was ultimately removed from classrooms. Times have changed, and there was a call in the 1990s to reintroduce a nonsectarian approach to character education to the daily lives of school children. It was believed that "something had to be done to reintroduce a strong sense of virtue in America's youth" (Jeynes, 2019, p. 36).

Karaburk (2016) sought to understand the perceptions of teachers about the effectiveness of character education programs in relation to promoting change in the overall school climate. Five to six teachers from a middle school in Maryland with diverse school demographics were interviewed as part of the study. One teacher stated the implementation process needed to be handled in an appropriate manner with time to focus on the program for it to be seen as a priority by all stakeholders. Other findings included positive benefits for students such as the development of tools to manage behaviors, ways for students and teachers to discuss problems without intimidation and a safe environment in which to do so. Students were also seen as gaining self-confidence as they built relationships with their teachers, developing a voice in school decisions, learning life skills for the future, and building healthy peer interactions needed to resolve conflicts. Students were ultimately empowered to be leaders of their own learning.

By teaching respect, fairness, civility, and tolerance at an early age, we are playing a major role in shaping the future behavior of students as they develop skills needed to be productive citizens in society (Karaburk, 2016). This can be done through character education instruction as students learn pro-social behaviors, democratic values, character reasoning, responsibility, respect, self-efficacy, self-control, self-esteem, social skills, and to trust and respect their teachers. All of these skills and traits are important tenets of a school culture that allows the entire child to be taught. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said it best, "intelligence plus

character… is the goal of true education" (England, 2009, p. 7 as cited by Karaburk, 2016, p. 31).

Social and Emotional Learning

Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan, and Hirsch (2014) stated, "approximately 12% of school-age children have one or more emotional or behavioral disorders" (p. 22), which suggests the need for some type of intervention to help them be successful in school. Social and emotional learning is "the process through which people learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors" (Fredericks, 2003, p. 4 as cited by Fonzi & Ritchie, 2011, p. 16). According to Kress, Norris, Schoenholz, Elias, and Seigle (2004), social and emotional learning (SEL) standards highlight, "the process of integrating thinking, feeling, and behaving, in order to become aware of self and others, make responsible decisions, and manage one's own behaviors and those of others" (Brackett & Rivers, n.d., p. 4). Ideally, SEL standards align academic standards and behavioral expectations. Therefore, it is important to remember SEL is linked with student academic and behavioral success; a student cannot learn until their social, emotional, and physical needs are met.

Unfortunately, schools focus on standardized learning to the degree that the well-being of students is often overlooked. "True education encompasses more than IQ and that children need a safe environment in which to learn and achieve" (Kress, et al., 2004, p. 70) are factors not considered when creating plans of education. The environment should be caring, supportive, safe, and empowering and allow for meaningful, safe, and empowering interactions (Brackett & Rivers, n.d.). SEL is student-centered, meaning the focus is on the student's ability to regulate behavior, build caring and engaging relationships, and be responsible in decision-making

(Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Osher, et al., 2010; Payton, et al., 2000; Zins & Elias, 2006). SEL allows students to develop positive relationships with their teachers, leading to school attachment (Kress, et al. 2004; Osher, et al., 2010). This in turn leads to more positive student attitudes, increased motivation, and decreased absences and dropout rates, positively influencing student academic and behavioral success (Smith & Low, 2013). Educators must be willing to build positive, caring relationships with their students to motivate them to achieve their goals. Classroom environments that develop positive relationships also build strong character and empathy because "the most powerful thing a teacher can give their students is a 'voice' in deciding who they are" (Schwartz, 2016, p. 193). SEL programs allow students to develop skills that can be carried over into their lives outside of school (Payton, et al., 2000). The goal of SEL programs is "the development of students who are knowledgeable, responsible, and caring, thereby contributing to their academic success, healthy growth and development, ability to maintain positive relationships, and motivation to contribute to their communities" (Payton, et al., 2000, p. 179; Brackett & Rivers, n.d.; Zins & Elias, 2006).

Table 1 shows the connections between SEL and LIM. This demonstrates how LIM focuses on and supports students' social and emotional learning and well-being.

Table 1. CASEL SEL Competencies

Key Factors	Social and Emotional Learning	The Leader in Me
Self-awareness	Accurately assessing one's feeling, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence	Habit 1: Be Proactive; focus on personal choice
Self-management	Regulating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals; expressing emotions appropriately	Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind; focus on planning ahead and setting goals
Social awareness	Taking the perspective of and empathizing with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; recognizing and using family, school and community resources	Habit 5: Seek first to understand, then to be understood
Relationship management	Establishing and maintain healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resisting inappropriate	Habit 4: Think Win-Win Habit 6: Synergize

	social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict; seeking help when needed	
Responsible decision making	Making decisions based on considerations of ethical standards, safety concern, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; contributing to the well-being of one's school and community	Habit 3: First Things First Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

*From Brackett and Rivers, n.d.; Fonzi and Ritchie, 2011

New state laws are creating a shift from a punishment mindset to a development perspective leading to more focus on SEL as it fosters students' social and behavioral competencies in order to help them be more successful in school. "Schools are increasingly implementing SEL or programs based on SEL in order to foster caring relationships, cooperation and conflict resolution, a greater sense of school safety, and the development of social and emotional skills in students, teachers, and school leaders" (Brackett & Rivers, n.d., p. 4).

Our emotions affect how we learn, what we learn, and the building of caring relationships provide the foundation for lasting learning hence the importance of SEL (Zins & Elias, 2006). "When youth do not feel connected to school, their grades slip, they become disruptive in class, and they are unlikely to aspire to higher educational goals (Brackett & Rivers, n.d.). SEL provides equal access to a wide range of supports and interventions to promote positive behavior, assists students in developing self-discipline and social and emotional efficacy, and enables students to improve and correct inappropriate behaviors (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). SEL focuses on self-awareness, the ability to understand your emotions, values, and personal goals; social awareness, the ability to understand the perspective of others and to empathize or feel compassion for them; self-management, skills and attitudes that regulate emotions and behaviors, and relationship skills, which help establish and maintain healthy interactions with others (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Zins & Elias, 2006). Relationship skills require students to

communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate and resolve conflict- all of which are skills taught by many school-wide discipline programs.

School-wide Discipline Programs

In this section, I examine three school-wide discipline programs: Positive Behavioral Intervention Support, Restorative Practices, and Responsive Classroom.

Positive Behavioral Intervention Support

Bruhn, et al. (2014) noted, "For many years, school discipline practices consisted of reacting to existing behaviors by administering consequences rather than preventing future behaviors" (p. 14). Schools are gradually moving away from traditional forms of discipline to school-wide programs such as Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS). PBIS "is an approach to preventing undesirable problem behaviors and promoting positive behaviors… as an alternative to more exclusionary and punitive forms of school-wide discipline" with "an instructional focus on teaching positive and prosocial behaviors" (Solomon, et al., 2012, p. 105). The routines, expectations, and predictable schedules established in PBIS schools (Green, 2009; Osher, et al., 2010) create the positive environments students need to feel safe enough to take the risks required for learning to occur (Kress, et al., 2004).

PBIS focuses on defining and teaching behavioral expectations, rewarding appropriate behavior or behavior that has been traditionally expected in our society, continued evaluation of the program's effectiveness, and integration of supports for individuals, groups, the whole school and stakeholder partnerships (Tuccinardi, 2018). PBIS "can be effective in reducing chronically challenging behaviors, helping students react in a socially acceptable manner, and in meeting the needs of students who exhibit problem behavior" (Johnson, 2014, p. 30) by looking for the underlying causes of the behavior. The goal is to prevent antisocial, disruptive, and defiant

behaviors in and outside the classroom (Tuccinardi, 2018) by providing interventions, supports, and positive reinforcement specific to each child's needs (Johnson, 2014) and focusing on reinforcing desired or wanted behaviors (Anderson, 2009).

Green (2009) wrote about the implementation of PBIS in her school district. The need for consistency in behavior management across all areas of an individual school and across schools in the same district is also important when considering the implementation of a school-wide discipline program. Maintaining open communication between all stakeholders before, during, and after the implementation of a school-wide behavior system is important to the success of the implementation process (Green, 2009; Kress, et al., 2004; Osher, et al., 2010). This allows for the much-needed buy-in and support of an implementation of this level. Green (2009) supports the establishment of an implementation team, the collection of data about the needs of the school and possible expectations and establishment of those expectations, the development of lesson plans, matrices, and consistent discipline referrals. Without discussion of each of these aspects of the implementation plan during the onset of PBIS in Green's school district, it would not have been successful.

A school-wide behavior system allows for consistency across all areas of a school (Kress, et al., 2004; Osher, et al., 2010). Green (2009) was seeking to find a way to create consistency to ease the transition of students from elementary to middle school in a situation where multiple elementary schools fed into one middle school. Kress et al. (2004) support the need for consistency as evidenced by the belief that the classroom environment influences behavior and learning. In other words, a disorderly classroom will not support student growth and learning. Osher, et al. (2010) realize that classrooms that have engagement and collaboration are

more successful in supporting student learning. This cannot be established in a classroom without effective classroom management.

Students must develop self-discipline by learning how to manage their own behavior (Green, 2009; Kress, et al., 2004; Osher, et al., 2010). In order for this to occur schools must develop a common language and give students voice and choice in the development of school rules and expectations. PBIS suggests establishing three to five explicit, simple, and consistent school-wide expectations (Solomon, et al., 2012). These expectations are created for all areas of the school including the cafeteria, classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and playground. They are worded in a positive manner without the use of the words "do not" in the expectations. The expectations are clearly taught so students know exactly what is expected and do not have to wonder leading to a clear understanding of how to be successful (Bruhn, et al., 2014). Teachers model throughout the year as needed with examples and non-examples and allow students to practice how to meet the expectations through role play (Bruhn, et al., 2014). Achieving the goal of positive reinforcement can be difficult when working with students from diverse backgrounds, those living in poverty, and those with mental health needs (Kress, et al., 2004; Osher, et al., 2010). However, implementing school-wide behavior management programs focused on the positives and students' social and emotional needs allows schools to provide targeted and individual interventions to those with diverse needs. PBIS also allows for the creation of a safe and consistent environment needed to maximize learning (Bruhn, et al., 2014).

When school-wide behavior support systems are implemented to support students' social and emotional learning, "Educators find that they have a framework for an instructional and school climate conducive to enthusiastic, well-structured teaching in which students can develop the skills necessary for deeper, more cooperative, and focused learning" (Kress, et al., 2004,

78). Osher, Bear, Sprague, and Doyle (2010) focus on PBIS and SEL, and their differences, and how the two can be linked to support student success. Once the school-wide system is in place, "the emphasis is on cooperation, engagement, and motivation, and on students learning to be part of a dynamic system, rather than on compliance, control, and coercion" (Osher, et al., 2010, 49). Students with emotional and behavioral disorders and students of color are most often impacted by punitive discipline methods contributing to their disengagement in school, lost opportunities to learn, and higher dropout rates (Osher, et al., 2010).

The use of a token economy focuses on positive reinforcements and positive attention from adults (Solomon, et al., 2012) versus punitive consequences which can lead to adverse effects on behavior (Johnson, 2014). Teachers also use positive feedback specific to the behavior to be reinforced in order to build intrinsic motivation (Bruhn, et al., 2014). For students who have experienced repeated reprimands and failures in school tangible prizes, such as candy, pencils, and toys may be needed. Extrinsic rewards may be needed in the beginning and then faded out as the child begins to understand and internalize the expectations. Non-tangible rewards can include a homework pass, lunch with a teacher, or being a classroom helper. The child must be given consideration when determining what will motivate him or her. While the rewarding of students with tangible items is often seen as harmful to their intrinsic motivation, it has been found that when rewards are used appropriately to reinforce clear behavior expectations children will "build life-long skills that can eventually be sustained with intrinsic motivation" (Martin, 2013, p. 39).

PBIS is based on a three-tier model (Solomon, et al., 2012; Anderson, 2009). Schools should use discipline data for early identification of behavior problems in order to reduce and reverse these issues using the tiered system of targeted and intensive interventions (Bruhn, et al.,

2014). In Tier 1, primary or universal, all students are served through universal programming and interventions, (Solomon, et al., 2012) with an 80-90% success rate (Johnson, 2014). They are taught school-wide expectations in all areas of the school (Bruhn, et al., 2014). Tier 2, secondary or targeted, involves students who have not responded well to this type of intervention and need specialized attention for mild to moderate behaviors. This type of intervention is designed to meet the needs of about 15% of the students, including check-in/check-out, small-group social skills instruction, and self-management strategies (Bruhn, et al., 2014). Tier 3, tertiary or individualized, is reserved for those students who present with severe or high-risk behavior problems, have been unresponsive to Tier 1 and 2 interventions and need individualized attention focused on reducing problem behaviors and increasing prosocial behaviors (Bruhn, et al., 2014; Solomon, et al., 2012).

Research shows schools have experienced success with the implementation of PBIS. In one study, a school experienced a reduction in office discipline referrals from 518 to 252 after the implementation of PBIS (Tuccinardi, 2018). This increased the amount of instructional time spent with students as the teacher was not having to constantly deal with misbehaviors. "Students are choosing to make better behavior choices and are being less disruptive in the classroom, resulting in more time on task, effective instruction, and an overall improved learning environment" (Tuccinardi, 2018, p. 25).

Johnson (2014) explored the sustainability of PBIS in a middle school, which had completed three years of successful implementation in Western North Carolina. Individual interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents asking them to reflect on the sustainability of PBIS and their experiences as members of the school community. Observations were also conducted during the school day with a focus on the daily routine and

environment and during PBIS team meetings. Observations of the school looked for data regarding relationships, thoughts, feelings, and interactions between teachers, leaders, and students. The team's interactions were analyzed for leadership dynamics and how they communicated their overall values and feelings toward PBIS.

Some research studies found negative results and perceptions of PBIS. In a study conducted by Anderson (2009), the effectiveness of a proactive school-wide discipline plan on office discipline referrals was examined. The study was conducted in an elementary school serving grades K-5 with five lottery funded pre-kindergarten classes. The school was followed for one year without a school-wide discipline plan and then for one year after implementation of a plan. After the first year the number of office discipline referrals did not decrease. In fact, there was an increase in office discipline referrals in the second year. There were several factors that could have led to these results including the overcrowding of the school and the addition of an administrator.

A study conducted in a Title I elementary school in southeast Georgia looked at the teachers' perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS and its impact on school climate (Martin, 2013). Teachers were surveyed using a 5-point Likert scale to determine their perceptions and satisfaction with PBIS. Those scoring very high or very low were then interviewed to gain a deeper understanding of their views and opinions of the program. The results showed that the teachers were relatively satisfied with PBIS. However, statements related to student behavior received the lowest ratings demonstrating satisfaction in the teachers' own actions regarding PBIS, but not in how it influences students. Overall, they were satisfied with the impact on student behavior, but they felt it did not punish students who displayed negative behavior at an appropriate rate. They did not feel that PBIS significantly decreased the number of discipline

problems at their school. Nor did they feel that it had helped students learn to be more respectful, improve their relationships with others, or improve their attitudes toward school. Disrespect was seen as a definite barrier to PBIS. Students demonstrating disrespect had difficulty following the expectations and responding to the consequences. Other behaviors seen as hindering instruction included defiance, not following directions, and student disagreements. The teachers who responded negatively on the survey were all currently teaching or had previously taught students with severe behavior problems. This could have skewed their perception of PBIS and influenced their responses to the survey questions. However, research does demonstrate that PBIS does have a positive impact on student behavior.

Restorative Practices

"Exclusionary and punitive discipline… not only fails to reduce negative behaviors but also actually exacerbates them" (Mirsky, 2011, p. 46). Restorative Practices (RP) is based on the premise of a need to restore good relationships after conflict or harm has occurred (Armour, 2016; McCluskey, et al., 2008; Schiff, 2013). The practice also hopes to reduce the chances of conflicts arising again. Students learn to identify the inappropriate behavior and assume responsibility for their actions in a supportive rather than demeaning way (Mirsky, 2011). The focus is on repairing the harm done rather than on punishment. This allows students to make positive changes to their behaviors because those in authority are doing things with them rather than to or for them. Students are given an opportunity to give input allowing them to have a voice in the decisions being made (Gregory, et al., 2015). RP fosters communication, mutual respect, and understanding as well as the development of students' leadership skills by creating opportunities for goal-setting and mutual resolution (Mansfield, et, al., 2018).

The interventions of RP are not intended to be a stand-alone curriculum, but should be integrated into daily instruction (Gregory, et al., 2015). In order to change how students and adults interact with each other to create a positive school climate RP uses prevention and intervention strategies. When a behavior causes harm to others all affected come together to discuss the impact on them. A decision is made about how to repair the harm, with a focus on mending the relationship by creating respect for all through the development of an understanding of how one's actions affect those around you (Mansfield, et al., 2018).

There are strategies for prevention, such as proactive circles for reducing the likelihood of rule breaking occurring, and those for intervention, like restorative circles to help repair the harm done (Armour, 2016; Gregory, et al., 2015; Mansfield, et al., 2018). RP also provides opportunities for community building. The proactive circle allows for frank and open discussions about academic, emotional, and classroom-specific topics, such as behavioral expectations, rules, and consequences. The goal is to provide opportunities for the teacher and students to learn about each other and to develop a sense of shared ownership over the classroom environment. Affective statements are used to strengthen social connections and responsibility for one another. Teachers and students use affective statements to express their emotional reactions in both positive and negative situations. Responsive circles are used for whole group discussions when an incident has occurred in an attempt to restore community. Here students discuss their feelings, identify who has been affected, and develop a plan for repairing the harm and prevention of future conflict. Incidents that are more serious are addressed in restorative conferences with the goal of developing a joint solution for repair of the harm done. Teachers use a structured and scripted meeting to focus on accountability and reintegrating the offender back into the community allowing for amends to be made.

Many schools use this program as a multi-tiered system (Gregory & Fergues, 2017; Mansfield, et al., 2018; Mirsky, 2011). In Tier 1, the universal level experienced by all students, students participate in proactive or community-building circles in which they face one another and take turns speaking to a prompt or question. This is done to build community, problem solve, and provide a respectful place to establish classroom values (Armour, 2016). Tier 2 involves responsive circles in which students work together to resolve minor disciplinary incidents to repair the harm done to relationships. Restorative conferences occur at Tier 3, the most intensive tier experienced by the smallest percentage of students, involving all individuals affected by serious discipline incidents. In these conferences, participants engage in conversation based on a structured, scripted set of questions asked by a facilitator. The goal is the joint development of a solution to the problem and repair of harm caused. If a student must be absent from school for an extended period at this tier, they participate in a re-entry process to welcome them back and identify any support needed.

Gregory, Clawson, Davis, and Gerewitz (2015) studied whether teachers who implemented RP had relationships that are more positive with students compared to those who did not implement the practices. The study was conducted in two large and diverse high schools in a small city in the eastern United States after their first year of implementation of RP. In the year prior to implementation, office referrals for misconduct and defiance made up almost 30.3% of all discipline referrals with Latino and African American students receiving the greatest percentage of referrals. Participants in the study completed surveys about their perceptions of teachers' implementation of RP. Teachers who were perceived by their students as frequently implementing the practices tended to have better relationships with their students compared to those who infrequently implemented the practices. Higher implementation was also associated

with reductions in the number of disruption/defiance office referrals for Latino and African American students.

Algonquin High School, set in a large suburban area of Central Virginia, was the site of a study conducted by Mansfield, Fowler, and Rainbolt (2018). Prior to implementation of Restorative Practices, the school had more than 3,000 office referrals in one year. Within four years of implementation, that number decreased to approximately 500 referrals. In 2010-2011, about 7% of the White population had received at least one day of out of school suspension. Since the implementation of RP that number has decreased to about 4%. The percentage of black students suspended in 2011-2012 was about 26% with a decrease to about 12% in 2014-2015.

Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom (RC) is a discipline approach that seeks to create caring and respectful classroom and school environments (Horsch, et al., 2002) with a caring classroom environment prioritized and social and academic learning integrated into the instructional methods used (Rimm-Kaufman and Chiu, 2007). The overall goal of RC "is to help children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally" (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006, p. 3) through the combining of social and academic learning throughout the entire day in order to strengthen academic confidence (Koontz, 2003). RC utilizes the "natural desire of children to engage in learning when they feel safe, valued, and respected" (Horsch, et al., 1999, p. 223).

RC teaches character education by incorporating a social curriculum (Koontz, 2003). "It combines social and academic learning throughout the school day in order to achieve academic success in an environment that is safe and comfortable, and welcoming to all who enter"

(Kootnz, 2003, p. 9). Students are taught to consider others through a sense of community. They learn to respect, care for, and value the feelings of others.

Caring for others is the centerpiece of the program as emphasized by Horsch, Chen, and Wagner (2002), in that the program seeks to increase the desire and knowledge to act with more care toward those around them. Koontz (2003) stresses the desire of the Responsive Classroom approach to instruct children in "values such as treating others with respect and care, taking responsibility for one's own actions, and self-control" (p. iv). Students learn through the establishment of clear expectations for behavior and academic performance (Rimm-Kaufman & Chui, 2007). They learn to be more proactive versus reactive in their reactions to situations with others. Responsive classrooms "support children's growth and development from a more holistic perspective" (Rimm-Kaufman & Chui, 2007) than classrooms which have not implemented RC.

Empathy or caring for others is not only emphasized in the curriculum for the students it is also important for their teachers as they help their students develop self-control (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004). This empathy helps teachers know and understand their students as they build relationships with them. Teachers learn how to set guidelines and limits for student behavior in their caring classrooms. Teacher/child interactions as well as child/child interactions are important in the creation of safe and comfortable environments in which children are respected and valued as individuals (Koontz, 2003). Classrooms that have implemented Responsive Classroom develop feelings of belonging in students, foster their social skills, consider the developmental levels of the children, connect families with the learning goals, and produce environments that foster academic learning.

Responsive Classroom is based on seven principles (Koontz, 2003; Rimm-Kaufman, 2006; Rimm-Kaufman & Chui, 2007):

1) Social and academic curricula are equally important in the education of children.
2) How children learn is as important as what they learn.
3) The social interactions between students and others facilitates cognitive growth.
4) Children need to learn cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control if they are to be successful socially and academically.
5) Building knowledge of children individually, culturally, and developmentally is essential to good teaching.
6) Teachers' and school administrators' knowledge of children's families is essential to good teaching.
7) The working relationships among adults in school are critically important to how well children learn.

Children learn more efficiently when they are able to manage their behaviors and interactions with others (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). As well as developing "the social skills of cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control and" promoting "a deeper knowledge of academic subject areas, reasoned decision making, and motivation for learning" (Horsch, et al., 2002, p. 367) while no longer thinking only of themselves (Koontz, 2003). This allows them the freedom to focus on their academics and to face the challenges that come with learning. Schools become safe and productive learning communities in which students work together with others to reach their goals (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006).

Classroom practices used in the Responsive Classroom program "promote children's sense of the investment learning process" (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004). The day in a

caring classroom begins with a morning meeting used to build a sense of community while setting a positive tone for the rest of the day (Horsch, et al., 2002; Koontz, 2003). Rules and logical consequences are "management tools designed to promote and sustain a sense of community" (Horsch, et al., 2002, p. 368). Rules, which are created with input from the children (Koontz, 2003) are stated in positive terms that establish the guidelines and expectations for behavior and encourage conversation and problem solving (Horsch, et al., 2002). Children learn to behave in socially responsible ways and make amends for wrongdoing versus obeying the rules, which were already established and posted prior to their arrival in the non-responsive classroom (Horsch, et al., 1999; Koontz, 2003).

Guided discovery, the process of introducing students to classroom materials and instructional methods, begins the focus on academic learning (Horsch, et al., 1999; Horsch, et al., 2002; Koontz, 2003). This component of Responsive Classroom is intended to ignite excitement and invite students' active participation in learning. Classroom organization is vital to the success of caring classrooms, with physical space organized to maximize independence and facilitate interactions among the children. Children are also given academic choices, which helps them develop a sense of ownership in the learning process. They are allowed to make choices in their own learning. Parents are informed of their children's progress through assessment and reporting to parents. Parents are invited to express their concerns and goals for their child as well as to develop and understand how to promote their child's academic and social-emotional development.

In a study of six schools, which had implemented RC, based on the first two years of a quasi-experimental, longitudinal three-year study, Rimm-Kaufmann and Chiu (2007) addressed the following questions:

a) how does teachers' use of RC practices contribute to children's academic and social growth,

b) how is the relation between teachers' use of RC practices and children's academic and social growth moderated by children's sociodemographic risk.

Their findings show "a small positive relation between the RC approach and children's growth in reading" (Rimm-Kauffmann & Chiu, 2007, p. 408). They also found that use of Restorative Practices enhanced specific social skills in children, such as reports of greater assertiveness in the classroom, more prosocial behavior, and less anxious and fearful behavior.

"Social and academic skills typically improve only over time as children are given many opportunities to learn and practice these skills" (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006, p. 5). Children who experienced the Responsive Classroom practices for a year, demonstrated improvement in social skills and reduced problem behaviors (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004). In order for Responsive Classroom to be successful it must be customized to fit the needs of the school implementing the approach (Koontz, 2003). The support of the majority of the staff, effective training, and fidelity of implementation are also vital.

What is *The Leader in Me*?

The Leader in Me, based on Stephen Covey's 7 habits, "is focused on leadership, promoting leadership within the students, staff, administration and larger school community as a whole" (Rocco, 2018, p. 6). The LIM "emphasizes the use of common language, explicit leadership lessons, integrated leadership lessons, staff professional development, and staff modeling" (Mannell, 2018, p. 2; Tuccinardi, 2018). It involves a whole school transformation focused on leadership and life skills to develop a culture of empowerment through the nurturing of the child's social and emotional needs (Rocco, 2018). The LIM claims to be a "more

comprehensive, applicable, and deeply rooted extension of a traditional character education program" (Mannell, 2018, p. 23). It can create a culture of student empowerment and encouragement for all students to lead at school, home, and in their communities (Tuccinardi, 2018).

Table 2 depicts *The Leader in Me* Framework, which schools use to assess their level of implementation and progress. Schools use this framework to determine their areas of need and to assist in goal setting for the entire school.

Table 2. The Leader in Me Framework

SEE Core Paradigms	**Paradigm of Leadership** Everyone Can be a Leader	**Paradigm of Potential** Everyone has Genius	**Paradigm of Change** Change Starts with Me	**Paradigm of Motivation** Educators Empower Student to lead own learning	**Paradigm of Education** Develop the whole person
DO Highly Effective Practices	**Teach Leadership Principles** **Professional Learning** ● Ongoing Staff Learning ● New-Staff Learning ● Principal Learning and Modeling **Student Learning** ● Direct Lessons ● Integrated Approaches ● Modeling **Family Learning** ● Family Communication ● 7 Habits Training for Families ● Student Teaching at Home	**Create a Leadership Culture** **Leadership Environment** ● Physical Environment (See) ● Common Language (Hear) ● Emotional Environment (Feel) **Share Leadership** ● Student Leadership Roles ● Student Voice ● Active Lighthouse Team **Leadership Events** ● School-wide Events ● Classroom Events ● Family & Community Events	**Align Academic Systems** **School-wide-Goal Achievement** ● School Goals ● Team Goals ● Staff Goals **Student-Led Achievement** ● Student Goals ● Leadership Notebooks ● Student-Led Conferences **Empowering Instruction** ● Trusting Relationships ● Student-Led Learning ● Collaborative Planning and Reflection		

GET Measurable Results	**Leadership**	**Culture**	**Academics**

*This chart, adapted from Franklin Covey Field Guide Empowering Instruction, shows the principles and practices of *The Leader in Me*.

Characteristics of *The Leader in Me*

The Leader in Me focuses on "nurturing the primary greatness in each child" (Pinkelman, 2011, p. 3) and developing them "into leaders of their own lives" (Mannell, 2018, p. 1) by unleashing "each child's full potential" (Rocco, 2018, p. 8). Students learn to reflect on their choices and recognize what is within their circle of control. This leads to acting proactively versus reactively allowing students to think win-win as they seek first to understand then to be understood. "By teaching students to be proactive, set goals, develop cooperative relationships, and build personal, emotional and social capacity, these principles improve learning outcomes, enhance student experiences, and ensure the cultivation of skills that strengthen student achievement" (FranklinCovey, 2015, p. 9).

Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) encourage us to "focus on understanding rather than agreement" (p. 7). This resonates with me on multiple levels, as we have to ask ourselves if our disagreement is truly the problem, or do we just not understand the situation. As an administrator in a LIM school, I have begun to live the habits myself. Habit 5 "seek first to understand, then to be understood" is my favorite. When living this habit, we have to listen to the thoughts and feelings of others, see their viewpoint, and use empathetic listening. I consider how this would influence society and find myself thinking we could definitely use more understanding of those around us. In the world of education, this understanding could lead to higher levels of consistent, sustainable student achievement; therefore, supporting the teaching of the 7 Habits in schools. Students who live the habits will be more successful in meeting their academic and behavioral goals as well as becoming responsible citizens ready for success in society.

The LIM helps children and school staff create and use a common language, gives students a positive voice in school level decision making, and the ability to make better choices (FranklinCovey, 2018). Teaching the seven habits positively influences student behavior. Students are developing skills, such as leadership mindsets and behaviors that allow them to be effective lifelong learners and leaders. School cultures exist where students and staff feel safe and able to engage in authentic learning. Students' social-emotional skills develop through the positive support of the learning environment created by the LIM. Students feel emotionally safe, socially supported, and academically engaged leading to positive results for schools that have implemented the LIM. Students are observed problem solving and solving issues amongst themselves using the habit language.

The habit language as well as the core paradigms guide stakeholders in living the habits. When a school centers its implementation, continues to guide its culture and practices around the core paradigms rates of sustainability increase. Table 3 provides the meaning of each of the core paradigms.

Table 3. Five Core Paradigms of *The Leader in Me*

Paradigms	Meaning
Leadership	Everyone can be a leader
Potential	Everyone has genius
Change	Change begins with me
Motivation	Students should be empowered to lead their own learning
Education	Education should focus on the whole person

*from Mannell (2018)

The physical environment of a school demonstrates evidence of the LIM with goals posted throughout the school and in classrooms (Tidd, 2016). The goals are related to academic achievement and are tied to school improvement goals, which are tied to grade level goals, which are tied to classroom goals. Student goals based on the individual child's skill level are linked to

the classroom goals. The visual displays for the goals are shown on WIG (Wildly Important Goal) boards as well as being tracked in the students' Leadership Notebooks.

Students lead throughout the school via their leadership roles, which allow them to develop a deep sense of responsibility and act as role models (Rocco, 2018; Tidd, 2016). These roles are not assigned; students must apply for them and justify why they are a good fit for the role. Leadership roles include tasks that adults would normally complete. Administrators have reported significant decreases in discipline issues due to students assuming leadership roles (Tidd, 2016).

Implementation of *The Leader in Me*

Implementation of the LIM is a three-year process but there is no one size fits all process (Fonzi & Ritchie, 2011; Rocco, 2018). Prior to implementation, the LIM coach gathers information about the school environment and challenges/issues faced in order to prepare for the training to come. The implementation process takes 3-4 years to be fully embedded in the daily functioning and culture of a school. Through the cultivation of a positive learning environment, students are empowered to reach their potential academically, socially, and behaviorally. During the first year the focus is on introducing the habits and clarifying the purpose for implementing this program. The focus is on the vocabulary of the program and establishing a school culture of leadership for all versus a few (Miller, 2016). The staff spends time understanding the habits and their impact on their personal and professional lives. The staff considers what is our vision, what will we do differently, and what impact could we have. This is a time to develop ownership and buy-in. During Year 2, the focus moves to "introducing tools to reinforce the meaning and application of the habits" (Fonzi & Ritchie, 2011, p. 4). Also moving toward a focus on academics, with lessons being integrated into the regular standards being taught each

day. During the third year, teachers learn how to empower instruction through the 3i model: ignite curiosity, investigate, and invite connections, bringing about the completion of training to maximize the results of the implementation of the program.

Miller (2016) conducted a study of a LIM school in the first year of implementation with findings of no discernible difference in discipline referrals or student achievement during that first year of implementation. He asserted that the implementation of the LIM requires fidelity to implementation with support from all staff members and as can be seen from the depth and detail of the trainings complete buy in is needed for fidelity.

The Lighthouse team, made up of six people, oversees the implementation process to ensure a smooth implementation (Mannell, 2018; Rocco, 2018). All teachers are vital to the success of implementation as they have a direct connection to the students. After implementation is complete, schools begin working toward the status of Lighthouse school. This requires schools to have a Lighthouse team in place, which meets regularly and oversees the implementation of the leadership model. The school environment must reinforce the leadership model. Teachers should integrate the language into their instruction daily. Staff must collaborate to build a culture of leadership in classrooms and throughout the entire school. Students should be provided with meaningful leadership roles and responsibilities. Parents should be involved in activities to support the leadership model as well as understand the leadership language being used at school. The school should hold leadership events to highlight the program. The school should be seeing measurable improvements due to implementation. In order for implementation to be successful all staff must know and live the habits daily (Mannell, 2018).

The Seven Habits of *The Leader in Me*

"*The Leader in Me* calls for a ubiquitous approach embedding the 7 Habits in school's curriculum, traditions, systems, and culture" (Fonzi & Ritchie, 2011, p. 7). Flexibility is allowed; however, depending on the school's needs. Schools that implement the LIM have hopes that students will learn to be responsible, respectful, caring, compassionate, and have a strong work ethic (Pinkelman, 2011); in other words, students who are leaders. Through the teaching of Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, students learn how to be proactive, begin with the end in mind, think win-win, seek first to understand, then to be understood, and to synergize, the five habits that focus on student behaviors.

Table 4 provides a description of each of the habits. Knowing and understanding the why and how of each habit increases the likelihood of success with the program.

Table 4. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

Habit 1 Be Proactive	This habit focuses on students' personal choices and how they have control over their own actions
Habit 2 Begin with the End in Mind	This habit focuses on thinking about the end result. Students are encouraged to plan ahead and set goals. Leadership notebooks are used to track students' goals.
Habit 3 Put First Things First	This habit encourages students to prioritize so that they may spend time on things that are most important first.
Habit 4 Think Win-Win	This habit encourages students to balance courage for getting what they want with consideration for what others want.
Habit 5 Seek First to Understand then to be Understood	Students are encouraged to see things from another's point of view by listening to others' ideas and feelings.
Habit 6 Synergize	The goal of this habit is to focus on working well with others while working in groups allowing students to learn to value others' differences.
Habit 7 Sharpen the Saw	The focus of this habit is on the individual and the importance of taking care of oneself by eating right, exercising, and spending time with family.

*Fonzi & Ritchie, 2011

The habit of being proactive "encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and the direction of their lives through personal choice and initiative" (FranklinCovey, 2015, p. 2) before being asked (Mannell, 2018). Success with Habit 1 requires choosing a proactive mindset versus a reactive mindset (FranklinCovey, 2015). By setting goals and having a plan of action (Begin with the end in mind), students are able to maintain a focus on what is important versus the insignificant. The first three habits help students own their academic progress and make appropriate choices about behavior through personal reflection and individual work (Tidd, 2016; Tuccinardi, 2018). This eventually enables them to interact with others and build positive relationships (Tuccinardi, 2018).

When students think win-win they are considering the best outcome for all involved. They learn that one's success is not gained at the expense of another. The goal is mutual benefit for all involved by seeking the "third alternative when conflicts arise during collaboration" (Mannell, 2018, p. 23). Seek first to understand then to be understood teaches empathetic listening, which allows open communication between the two parties involved. This habit requires one to listen first before expressing one's own ideas (Mannell, 2018; Tuccinardi, 2018). Synergy means working well together. When students synergize they are "humble, and respect and seek out the opinions of others" (FranklinCovey, 2015, p. 7). The strengths of others are valued and the group can accomplish more. Habits four through six emphasize the importance of working together cooperatively (Tidd, 2016). Students use these habits to become "self-directed problem solvers and critical thinkers, who have vital communication and interpersonal skills" (Pinkelman, 2011, p. 3). The habits help students establish and maintain their relationships with others (Tuccinardi, 2018).

By integrating the habits into the school day, the LIM initiative strives to ensure that the principles behind the habits are ingrained in the students and staff members, and will thereby lead to a successful school experience as well as a better quality of life for students beyond school (Mannell, 2108, p. 7).

The Leader in Me **and Student Discipline**

Implementation of the LIM has also influenced student behavior, as evidenced by students who are engaged in learning are less likely to misbehave (Howard & Rodriguez-Minoff, 2017; Schwartz, 2016; Singleton, 2015). Students have to believe they can achieve even when faced with adversity. We naturally have two distinct mindsets that contribute to the way we interact with the world (Schwartz, 2016). A fixed mindset means we believe our abilities and intelligence are stagnant, we have it or we don't. A growth mindset means we realize all have the ability to improve not only abilities, but also intelligence. LIM teaches us to shift our paradigm to a growth mindset.

The research of Sanders (2014), in a study conducted to determine the difference in discipline referrals in the year prior to implementation and the first year of implementation, suggests that for the LIM to be effective all staff members must be knowledgeable of the seven habits and use them appropriately throughout their entire day. This is not always the case, however, as evidenced by a teacher at a prominent LIM school when he responded with "he did not know much about them (the 7 habits) and that the question should rather be put to the teacher across the hall who actually used them regularly" (Center for Advanced Research, 2010, p. 2). A lack of implementation fidelity such as this could be the detriment of the success of the program. This school was, however, able to report a 68% reduction in overall disciplinary referrals. Sanders' study gave no clear indicator of why the LIM brought about a reduction in

discipline referrals; however, the administration of the school involved in the study stated the program created a more positive atmosphere in the school.

Another example of the positive impact of the LIM is a school with a 60% reduction in disciplinary referrals (Center for Advanced Research, 2011). This school also reports having the highest ranking of student on-task behavior, a positive school learning climate, and evidence of students applying the seven habits in real life. Schools that have implemented the LIM are showing improvements in discipline, including a school in South Carolina, which experienced a 23% decrease in student discipline referrals. In Florida, a school experienced a drop in referrals from 225 to 74 in slightly over a year. In another school in Illinois, the office referrals dropped 75% after the first year of implementation. A school in North Carolina had a drop from 64 office referrals to 34 over a two-year period. Students are also demonstrating the ability to problem solve and take responsibility for their own actions when involved in discipline incidents.

Tidd (2016) conducted a qualitative case study to determine staff perceptions of the impact of the LIM on students' motivation and peer relationships to support the decision to implement LIM at her school, Lane Elementary. Interviews were conducted with 18 staff members, two teachers, two administrators, and two non-classroom based personnel from three schools, six from three different Title I school sites with similar demographics to Lane Elementary. This study came about due to concerns at Lane Elementary, which continued, to experience students' lack of necessary skills to self-regulate behaviors and positive interactions with peers despite the implementation of school-wide expectations and positive behavior incentive programs. The results of the study demonstrated that the LIM positively influenced students' motivation and peer relationships.

School administrators face an important task when determining the best fit for a program for their school. Teacher perceptions of the impact of the LIM on student behaviors after implementation help with this decision-making process (Tuccinardi, 2018). A case study was conducted in an elementary school serving over eight hundred students in grades PreK- fifth. Three years of suspension data including data from before implementation to two years into implementation along with a survey of teachers was used for data collection. The survey included questions about teachers' experiences with the LIM and its effectiveness with behavioral issues. Teachers who had taught at the school for three or more years were asked to complete the survey. The results of this study showed an increase in suspensions during the first full year of implementation then a slight decrease in year two from 25 to 21 suspensions. Tuccinardi (2018) believes based on the results the LIM "provides a system and structure resulting in some positive behavior outcomes and an overall positive school culture and climate, but student discipline is still an issue" (p. 77) as the program lacks the tools needed to correct student behaviors and improve discipline issues. A system is not in place to hold students accountable by assigning consequences for misbehavior. It is suggested that schools implement other behavior programs along with the LIM to increase the positive results.

Rocco (2018) conducted interviews with 12 principals of elementary schools, which had implemented the LIM to gather information about their experiences with the program; including how and why they implemented the LIM. How they measured success, what they learned, how they had adapted the program to meet their school's needs, what they would change, and any advice they would give other school leaders was also analyzed. All 12 principals who participated in the study suggested the LIM had a positive impact on the culture of their schools. They noted the all-inclusive nature of the program as a positive and saw a decrease in discipline

referrals and suspensions. Principals also reported changes in communication with students during conversations about discipline incidents. Students were noted as being able to demonstrate knowledge of and implementation of the LIM into their academic and social lives. They were also observed using the language of the program in their day-to-day interactions. There was a decrease in the suspension rates at each school as well. One school noted a 57% decrease in the number of discipline incidents referred to the office. Another school experienced a decrease in their minor incidents, such as pushing and shoving. The results of the study indicated that having teacher buy-in led to minor push back from the staff and that schools should be sure to customize the implementation to their school's culture. It was also noted that the cost of the program was high, but the principals still felt it was worthwhile. Another suggestion was to implement the program one grade level at a time.

In a causal-comparative approach by Mannell (2018), the purpose was to determine if there was a difference in the changes in students and teachers' perceptions of school climate and student reactive recovery room visits between two elementary schools, one of which implemented the LIM and the other not. Both schools had similar enrollment and demographics. Reactive recovery room visits are those in which a student is sent to the room because of behavior that disrupted the classroom. The number of students sent to the recovery room decreased for the school having implemented the LIM and increased for the other school. Student and teacher perceptions of the climate and behavior declined at both schools, but more so at the LIM school. It was noted that other factors played a role in the results of this study.

Not all discipline issues will be alleviated by implementing *The Leader in Me*. However, the LIM cultivates a positive learning environment that empowers students to reach their academic, social, and behavioral potential. Factors that will impede the impact of the program

include the number of students who enter school with cognitive, physical, and social disabilities (Miller, 2016) as well as those with traumatic experience. It is not to say these students will not experience a positive impact. However, when analyzing the discipline data of a school we must consider the fact that "it is estimated that approximately 10% of children and adolescents in the United States suffer from some form of mental illness that significantly impairs their ability to function in everyday settings" (Miller, 2016, p. 18).

Student Voice Cultivated by *The Leader in Me*

The Leader in Me gives all students a voice in their educational experience. Through this voice, students help determine goals for their learning, contribute to the learning of others, and develop life-long leadership skills (FranklinCovey, 2015). "Research in the areas of self-determination and motivation confirm that this concept of student ownership is indeed fostered in part by ensuring that students are involved with leadership opportunities within the school" (Tidd, 2016, p. 69). According to Mansfield (2014) student voice has a positive impact on student achievement, however this use of student voice is often lacking in the debate about how to increase student achievement and positive student behavior. School leaders must establish the culture of the school through positive treatment of families and other stakeholders by allowing them to be actively involved in the decision-making process of the schools including decisions about how and what to learn (Kohn, 1991). We can no longer think of students as the problem to be fixed, but must give them the opportunity to identify the problem and offer their own solutions.

The LIM seeks to teach students leadership skills, which are the result of giving them a voice in their education. "School goals and activities that are associated with good character education programs are also associated with academic achievement. Thus our results argue for

maintaining a rich curriculum with support for all aspects of student development and growth" (Schwartz, 2016, p. 153). Schwartz was a third grade teacher who asked her students to complete the sentence "I wish my teacher knew…". Her students' responses helped her see the need for understanding of students' realities outside of school. The LIM integrates character education and empowering instruction to give students a voice to set goals for success in school and life thereafter. Teachers should not fear sharing the responsibility of creating norms and determining goals with their students (Kohn, 1991). "The act of learning itself requires a strong character" (Schwartz, 2016, p. 162). Curiosity, perseverance, and resiliency are needed to acquire knowledge and are taught through the seven habits.

Lac and Mansfield (2018) define student involvement as students sharing their perspectives with adults to work alongside them to solve problems. This experience increases as students strengthen their citizenship behaviors as adults. Students' feelings of self-efficacy become stronger creating a sense of empowerment to make a difference in their school and community. Through participation in student-led initiatives, students develop autonomy; therefore, school leaders must create opportunities for student voice with continued value and support to ensure success. Teachers and students must co-construct knowledge and understanding. By giving students, a say in their education, respect and appreciation for the perspectives of students is shown. When educators value and recognize the lived experiences of students, they will engage and connect to school and learning, therefore experiencing greater success (Mansfield et al., 2018).

Mansfield, Welton, and Halx (2018) support the existence of three levels of student voice: At the first level, students share their opinions about school problems and are heard. Next, students collaborate with adults in the school to identify and address school reform. Finally, the

most intense level of students assuming leadership roles to identify problems and implement solutions. School leadership officials and teachers must learn to speak with students rather than for them. By engaging students at the most intensive level curricular improvements and strengthening of student-teacher relationships occur. In schools that have implemented the LIM, students are given opportunities for leadership through classroom leadership roles, school leadership roles, and membership in the Student Lighthouse Team (FranklinCovey, 2015). All students are allowed to voice their opinions about school improvement and can make change happen.

Students of poverty have often experienced traumatic events in their lives. By giving them a voice in their education, their personal and academic goals, and valuing and recognizing their lived experiences, schools become more inclusive and welcoming. "Respecting people as subjects of their lives rather than objects in our lives is essential to human growth and development" (Lac & Mansfield, 2018, p. 46). When we attempt to change schools without involving students in the process, we rob them of the opportunity to develop their leadership abilities, which goes against the tenets of the LIM.

In LIM, schools' students become co-leaders (Franklin Covey, 2015). When students' identities are an integral part of the school's leadership resilience is strengthened (Mansfield, et al., 2018). When we ignore their voices, they experience feelings of alienation, anonymity, and powerlessness and disengagement. Disengaged students have lower self-esteem, lower academic achievement, higher rates of discipline issues, and higher dropout rates. Student voice deepens the engagement of students as co-designers and co-learners (Fullan & Quinn, 2016). Students must take responsibility for their learning and gain an understanding of the process of learning in order to maximize the results. Student voice "is more than participation; it is engaging students

in real decision-making and a willingness to learn together" (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, p. 95). By assisting students with goal setting and progress-monitoring as they progress toward their goals, such as prescribed by the tenets of the LIM, schools can ensure that students with traumatic experiences, including living in poverty and exhibiting behavior concerns, will experience success in schools.

School leaders and other stakeholders must look beyond the behavior issues to find the child beneath the surface and provide a means for all students to have a voice in their education. "Schools and districts cannot establish equitable learning outcomes for all students when leaders continually ignore, belittle, or deny the voices of historically marginalized students, parents, and families" (Lac and Mansfield, 2018, p. 51). Schools often mute the voices of marginalized students whether intentionally or not and these students are rendered virtually invisible causing a negative impact on their academic and behavioral goals (Mansfield, et al., 2018). "When students take on leadership roles within the school, they have an active voice when it comes to helping to shape responsibility for the culture and climate" (Tidd, 2016, p. 62) and when students are heard and allowed to lead they will succeed (Rocco, 2018).

Critics of School-wide Behavior Programs

Critics of school-wide behavior programs share a variety of reasons for their lack of support for these programs. If the goal of education is to create life-long learners who will become productive citizens, we need to teach children to problem solve on their own, however critics believe these programs do not instill these traits in students for the long term (Komagata, 2016). A key concern is the fact that "behavior modification programs are rarely successful at producing lasting changes in attitudes or behaviors" (Kohn, 1994, p. 1) with no transfer to new

situations because the children have not integrated the actions into their value structures (Kohn, 1997).

Kohn (2018) discusses behaviorism which is "a psychological theory that would have us focus exclusively on what can be seen and measured, that ignores or dismisses inner experience, and reduces wholes to parts" (p. 1). Behaviorism suggests that people do things for rewards and can be controlled based on this desire. Intrinsic motivation, finding value in the task itself, should be the goal versus extrinsic, external reward, as children who are constantly rewarded tend to perform for the reward only over time as they seek adult approval for their actions (Kohn, 1997; Kohn, 2003; Kohn, 2018; Komagata, 2016; Van Gemert, 2018). This often leads to less effort in the task as well. Kohn believes educators should be looking beneath the surface to find the underlying cause of the behaviors.

Today's character education programs are seen as ways to force students into submission, never allowing them to engage in deep, critical reflection about their actions (Kohn, 1997). Standardized discipline programs tend to rely on techniques that break down students' resistance and force them into conformity with the established norms of the institution (Kohn, 2003). While they rely on positive reinforcement versus punishment, their basic objective remains the same: compliance. For example, the use of logical consequences in Responsive Classroom. The goal remains to be in control of the students. Teachers state the need to teach good citizenship through teaching words like respect and responsibility, but it still boils down to control, compliance to rules and respect for authority (Kohn,1997).

Many programs boast student empowerment, but this is limited due to the control maintained by the teacher (Kohn, 2003). Class meetings where the teacher determines what will be discussed, who will speak, and when are not truly empowering students to have a voice in the

decision making process. Building caring relationships between students and teachers is not effective when teachers do not reflect deeply enough to see what is truly happening with the student. Self-discipline is another proposed goal, however, "accepting someone else's expectations is very different from developing one's own" (Kohn, 2003, p. 4).

In an attempt to control behaviors, schools tend to offer rewards for positive behavior and consequences for unacceptable behaviors. While this will bring about temporary compliance, the child is not becoming an ethical, compassionate decision maker (Kohn, 1991; Kohn, 1994). In fact, punishment often generates feelings of anger, defiance, and a desire for revenge. The teacher inadvertently demonstrates power over the child and damages the relationship between adult and child. Awards are also seen as having a negative impact on students as only a few students are selected to receive them, creating unhealthy competition between peers (Kohn, 1997; Komagata, 2016; Van Gemert, 2018). On the other side of the competition argument "is the fear that children taught to care about others will be unable to look out for themselves when they are released into a heartless society" (Kohn, 1991, p. 4). Quite the opposite is true as those taught to look out for number one often struggle to work well in situations where they are required to synergize with their colleagues.

Other critics of character education believe the line between what should be taught at home and in school is crossed when schools implement programs focused on moral values (Jeynes, 2019). This belief is based on our society being too morally diverse and the thought that schools should maintain a focus on improving student achievement and critical thinking. However, this is contrasted by the Gallup poll results showing "that between 91% and 99% of Americans believe that qualities such as honesty, the golden rule, courage, sincerity, patriotism, and responsibility should be taught in public schools" (Jeynes, 2019, p. 38). Alfie Kohn, (1991)

also counteracts this belief by stating that all teachers share their moral values without even realizing it. While many believe this part of education should come from home, Kohn points out that many children do not receive this important instruction at home.

Critics of *The Leader in Me* specifically feel that the program leads to students being treated as mini-adults (Sherry & Worth, n.d.). They see it as a waste of money and say it indoctrinates students while sacrificing classroom discipline all for the benefit of a for-profit company. Other complaints include it is a one-size-fits-all approach with too much focus on productivity, it uses language that is too advanced for younger children, and most times it was not properly vetted as curriculum prior to implementation. Another critic of LIM sees it as the continuation of White privilege or Whiteness as Property (The Leader in Me, 2017). The view of the program is that students should understand they have control of their destiny. It is questioned if students coming from poverty really do have control. They are seen as having limited power and control over their lives. "They lack whiteness, financial stability, stable home lives…" (blog post, 2017). They are a product of poverty and racism, which continues to disadvantage them. The LIM is believed to be too far removed from their circumstances for them to relate to it. When schools implement the program, they are "transforming the structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of [students] of color" (Solorzano, 1998, p. 123 as cited in The Leader in Me, 2017). The biggest critics of the LIM cite Stephen Covey's Mormon beliefs as a cause for concern (Sherry & Worth, n.d.). They feel he created the program based on religious concepts that pose as character and leadership education. The views of the critics will be considered when analyzing the data gathered during my study. Their views may open up areas of concern at my school that we have not considered

to this point. If stakeholders involved in the study hold these opinions, they will need to be addressed.

Conclusion

The ability to learn, form relationships, solve problems, and adapt to life's changes are crucial to students' success in academics, improved quality of relationships between teachers and students, and the decreasing of behavioral incidents (Brackett & Rivers, n.d.; Kress, et al., 2004). Through the years, educators have sought ways to teach students the skills vital to promoting healthy social and emotional learning. School-wide behavior programs and character education have become the trusted ways to accomplish this task. This is vital to the success of all students, but especially students of color and male students as they are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, which can hold them back academically (Gregory & Fergus, 2017).

Critics feel these programs are creating robots who lose the ability to think for themselves and simply follow established expectations. Other critics feel society is too morally diverse and a clear line is being crossed with implementation of character education (Jeynes, 2019). There are critics of the implementation process itself as they believe schools are trying to implement too many things at one time, decreasing the fidelity of each one (Payton, et al., 2000).

PBIS has shown positive results, but the focus on rewards is a concern for many (Martin, 2013). Some feel it does not instill in students a sense of respect for others hindering the program's success in schools. RP focuses on restoring the relationship damaged by the negative behavior or actions of students (McCluskey, et al., 2008). Meetings are held with all involved after an incident; however, time is devoted throughout the day to teach and instill positive behavior practices. RC most closely aligns with the teachings of the LIM with the focus on

seeking to develop caring and respectful classrooms (Horsch, et al., 2002). Students learn to set goals and monitor their progress toward these goals.

Through the implementation of the teachings of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People through *The Leader in Me,* education systems can provide support to marginalized students through the creation of a welcoming, asset-based, and proactive school climate and culture. While "character education should not be seen as a magical intervention that solves learning and behavior problems" (Schwartz, 2016, p. 153) it is the beginning of the journey to student success. Through the support of students by all stakeholders, they can learn to be proactive, begin with the end in mind, think win-win, seek first to understand then to be understood, and to synergize to accomplish all their academic and behavioral goals.

While the research on the LIM is limited, there is promise that with more research the impact on discipline will be proven highly effective. When considering the influence of the LIM on school climate and culture, one must consider the fidelity with which it was implemented at a school, the state of the school at the time of implementation, and the staff turnover rate. Each of these factors could affect the success of the school after implementation if they were negative in nature. This research will be beneficial to other schools who are considering implementing the LIM, as it will allow for analysis of implementation styles at different schools.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

As stated in Chapter 1, the purposes of my research were to examine the experiences and perceptions of an elementary school staff who implemented *The Leader in Me* Program (LIM) in their school. I hoped to learn more about the implementation style at this school in order to assist other schools as they begin the implementation process. An appreciative inquiry study at a Title I school which implemented LIM four years ago allowed me to understand the nature of the program, how the program was implemented, what faculty and administration perceptions are around implementation fidelity and program effects, and how the program might be improved. The overarching research questions guiding my study are:

1) What is the nature of *The Leader in Me* program in RAE elementary school?

2) How do stakeholders (teachers, administrators, students) experience and perceive the implementation and effects of *The Leader in Me* program in RAE elementary school?

3) What relationships can be inferred between stakeholders' (teachers, administrators, students) implementation experiences and intended impacts in RAE elementary school?

4) How can implementation elements be improved to strengthen intended impacts?

In this chapter, I will describe the methodology I used in the study. I will describe the setting of the school in which the study was conducted, including information about the sample population. I will discuss the data collection and reporting methods that were used. I will also discuss limitations and trustworthiness issues, and how I sought to overcome them.

Methodology

I selected an appreciative inquiry approach because it allows the researcher to gain insight into the strengths and effectiveness of the program in order to determine opportunities for

change and improvement (Anderson, et al., 2016). The "focus is on honoring what already exists and using a positive strengths-based change orientation to make the changes" (Black, et al., 2017, p. 61) needed. This study was conducted at a Title I elementary school. My research followed a flexible and interactive design. By conducting the research in the school setting where the participants work, they experienced a sense of comfort in their natural environment. This study method allowed me to focus on a single case or program, *The Leader in Me,* and how staff believes it is working well and what could be improved (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014).

Appreciative inquiry focuses on the positive aspects of the problem rather than the problems experienced (Grant & Humphries, 2006). This approach leads to a concentration on what is possible rather than what is wrong. Questions were asked during the data analysis about what is working, why it is working, and what could be done in the future to continue improvement (Gray, et al., 2019). "Qualitative research is useful when the researcher wants to understand a particular phenomenon in its social context" (Rocco, 2018, p. 45). By interviewing teachers who have experience with the LIM, I gained insight into their knowledge, which was constructed via lived experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Teacher interviews in an appreciative inquiry approach allow teachers to share their successes while considering what made them successful and where to go next (Gray, et al., 2019). This reveals the role of all stakeholders in the success of the program as well as identifying their strengths (Black, et al., 2017). Critics of appreciative inquiry believe it focuses solely on the positive overlooking the negative or problematic aspects of a program (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018). However, appreciation does not mean to solely focus on the good, but to consider different perspectives

(Grant & Humphries, 2006). The purpose is to draw attention to what is working well in order to create a plan for how to proceed with any needed changes.

The use of multiple data sources including interviews with teachers and an administrator and observations of the physical environment increased the trustworthiness and believability of my study. By studying a school, which implemented the LIM four years ago, I discovered consistencies and inconsistencies in the implementation process and daily living of the LIM in the school (Ross, et al., 2012). I hoped to learn new strategies, implementation strengths, and areas of need to be shared with other schools considering or already implementing the program. The study provided information about the sustainability of the program, the influences on the school and students, the benefits, and any improvements that could be shared with other schools. During the study, I used interviews to learn the participants' thoughts or feelings about the LIM program, and how they interpret its influence on their students and school.

Setting

The school I studied is a Title I school with approximately 520 students, grades Pre-K to fifth with 28 classrooms. The highest ethnic group population is Hispanic at 70%; notably, 40% of these students are considered Limited English Proficiency. In addition, 20% of students identify as Black while 5% identify as White. The remaining 5% identify as Asian and Multiracial. The school employs a full-time interpreter, school nurse, school social worker, and two school counselors to assist with meeting the diverse needs of our students who come from a high poverty area in our community. The second school counselor position was added this school year due to the increased SEL support students were believed to need due to COVID-19 and its impact on schooling. All students have the opportunity to receive free breakfast each morning through a federally funded program. Additionally, all students receive free lunch

through this same program. Discipline data demonstrate a high number of office referrals and suspensions involving Hispanic and Black males. However, the data also shows that since the implementation of the LIM, there have been notable decreases in the number of office referrals each year up to the 19-20 school year in which about 30 new students enrolled. Approximately ten of these students were identified and treated for mental health concerns. In the 2020-2021 school year, our students participated in virtual learning for the first half of the school year and continue to do so. Behavior incidents were drastically lower during this time.

Researcher Positionality

In order to reduce possible bias, I utilized a reflexivity journal to record my view and perceptions of LIM throughout the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I am currently employed as a building level administrator in this *Leader in Me* school which has experienced tremendous success, as demonstrated by the discipline data and the reduction in the number of office referrals since implementation, and has been a showcase for other schools who were considering implementing the program. In order to reduce my biased perceptions of how the LIM influences the success of a school and the behaviors of students, I gave room to participants to talk about how they envision the program improving in their school. Due to the success with the LIM experienced at my school, my view may be biased as to the impact it has on students' behavior. However, I had to clearly communicate that I am open to hearing from teachers about any concerns, needs, or suggestions they have. I had to conduct my study with an open mind and was willing to report accurately in cases where I did not find the results I had predicted. The use of an appreciative inquiry model helped keep this goal attainable by assisting with development of a plan to refine the approach of the school staff in implementing and living *The Leader in Me*.

Sample Population

The teachers who participated in the interviews were selected based on their answers to a survey (Appendix A) they were asked to complete about their years of experience in education, the number of years taught at their current school, and whether they have taught in a non-*Leader in Me* school before. The survey also provided background information about the staff, which I analyzed for data to support staff needs.

I reached out to the selected teachers to explain the purpose of my study and to explain the requirements for participants. I clarified if they wanted to participate with the understanding that they did not have to agree and could back out of the study at any time.

The participants included two Encore teachers (PE and Media), Encore means the same as specials or enrichment, two Kindergarten teachers, one third grade teacher, and one fifth grade teacher. I also interviewed the school's principal to learn about her perspective of the LIM, including how it is working in her school and how the implementation process went. All participants have taught at RAE for at least one year. The maximum number of total years taught was 32 and the least amount was four. Table 5 details the statistics for each teacher/administrator participant, including years taught at RAE, total years taught, and whether their career began at RAE or not.

Table 5. Interview Participants

Interview Participants Data				
Initials	**Position**	**Years Taught at RAE**	**Total Years in Education**	**Began Career at RAE (yes or no)**
Tom	Encore	24	24	Yes
Kate	Encore	1	32	No
Leah	Kindergarten	1	12	No
Molly	Kindergarten	7	7	Yes
Patty	Third Grade	4	4	Yes
Jessica	Fifth Grade	7	24	No

Susan	Principal	8	35	No

In order to have two teachers from each grade span K-2 and 3-5, I selected two Kindergarten teachers. I did not select a 1st or 2nd grade teacher because the only 2nd grade teacher to express interest did not meet the criteria for teaching more than one year and I did not have any 1st grade teachers express interest.

I interviewed the six selected teachers from RAE elementary school in two 30-minute interview sessions. Due to COVID, I conducted the interviews via Zoom, which allowed me to see and talk to the interviewees virtually. I decided to conduct two part interviews with the teachers due to the extensive nature of the interview protocol

I used purposeful sampling to allow me to select participants based on those I can learn the most from as well as criterion-based selection since I have attributes, such as number of year taught in total, grade level span/Encore and on staff or not during implementation, selected that the participants will need to possess (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I knew my sample size was large enough when I reach saturation or redundancy, meaning I heard similar things in their responses.

My student focus group consisted of seven fifth grade students who attended RAE from kindergarten until fifth grade. (Questions located in Appendix E.) Their homeroom teachers selected them based on criteria I set, (enrolled at RAE at least one full school year and willing to speak out and share with a group). I met with the students via Zoom since they were still learning remotely. The students joined me at the same time except for K who came late. She stayed for a few minutes after the others left to answer the questions she missed.

Data Collection Methods

Survey

The survey was initially conducted to assist in the selection of participants for the interviews. I also used the data collected in the survey to determine patterns in the lived experiences of other staff members during the implementation of the program. I originally sent the survey to classroom and Encore teachers to assist me in selecting participants. I removed the question about willingness to interview and resent the survey to the EC and ESL teachers in order to gather data from all certified staff who works with children during the school day. This allowed me to compare the responses of teachers from each grade span as well as those from staff who serve all grade levels. The survey questions are in Appendix A.

Interviews

I conducted interviews with the teachers selected based on their responses to the staff survey. I also interviewed my principal. Questions ranged from participants' range and years of experience in education to experience with *The Leader in Me,* including the number of years teaching or leading in a LIM school, to the implementation process. Participants were asked about their experiences during the implementation process, pros and cons of the program, evidence of influence on students' behavior, and knowledge of different aspects of the LIM. The interviews allowed me to gain insight into the staff members' perceptions of the influence of the LIM on the behaviors of their students, the implementation process, resources available, and the program itself.

The interview questions were grouped based on my research questions, beginning with a general question about the teachers as individuals (Tidd, 2016). The questions were concisely worded to avoid confusion on the part of the interviewee (Tidd, 2016). While they were open-

ended enough to capture the participants' individual experiences, they were also specific enough to answer my overall research questions. The interview protocols are included in Appendices B and C.

Focus Group

I conducted a focus group with seven fifth grade students who have been enrolled in this school for one year or more. These students were selected based on recommendations by their classroom teachers. By allowing the teachers to select the students, a possible limitation to consider is which students did the teachers select, perhaps only the "good" students. Criteria for the teachers to use when selecting students included students who had attended this school for one or more years and students who would willingly share their thoughts with a group of peers and myself. A focus group is an interview about a topic the participants are familiar with (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During the conversation, participants share their views about the topic, hear those of others, and sometimes change their views based on what they heard from others. The goal of the focus group was to give the students a voice in the decisions made about enhancing and maintaining *The Leader in Me* program at their school. The focus group protocol is in Appendix d.

Observations

I conducted observations of the school building itself, specifically looking for evidence of *The Leader in Me* in the physical environment (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I wanted to observe in the classrooms of the teachers interviewed to look for evidence of the habits of LIM in their interactions with students, instructional delivery, and classroom management. Observing in classrooms and throughout the school building would allow me to understand the school's culture and how it influences the implementation of the LIM. The culture of the school also

influences student behavior. Due to COVID-19, the observations of classrooms were not feasible. I decided not to conduct them virtually which would only allow me to see instruction of students who are in their home environments, hindering what was observed pertaining to the LIM program. I used observations of the physical environment of the school instead. The focus of these observations was the physical space, looking specifically for answers to the following questions: a) What is it like?, b) What is the context?, c) How is space allocated?, d) What is the purpose of the space?, and e) What does it say to the viewer? Visual data, in the form of photographs, will be used to document these observations.

Document Analysis (Teacher Resources and Discipline Data)

I reviewed documents and materials pertaining to the LIM made available to the staff by the administration. I also reviewed the discipline data comparing the number of referrals each school year since the implementation of the program. My focus was on the reduction in the number of referrals each year and patterns present that could present new areas of need for the school and its focus on the LIM. Due to COVID-19 and school moving to a remote learning format for a year, the discipline data for the end of the 19-20 school year and the entire 20-21 school year is not an accurate portrayal of the school's discipline patterns for these two school years.

Data Analysis Strategies

I used open coding of the interview, focus group, and survey responses to determine categories and then themes relevant to my research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I began my analysis of the interviews by reading the transcripts just to know what was said (Tidd, 2016). By making notations in the margins or on the right side of a two-column matrix, I used analytical coding to assist me in determining meaningful topics and relationships between responses of

each interviewee (Mihas, 2019; Tidd, 2016). I used a similar coding system for observations of the physical environment. I marked the photographs taken to reflect which question they answered, and then made notes about what I observed.

Analytical coding allowed for looking for what I believe is occurring in this school implementing *The Leader in Me* as well as what people are doing to achieve the results and what is being said by the participants (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). I developed a system of codes including key words or phrases, symbols, etc. which allowed me to categorize the data based on new codes or things that stand out during analysis. I then converted the categories into several themes that helped me answer each of my research questions.

Trustworthiness/Ethical Considerations

To ensure trustworthiness the same interview questions or similar ones (rephrasing or asking sub-questions or follow-up questions as needed) were used in each interview. I followed the same interview protocol for each interview to increase validity (Rocco, 2018). Each interview was recorded and transcribed to allow for in depth analysis. I allowed each interviewee to read the transcription of their interview as a form of member checking to check for accuracy and meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Rocco, 2018). The use of an interview protocol allowed for a greater chance of transferability of my findings to other research studies (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I used maximum variation in my sample selection process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Staff was asked to complete a survey about their experience in education, experience in a *Leader in Me* school, and briefly about their thoughts and feelings about the program. The data gathered from the survey helped me in determining who was interviewed as well as to gather background information about those participating in the interviews. I also analyzed the survey data to look for patterns in responses that could assist in the development of the plan of action for

refining and improving *The Leader in Me* in our school. I conducted my research in a Title I school with participants including teachers with varying levels of experience in education and the administrator.

It was important to build rapport and trust with the interviewees. In order to do this I became aquatinted with the participants by asking them to tell me a little about themselves before we began the interview process. Having worked with many of the teachers on staff, I already knew much about them as teachers; however, I wanted to get to know more about them as individuals who are also living the 7 Habits. I also explained my study and the process I would use for conducting the interviews, including when and where we would meet, how I will use the interview data, and by explaining, they had the option to opt out at any time. I reassured them their confidentiality would be maintained by using pseudonyms and any information they shared will not be shared with their building level administrator unless they give their permission.

Ethical considerations included how I approached teachers who felt uncomfortable expressing concerns or frustrations about *The Leader in Me*. I needed to reassure them that their honesty would be protected from consequence or retribution. In order to do this, I needed to develop a sense of trust with them. In addition, my desire to interview teachers in my school created ethical considerations. It could have been difficult for some teachers to open up about their perceptions of the LIM if they feared repercussions from the district or their school level administration. However, the relationships and trust that have already been developed assisted in establishing a comfort level which allowed them to be open with me.

Data Reporting

My findings are reported through a variety of methods. I used tables and charts as well as narrative descriptions including quotes from the interviews. Descriptions of observations of the physical environment were used to create a sense of the scenes as viewed during my walk-throughs of the building. I used visuals to help my readers see the physical environment of the school. I provided detailed descriptions of the physical environment of the school. These descriptions were helpful in creating a sense of being there. I used sections for each type of data collection method I used in the study. I anticipated needing one chapter for data reporting with sections for each method: interviews/surveys, fifth grade focus group. As well as sections for observations/visual data- of the physical environment of the school building, and document analysis; including documents shared with staff members and spreadsheets documenting discipline data (numbers of referrals each school year and school improvement goals) for each school year since implementation of *The Leader in Me*.

Limitations

A challenge to my study could have included the teachers' ability to be open and honest about their experiences with the program. It could have been difficult to find teachers who are willing to participate due to their own time constraints. I feel the teachers in my school were willing to give of their time to help me due to a sense of loyalty to me as a part of their team, but under the current circumstances, their time could have been limited more than usual. Social distancing protocols also presented a challenge leading to the need to conduct interviews virtually. I was also concerned about skewed student discipline data. The tracking system used and the definitions of office referral worthy behaviors and types of consequences given are sometimes different in my school versus other schools, limiting the data to application at my

school alone. The only true limitation to my study is the small sample size with only one LIM school included in the study, which will make it hard to apply the results across multiple schools. However, the data showed areas that can be reviewed based on the individual needs of other schools.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In this chapter, findings are presented in a three-section sequence that answers the first two of four research questions.

1) What is the nature of *The Leader in Me* program in RAE Elementary School?

2) How do stakeholders (teachers, administrators, students) experience and perceive the implementation and effects of *The Leader in Me* program in RAE Elementary School?

In Part One of the findings, I share what I found from a variety of sources to explain the nature of the Leader in Me (LIM) program at RAE elementary school. Part Two of the findings detail stakeholders' implementation experiences followed by Part Three which shares stakeholders' perceptions about program effects. Then, Chapter 5 features my analysis of these findings in order to answer the final two research questions around inferring relationships and making recommendations for future practice.

During my study, data collection began with a staff survey, which was also used to determine interview participants later in the study. I then shared this survey with other staff members not in the participant pool, such as interventionists, EC, and ESL teachers, to gather data from staff working in support roles in the school. From there, the selected classroom teachers participated in two 30-minute interviews, which I analyzed using coding according to the research questions guiding the study. I also conducted a focus group involving seven 5th grade students who had attended the school since kindergarten. I asked them questions related to the LIM program in order to determine their perceptions of the program and areas of improvement. I reviewed the discipline data from the 16-17 school year to present as well looking for changes in the total number of office referrals as well as changes in the number of

referrals for particular infractions. Unfortunately, the discipline data appears skewed beginning with the 2019-2020 school year due to the impact of COVID-19. While this data provides important information to the study, one must be mindful of the impacts of COVID-19, which disrupted the school's ability to provide face-to-face instruction. I had intended to conduct observations of program implementation. However, due to COVID-19, the students remained in remote learning from mid-March 2020 until mid-April 2021 therefore; I was not able to complete the observations as intended. I instead, I chose to alter my methods and used photographs of the school environment to help the reader "see" the program implementation in another way. My last method of data collection involved the review of documents/resources provided to the staff by administration in support of the LIM. Screen shots of these resources are also included as a data source so that readers can get a "feel" for the program's features.

Part One: The Nature of *The Leader in Me* Program

As pointed out in Chapter One, the types of behavioral issues seen in classrooms today include antisocial behaviors that manifest in many ways and are detrimental to students' ability to learn effectively; and should be addressed before they become firmly established. These behaviors usually begin before age 10 and present in the form of resistance to parental or educational authority. This presents in behaviors such as stealing, lying, fighting, uncontrolled anger, defiance of adult authority, peer conflicts, blaming others, and avoiding acceptance of responsibility for actions. This can also lead to bullying. Disruptive behaviors manifest as blurting out, arguing, noncompliance, and tantrums, as well as inattention and over activity. These behaviors not only affect the child exhibiting them. Indeed, they also negatively affect those students around them, as they have difficulty learning and the teachers experience decreased morale.

RAE Elementary School was not immune to these types of behavior concerns. In fact, during the 2016-2017 school year, the office received 222 referrals. Therefore, the staff at RAE sought a way to reduce the number of referrals the next school year. The district also began requiring elementary schools offer a specialized program as a part of the district's strategic plan. After researching the specialized program options, the staff chose *The Leader in Me* and was in the initial implementation process for four years. During the process of learning the principles and habits of the LIM, the school decided to work to improve student behaviors with the creation of a behavior goal and action steps (lead measures) to reach it. The school improvement goal linked to the LIM allowed the school to work toward mastery of the goal. This practice has continued since initial implementation.

The LIM seemed a good fit for RAE Elementary School because it focuses on three critical areas: culture, leadership, and academics. Through the focus on culture, a positive learning environment is created. Focusing on leadership abilities of all stakeholders, including students, gives each a voice to guide their educational journey. Application of the LIM to academics provides a growth mindset helping students see and understand their current level of performance and where they want to be in the end.

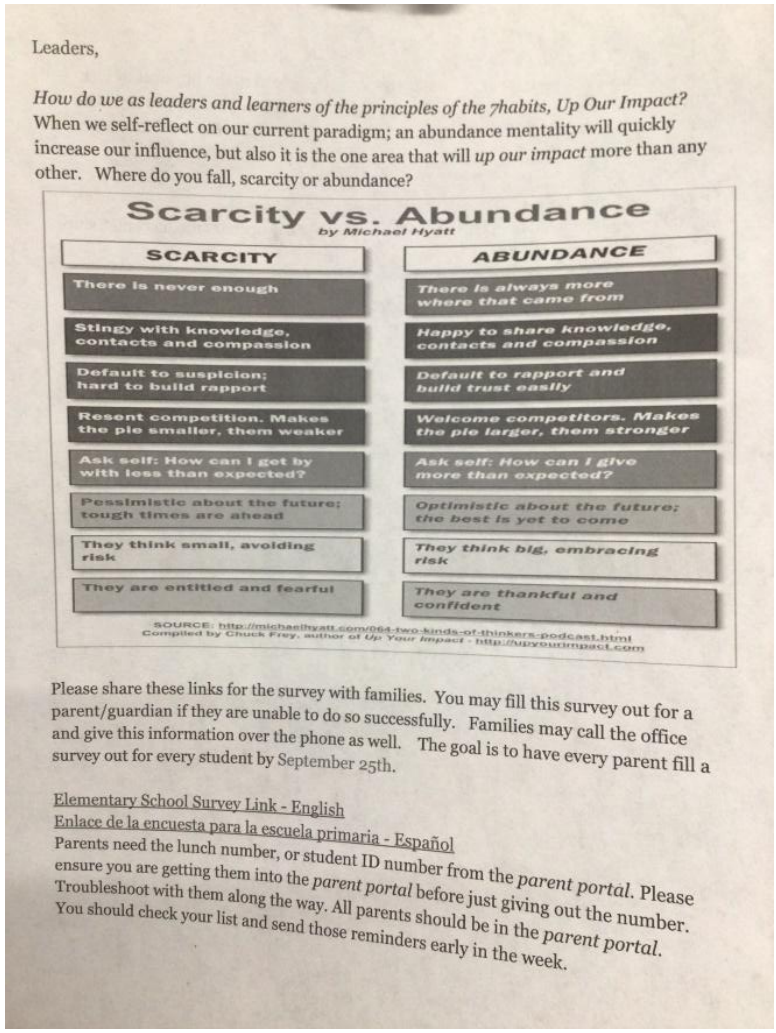
> When students are able to articulate their own learning goals and how they connect to the educational goals of the school, then everyone in the building is speaking the same language and the responsibility for learning is shared by all stakeholders (Tidd, 2016, p. 60).

What I Learned About LIM from Program Materials

My review of documents shared with the staff at RAE allowed me to see many resources provided directly from Franklin Covey, the company that created *The Leader in Me*. I also

discovered many resources taken from Franklin Covey, made into documents for ease of use, or compiled into one document to allow staff to have easier access. The principal sends a weekly reminder via email to all staff filled with reminders about the Habit of the month and other information pertinent to the successful implementation of the program at RAE (Figure 1). The language spoken by school leaders acts as a role model and reminder to all stakeholders. This email focused on the scarcity versus abundance mentalities. Staff received a reminder of a need for an abundance mentality to ensure their impact in teaching the LIM presented as most effective.

Figure 1. Consistent Communication Supports Continuation of the Program



Leaders,

How do we as leaders and learners of the principles of the 7habits, Up Our Impact? When we self-reflect on our current paradigm; an abundance mentality will quickly increase our influence, but also it is the one area that will *up our impact* more than any other. Where do you fall, scarcity or abundance?

Scarcity vs. Abundance
by Michael Hyatt

SCARCITY	ABUNDANCE
There is never enough	There is always more where that came from
Stingy with knowledge, contacts and compassion	Happy to share knowledge, contacts and compassion
Default to suspicion; hard to build rapport	Default to rapport and build trust easily
Resent competition. Makes the pie smaller, them weaker	Welcome competitors. Makes the pie larger, them stronger
Ask self: How can I get by with less than expected?	Ask self: How can I give more than expected?
Pessimistic about the future; tough times are ahead	Optimistic about the future; the best is yet to come
They think small, avoiding risk	They think big, embracing risk
They are entitled and fearful	They are thankful and confident

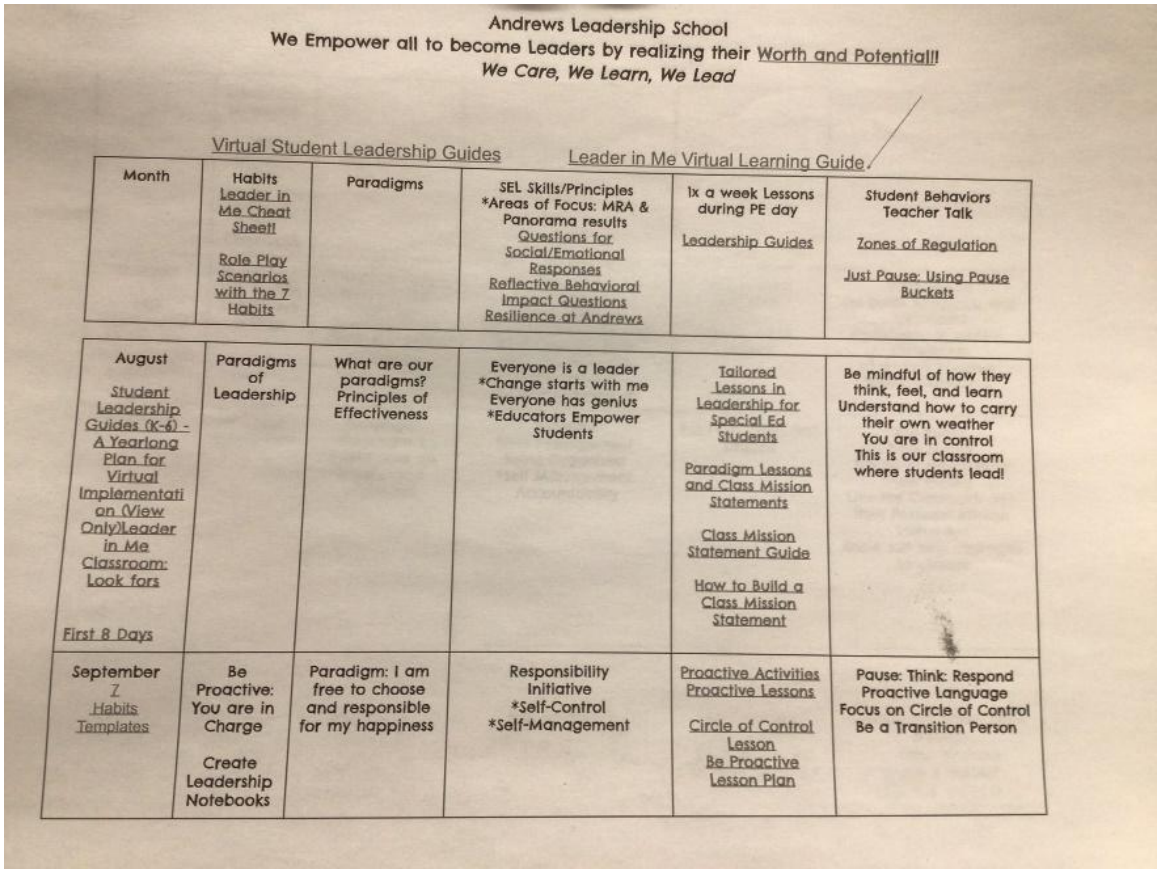
SOURCE: http://michaelhyatt.com/064-two-kinds-of-thinkers-podcast.html
Compiled by Chuck Frey, author of *Up Your Impact* - http://upyourimpact.com

Please share these links for the survey with families. You may fill this survey out for a parent/guardian if they are unable to do so successfully. Families may call the office and give this information over the phone as well. The goal is to have every parent fill a survey out for every student by September 25th.

Elementary School Survey Link - English
Enlace de la encuesta para la escuela primaria - Español
Parents need the lunch number, or student ID number from the *parent portal*. Please ensure you are getting them into the *parent portal* before just giving out the number. Troubleshoot with them along the way. All parents should be in the *parent portal*. You should check your list and send those reminders early in the week.

In addition, the program focuses on one habit per month to allow students time to fully absorb the content of the habit and begin implementation. The habit of the month is highlighted on the calendar with resources linked in the document along with reminders of the content of the habits, including role-play scenarios, the paradigm which governs the habit, SEL skills and principles, Leadership Guides, and student behaviors and teacher talk, related to the habit (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Monthly Calendar Provides Resources for Teachers



Andrews Leadership School
We Empower all to become Leaders by realizing their Worth and Potential!!
We Care, We Learn, We Lead

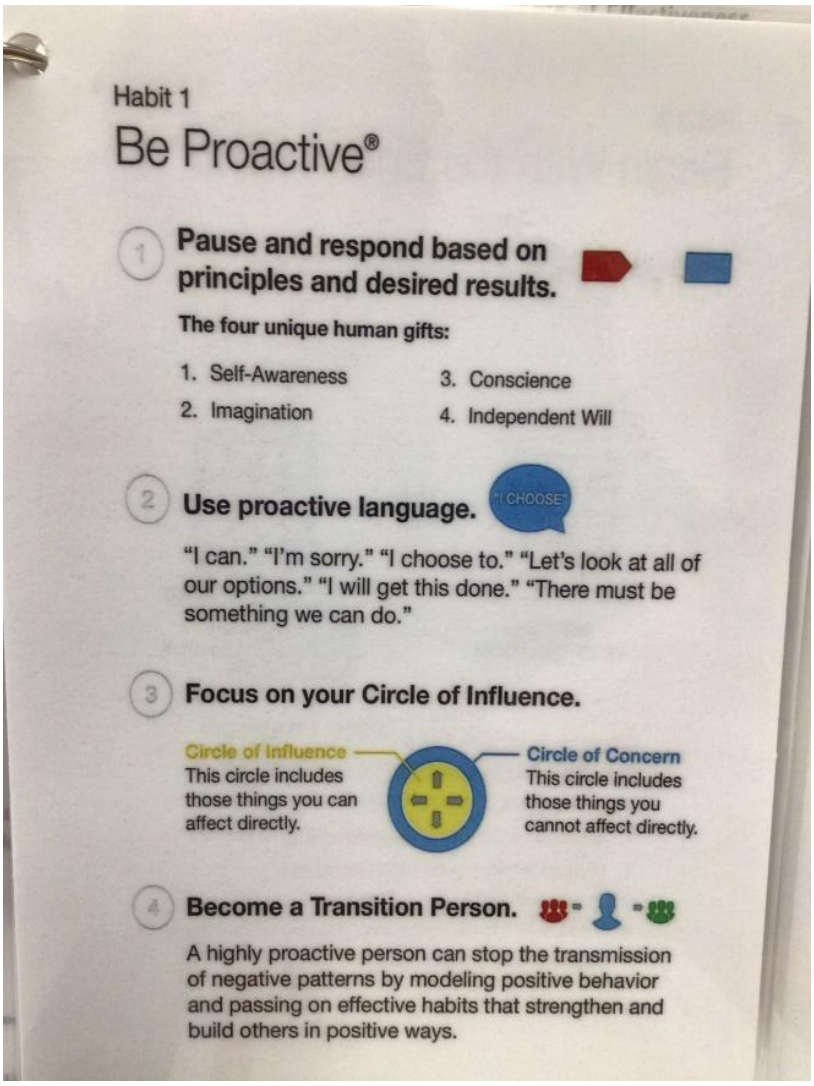
Virtual Student Leadership Guides Leader in Me Virtual Learning Guide

Month	Habits	Paradigms	SEL Skills/Principles	1x a week Lessons during PE day	Student Behaviors Teacher Talk
	Leader in Me Cheat Sheet! Role Play Scenarios with the 7 Habits		*Areas of Focus: MRA & Panorama results Questions for Social/Emotional Responses Reflective Behavioral Impact Questions Resilience at Andrews	Leadership Guides	Zones of Regulation Just Pause: Using Pause Buckets
August Student Leadership Guides (K-6) - A Yearlong Plan for Virtual Implementation (View Only)Leader in Me Classroom: Look fors First 8 Days	Paradigms of Leadership	What are our paradigms? Principles of Effectiveness	Everyone is a leader *Change starts with me Everyone has genius *Educators Empower Students	Tailored Lessons in Leadership for Special Ed Students Paradigm Lessons and Class Mission Statements Class Mission Statement Guide How to Build a Class Mission Statement	Be mindful of how they think, feel, and learn Understand how to carry their own weather You are in control This is our classroom where students lead!
September 7 Habits Templates	Be Proactive: You are in Charge Create Leadership Notebooks	Paradigm: I am free to choose and responsible for my happiness	Responsibility Initiative *Self-Control *Self-Management	Proactive Activities Proactive Lessons Circle of Control Lesson Be Proactive Lesson Plan	Pause: Think: Respond Proactive Language Focus on Circle of Control Be a Transition Person

Teachers were initially provided two sets of laminated cards. One set outlines the content of the habits (Figure 3). Each card in this set provides a quick reference guide for each habit. The cards outline the content of the habit with a brief description of each part of the habit.

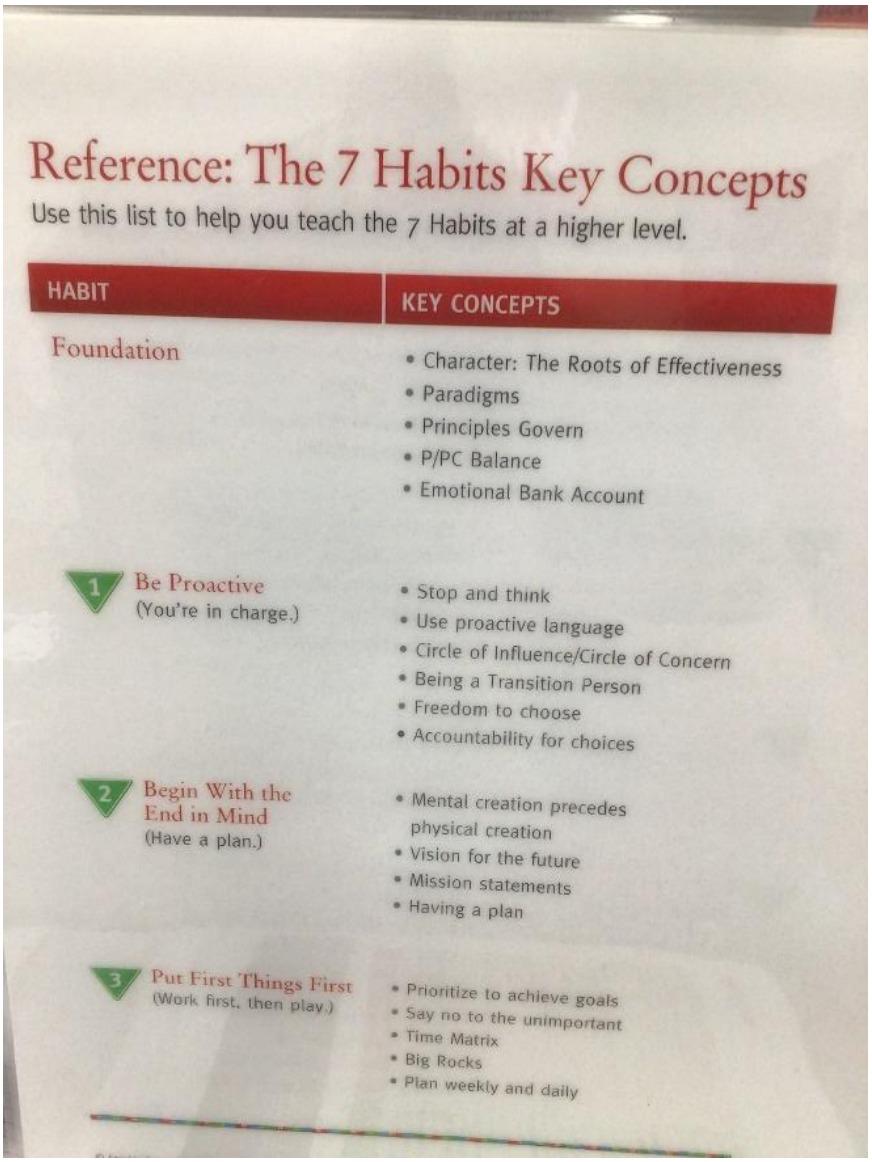
Visuals provided can be used by the teacher to teach the habits and as a reminder to students of the content of each habit.

Figure 3. Habit Cheat Sheets for Quick Reference



The other set outlines the key concepts of the habits (Figures 4 & 5) providing teachers with a quick reference guide. The card in Figure 4 provides teachers with a guide for teaching the habits at a higher level. Each habit is broken down in a list of the key concepts, which are crucial to remembering how to live the habit. Teachers use this to teach their students, but also as a reminder of how to live the habits themselves.

Figure 4. Teaching the Habits at the Highest Level



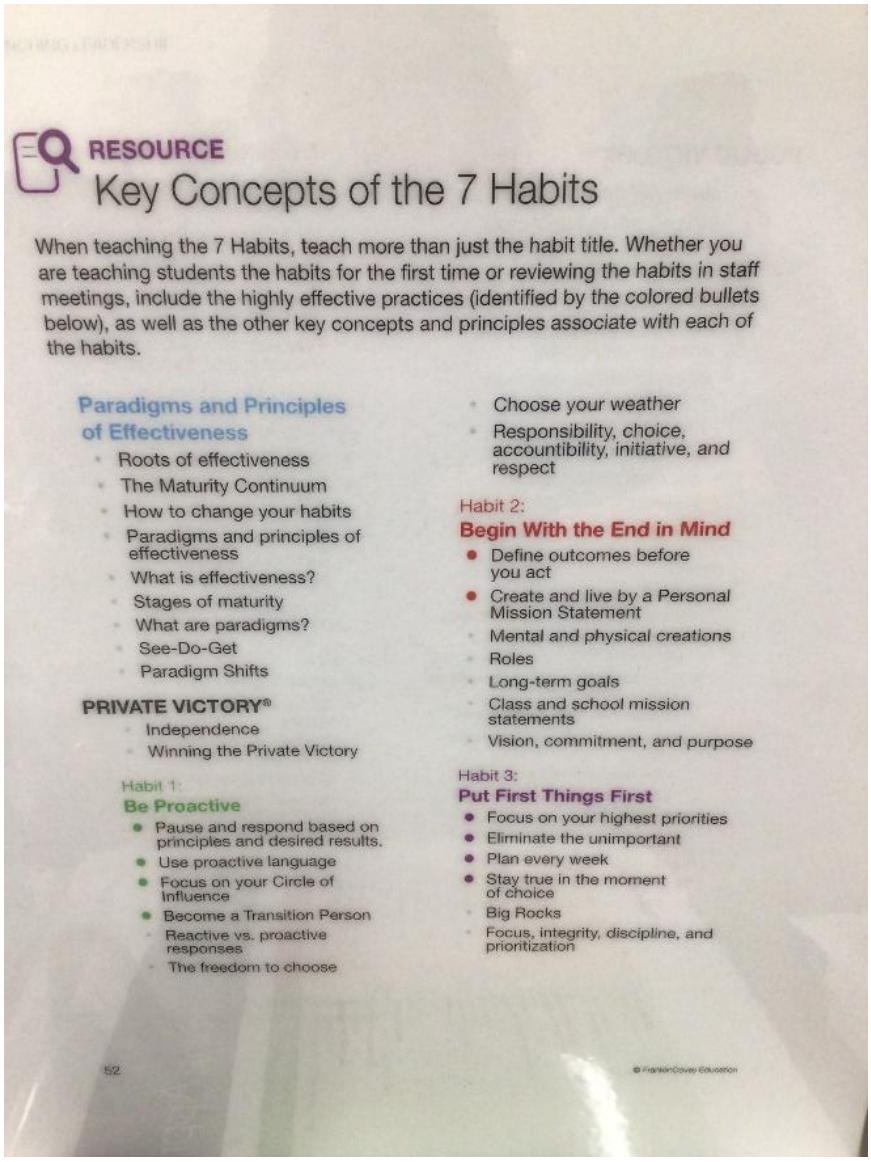
Reference: The 7 Habits Key Concepts

Use this list to help you teach the 7 Habits at a higher level.

HABIT	KEY CONCEPTS
Foundation	• Character: The Roots of Effectiveness • Paradigms • Principles Govern • P/PC Balance • Emotional Bank Account
1 Be Proactive (You're in charge.)	• Stop and think • Use proactive language • Circle of Influence/Circle of Concern • Being a Transition Person • Freedom to choose • Accountability for choices
2 Begin With the End in Mind (Have a plan.)	• Mental creation precedes physical creation • Vision for the future • Mission statements • Having a plan
3 Put First Things First (Work first, then play.)	• Prioritize to achieve goals • Say no to the unimportant • Time Matrix • Big Rocks • Plan weekly and daily

Figure 5 depicts a resource most helpful to teachers for understanding the learning process of the habits. As an individual learns and lives the first three habits, he/she experiences a private victory.

Figure 5. The 7 Habits Key Concepts



RESOURCE

Key Concepts of the 7 Habits

When teaching the 7 Habits, teach more than just the habit title. Whether you are teaching students the habits for the first time or reviewing the habits in staff meetings, include the highly effective practices (identified by the colored bullets below), as well as the other key concepts and principles associate with each of the habits.

Paradigms and Principles of Effectiveness

- Roots of effectiveness
- The Maturity Continuum
- How to change your habits
- Paradigms and principles of effectiveness
- What is effectiveness?
- Stages of maturity
- What are paradigms?
- See-Do-Get
- Paradigm Shifts

PRIVATE VICTORY®

- Independence
- Winning the Private Victory

Habit 1:
Be Proactive

- Pause and respond based on principles and desired results.
- Use proactive language
- Focus on your Circle of Influence
- Become a Transition Person
- Reactive vs. proactive responses
- The freedom to choose
- Choose your weather
- Responsibility, choice, accountibility, initiative, and respect

Habit 2:
Begin With the End in Mind

- Define outcomes before you act
- Create and live by a Personal Mission Statement
- Mental and physical creations
- Roles
- Long-term goals
- Class and school mission statements
- Vision, commitment, and purpose

Habit 3:
Put First Things First

- Focus on your highest priorities
- Eliminate the unimportant
- Plan every week
- Stay true in the moment of choice
- Big Rocks
- Focus, integrity, discipline, and prioritization

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The next three habits result in a public victory with Habit 7 enabling one to create balance in life to continue acting as a role model of the habits and experiencing success. The purpose of these resources becomes a guide teachers can use in the classroom while teaching without having to flip through pages in a book to find the information they need.

What I Learned About LIM from Visual Data

The LIM program emphasizes school culture, which is a component of *The Leader in Me* Framework, as imperative to successful implementation of the program. The physical environment of RAE sets the tone and culture for the school. RAE staff received input from the Franklin Covey coach to focus on the physical environment of the school first during the initial implementation training process. This allowed the staff to begin with an area to highlight staff and student talents as they focused on creating a leadership culture through the physical environment (see), creating a common language (hear), and development of a positive emotional environment (feel). Visitors to the school often comment on the physical environment first due to the visual nature of displaying *The Leader in Me* through murals, student work, signs, and other evidences of the program that guide students and staff throughout their day. They hear the language spoken which acts as a reminder that all can be leaders and feel the positive support all students receive.

The culture of the school and evidence of the LIM appears from the front entrance and throughout the building. In addition, students, staff, and visitors are greeted each day by many reminders of leadership. The following photographs depict the reminders of the LIM from the front entrance throughout the entire building. The photos in Figures 6 and 7 show a sign announcing RAE as a *Leader in Me* school where greatness happens greeting stakeholders and a mural painted on the sidewalk reminding them "You can steer yourself any direction you choose."

Figure 6. We Are a Leader in Me School

Figure 7. Street Signs Provide Direction

Overhead street signs (seen in Figure 7) listing each of the 7 Habits greet you as you continue to walk toward the building.

Once inside, students and visitors are greeted with reminders that all can lead. The physical environment includes encouraging quotes by world-renowned leaders, light posts with street signs addressing the 7 Habits (Figure 8), with motivational signs and banners in the hallways (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Street Sign "Proactive Parkway"

Figure 9. Motivational Sign Reminds Students to Listen to Internal Wisdom

Murals created by staff and students, such as the one in the 5th grade hall stating the school's mission statement with the school mascot as the focal point (Figure 10), the Habit Tree by the elevator, and the child-friendly mural in the kindergarten hall (Figure 11) also serve as cultural symbols of life at the school. Other displays including murals created by staff and students show students how they can control their learning and move toward success in life. As Kindergarten students enter the Kindergarten hall, they see a reminder of the 7 Habits.

Figure 10. We Care, We Learn, We Lead

Figure 11. Kindergarten Leaders Live the Habits

The jungle theme with bright colors appeals to their senses and invites their curiosity about the 7 Habits. At each classroom door, a jungle animal greets students to class.

In addition to creating a physical environment that reflects the overarching culture of the school, individual classroom teachers create an atmosphere that reflects the leadership characteristics they are hoping to inculcate with their students. For example, teachers have classroom roles listed to help students remember what role they hold for a given period. Then, students demonstrate leadership by leading activities in their classrooms (calendar, Fundations Leader, etc.). In addition, students also lead school-wide activities such as morning announcement leader, student greeters, and dismissal leaders. Other experiences of student leadership include leading school/family events and tours of the school by community stakeholders.

The school vibrates with positive feelings created through the physical environment's visual displays, use of the LIM language, and positive interactions between staff and students. Learning in all areas of the school building throughout the day is observed in all classrooms including Encore, EC, and ESL as well as all areas such as the cafeteria and front office, and during arrival and dismissal. The LIM asks educators to align their academic systems for learning by focusing on school-wide goal achievement. In order to do this, teachers hold students accountable and assist with setting goals for themselves, which they then track in their Leadership Notebooks, on class "Wildly Important Goal" (WIG) boards, and grade level WIG boards. Each grade level sets an academic goal related to the school improvement goals for reading and math. Based on these grade level goals, each class, K-5, sets a class goal with lead measures to help with mastery of the grade level goal. Students set individual goals and track their progress toward mastery as well. All of this combines and leads to the eventual mastery of

the school level goals. Students lead their learning through the creation of these goals and through the trusting relationships built with each other and the adults who work with them daily. Teachers must collaborate and reflect with their grade level teams in order to foster the growth necessary to achieve the goals set. The following photographs (Figures 12 and 13) depict examples of grade level WIG boards.

Figure 12. Tracking Goals Leads to Success

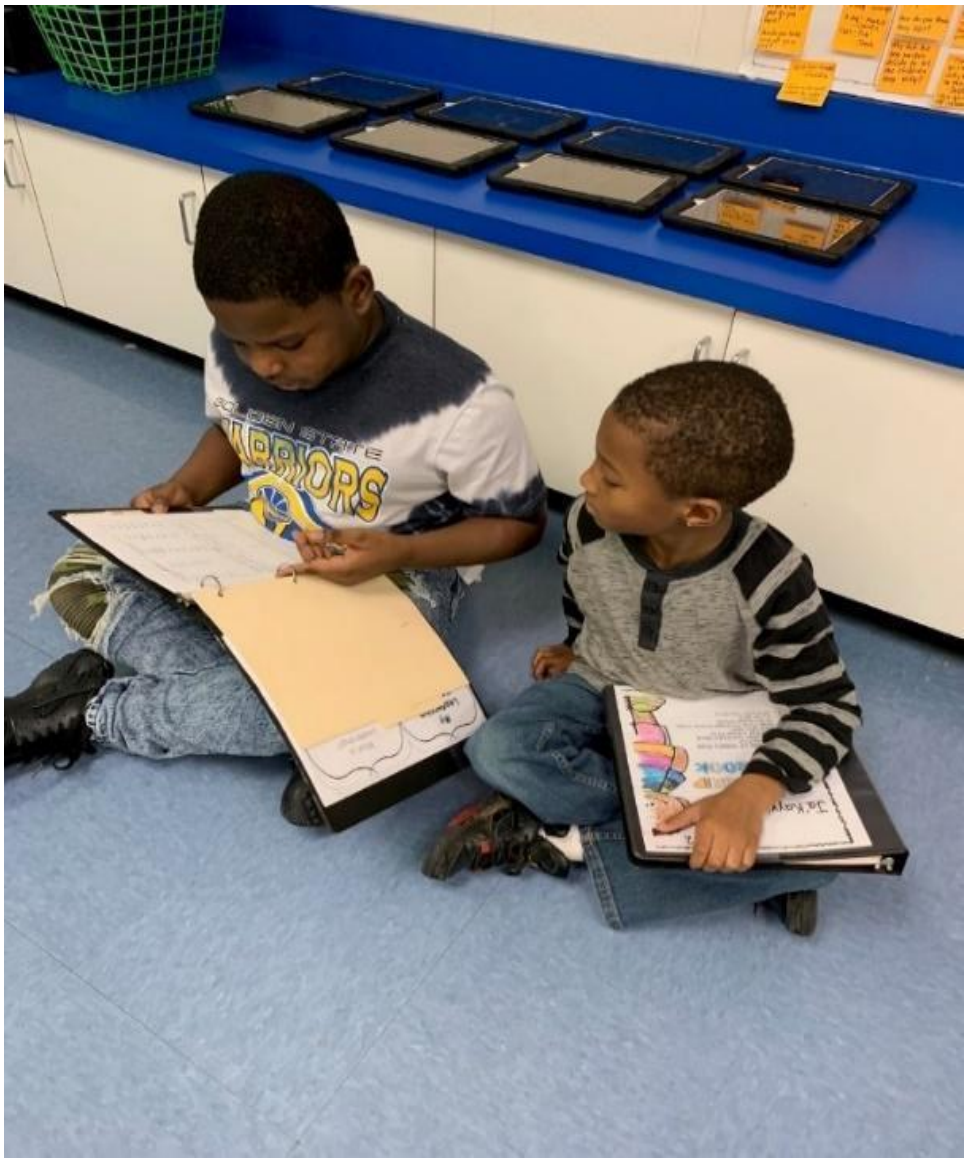
Figure 13. Compelling Scoreboards Keep Us on Track

The LIM is not isolated to grade specific classrooms. All staff members incorporate the content into their school day by teaching the 7 habits through direct instruction and integration into content areas, and modeling. For example, encore staff teach the habits through the teaching of their art, music, media, and PE curriculums. Support staff such as EC and ESL lead students in activities during their class time together that instill the habits in all parts of each child's day. Displays of this type of learning and leading are found throughout the building on bulletin boards outside the classrooms displaying student work related to the habits, through goal tracking displays, and visual reminders of how to live the habits in each specialty area.

Walking through the building provides opportunities to observe leadership from arrival to dismissal through the school-wide leadership roles students lead. Student accountability comes

from setting goals and monitoring progress toward mastery. Students met with their teachers and accountability partners to discuss their progress each Wednesday (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Accountability Partners Support Each Other



The two students pictured in Figure 14 were sharing their Leadership Notebooks with each other. Students do this weekly. During their time together with their accountability partner, they talk about their progress toward meeting their WIG goal, offer each other encouragement, discuss any suggestions for change in action and updates to goals, and celebrate successes.

Figure 15. Celebrating a Goal Met

Students also celebrate their success in meeting their goals by marking their grade level or class WIG board depending on how the grade level team has decided to display the WIGs in the hallway. Some grade levels only have grade level scoreboards in the hall, while others have classroom scoreboards in the hall as well. The student pictured in Figure 15 had placed a sticker on her star to note she had met one of her personal WIG goals.

Part Two: Implementation Experiences

This section of the findings shares what I learned about implementation experiences from three different sources: survey, interviews, and program materials. The narrative integrates elements from these sources rather than separating them out by collection tool.

Only two of the participants taught at RAE at the time of the initial choosing of the program and were able to answer the questions related to the beginning implementation process. They perceived the decision as coming from a district requirement for all elementary schools to choose a specialized program (LIM, STEM, A Plus Arts, Global). They did, however, recall that the School Improvement team voted on *The Leader in Me* after careful consideration, research, and visits to other LIM schools. The staff at RAE felt the LIM best fit the school goals and needs of the student population. Susan stated, "The SIP (School Improvement Plan) team chose (LIM) as the only program that wasn't an external treatment, but internally touched and changed students through adult leadership that was shared throughout the school."

Three of the participants began their teaching career at RAE. The other four have taught in other schools; however, none of their previous schools had a specialized program. One joined the staff during the first year of implementation. Two of the participants came to RAE after the first year of the implementation process was completed. One joined the staff mid-year the first year, but had taught at RAE previously. The participants working at RAE during the time of initial implementation all remembered the process of training for a couple of days in the beginning of the school year when implementation first began with refresher trainings provided by the LIM coach assigned to the school throughout the process.

Each participant felt the process was overwhelming in the beginning as expressed by Tom when he said, "You go from not hearing any of that language to being blasted with that

language on a daily basis". Patty stated something similar: "…it is overwhelming with the first month of school, but it does get easier. In the beginning it feels like it is all being thrown at you all at once…" Only one participant felt more training geared toward incorporating the LIM into academics "instead of making it so separate" would have enhanced the initial implementation. Aligning academics training began in year two of implementation with empowering instruction following in year three. All others were satisfied that the implementation process went smoothly. All of the participants expressed a sense of strong support from administration from implementing the program to assisting with student behavioral concerns. They feel supported in making their own decisions about the running of their classroom, but know that when they need assistance it will be provided.

Susan stated the staff participated in professional development as implementation began, and then worked on focus areas based on the LIM framework for implementation. The school is still in the ongoing implementation process, although it earned Lighthouse Status at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. This status means the school has implemented all major areas of the framework and can act as a model for other schools. The biggest challenges Susan found during the initial process were staff buy-in, content knowledge, time, effort, and the actual practicing of the principles and practices by adults and students. Susan intends for the school to continue to follow the plan, do, study, act model to develop new ways to meet the LIM framework for sustainability. As well as incorporating a yearly booster for teachers.

Teachers find the narrow focus on one habit a month helps students absorb the content since more time is spent on each habit. Kate believes the daily focus on LIM and social emotional learning each morning provides the reinforcement students need to keep the LIM in the front of their minds. She feels students learn how to use the habits at school when in a group

dynamic. Her concern is how are students learning to use the habits when on their own and have to do the thinking for themselves without the support of their teachers. She sees this being taught and feels more time will be required for students to fully incorporate the LIM into their whole lives.

Jessica responded to the question about other supports that would be beneficial for teachers, parents, and students by stating, "I think the LIM already addresses a lot of that." She went on to say continued touchpoints and coaching days conducted by Franklin Covey provided needed support as teachers continue to learn the content of the program. She finds the LIM website and weekly emails sent by Susan and Franklin Covey to be helpful as well.

Leah noted that when she first began at RAE she experienced a sense of confusion as those around her talked about the program and discussed resources they used. She had not been introduced to those resources and stated a tutorial of important words to know and where to find the resources would have supported her learning process.

It was interesting to hear the fifth grade students, who participated in my focus group, talk about their take on how their teachers taught them about the content of the LIM. All of the students who responded to this question gave similar answers. Their responses make it appear that their teachers show them a video and then have them explain how they can use the content in everyday life. However, Adam did not feel his teacher teaches how to use the content in life. He perceived that they just watch a video then write a paragraph about what they learned from it, lacking a real world application of the habit. Nick said his class completes google slides then completes worksheets, finally sharing out after a given amount of time. He stated during "learning lab we do it more often." Learning Lab is an Encore class where students participate in a lesson about the LIM each week. He gave an example of how they studied Habit 3 in the

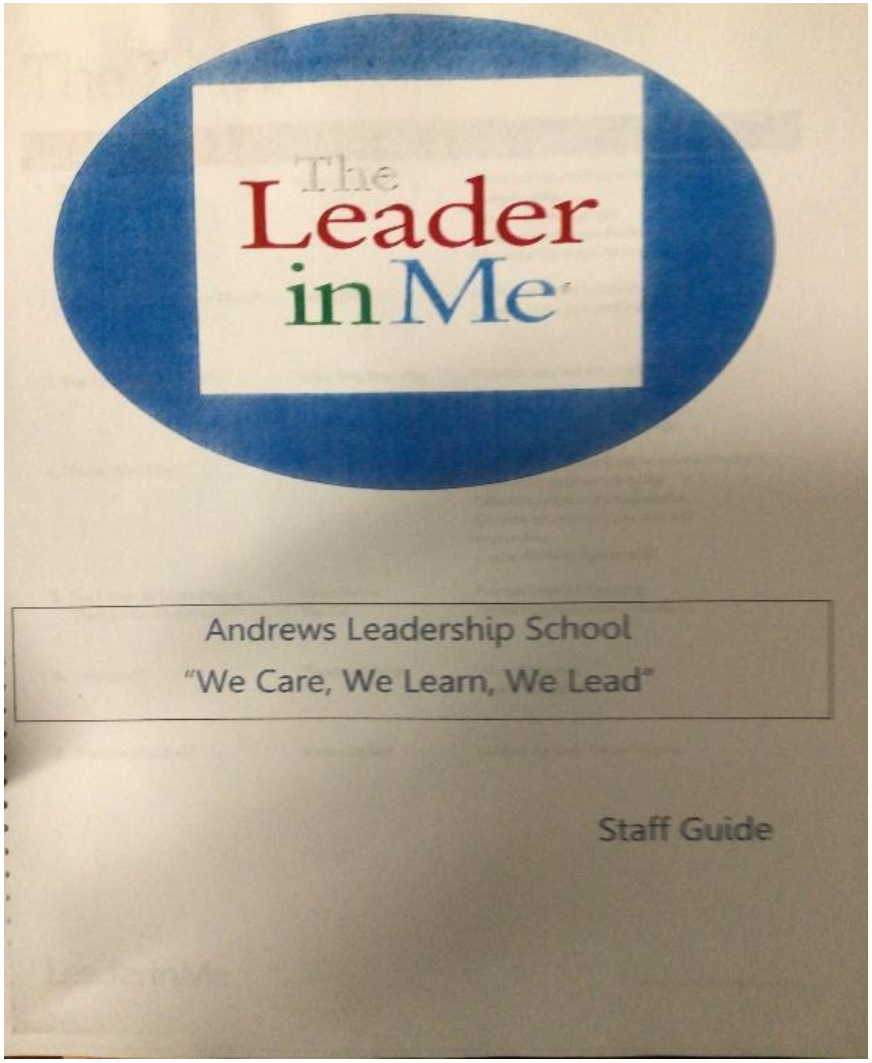
learning lab by the teacher reading aloud a LIM book and then discussing what students learned from the reading. They then rated how often they do something related to the habit.

The students definitely see the benefits of learning the 7 habits. For example, Hank shared that he feels like he is a better student because he works better with others now. He also stated, "I have a better reaction when I don't have a great day." I asked him to elaborate on this and he told me he is more proactive "by controlling my actions more than I used to." Nick said, "Habit 2 helps me create plans instead of running into them like a headless chicken." Obviously, he sees the importance of beginning with the end in mind as it helps one create a plan to accomplish one's goal instead of experiencing a sense of chaos by not knowing what the end product will look like.

Franklin Covey provides many resources during initial training which teach about the nature of the LIM. This includes the field guides, which outline each aspect of the LIM, such as Rethinking Leadership, Creating Culture, Launching Leadership, Aligning Academics, and Empowering Instruction. The first year the staff at RAE focused on rethinking leadership, creating a leadership culture, and launching leadership to include all stakeholders. The next year the focus became academics. The final year of implementation focused on empowering instruction. Each of the field guides provides much reference information for staff, but it is imperative for staff to be provided with the other resources, which allow for quick reference. Another resource provided by Franklin Covey is LIM Weekly, an email that includes videos, articles, and links to resources found on the LIM website. Many times this is used by administration to provide reminders to staff about new ideas, or as professional learning for specific staff members to strengthen their knowledge base or with grade levels to provide exciting new ways of delivering the content of the LIM.

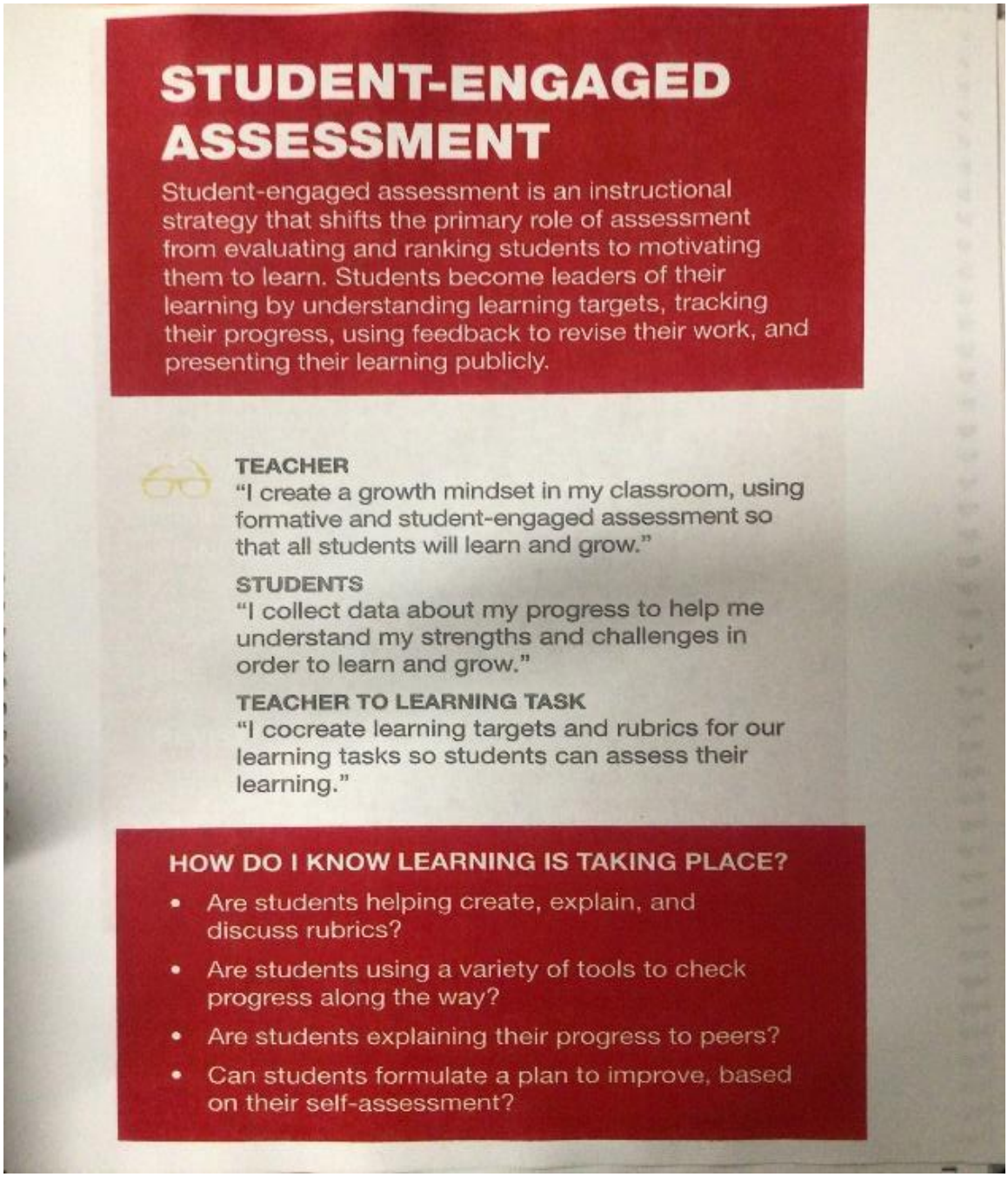
One document, which stood out, was a booklet created from Franklin Covey resources (Figure 16). This document became a handbook for classroom teachers to reference any time they needed a review of the habits and their principles. This handbook includes “how to” guides for empowering instruction, the final area of focus during initial implementation.

Figure 16. RAE Staff Guide



The systematic guide to empowering instruction depicted in figures 17 and 18, shows one of the strategies recommended by Franklin Covey for integrating the LIM into daily instruction. When this occurs students’ success rates in academics are expected to rise.

Figure 17. Franklin Covey Resources- Empowering Instruction



STUDENT-ENGAGED ASSESSMENT

Student-engaged assessment is an instructional strategy that shifts the primary role of assessment from evaluating and ranking students to motivating them to learn. Students become leaders of their learning by understanding learning targets, tracking their progress, using feedback to revise their work, and presenting their learning publicly.

TEACHER
"I create a growth mindset in my classroom, using formative and student-engaged assessment so that all students will learn and grow."

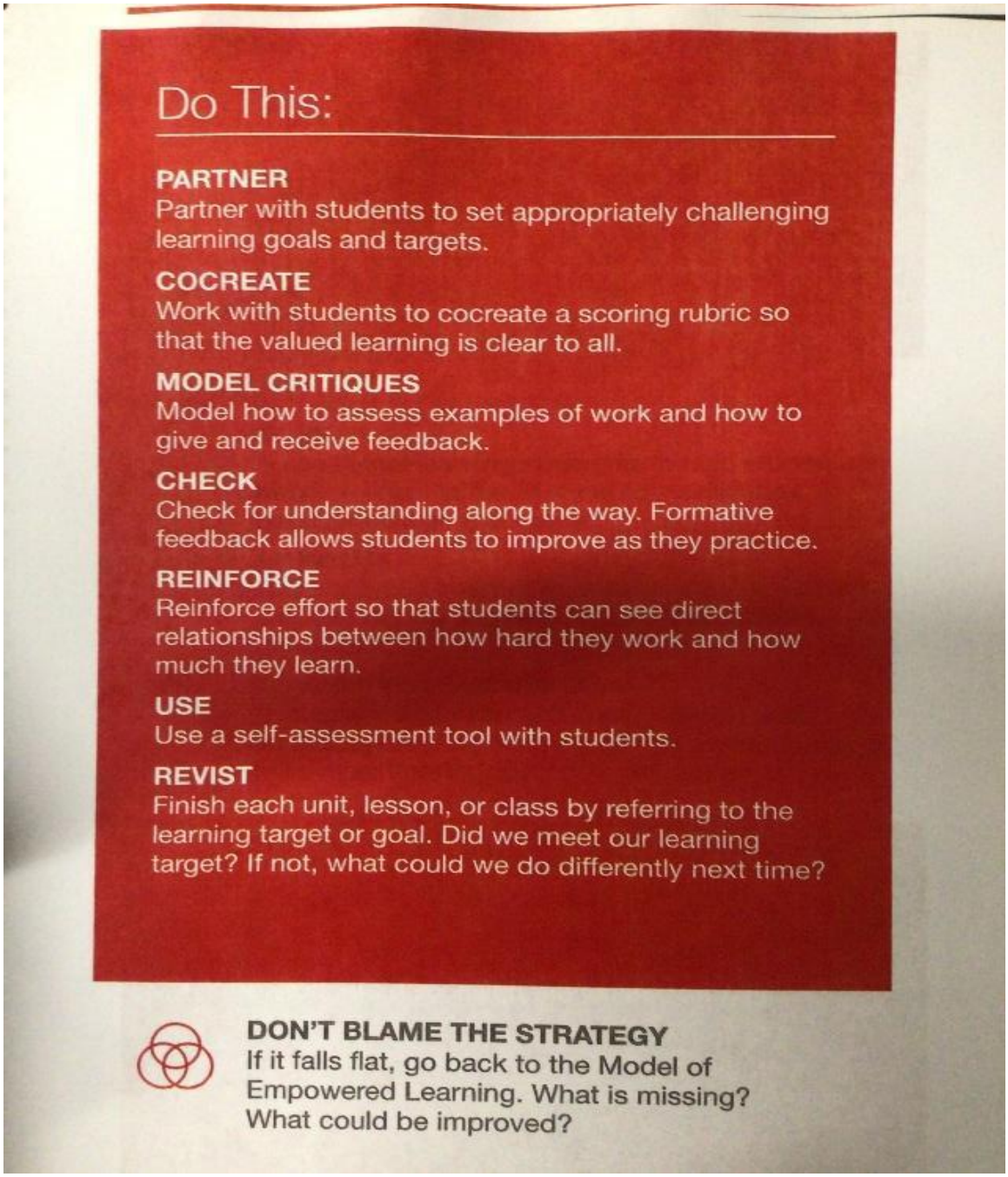
STUDENTS
"I collect data about my progress to help me understand my strengths and challenges in order to learn and grow."

TEACHER TO LEARNING TASK
"I cocreate learning targets and rubrics for our learning tasks so students can assess their learning."

HOW DO I KNOW LEARNING IS TAKING PLACE?

- Are students helping create, explain, and discuss rubrics?
- Are students using a variety of tools to check progress along the way?
- Are students explaining their progress to peers?
- Can students formulate a plan to improve, based on their self-assessment?

Figure 18. Step by Step How to Guide



Do This:

PARTNER
Partner with students to set appropriately challenging learning goals and targets.

COCREATE
Work with students to cocreate a scoring rubric so that the valued learning is clear to all.

MODEL CRITIQUES
Model how to assess examples of work and how to give and receive feedback.

CHECK
Check for understanding along the way. Formative feedback allows students to improve as they practice.

REINFORCE
Reinforce effort so that students can see direct relationships between how hard they work and how much they learn.

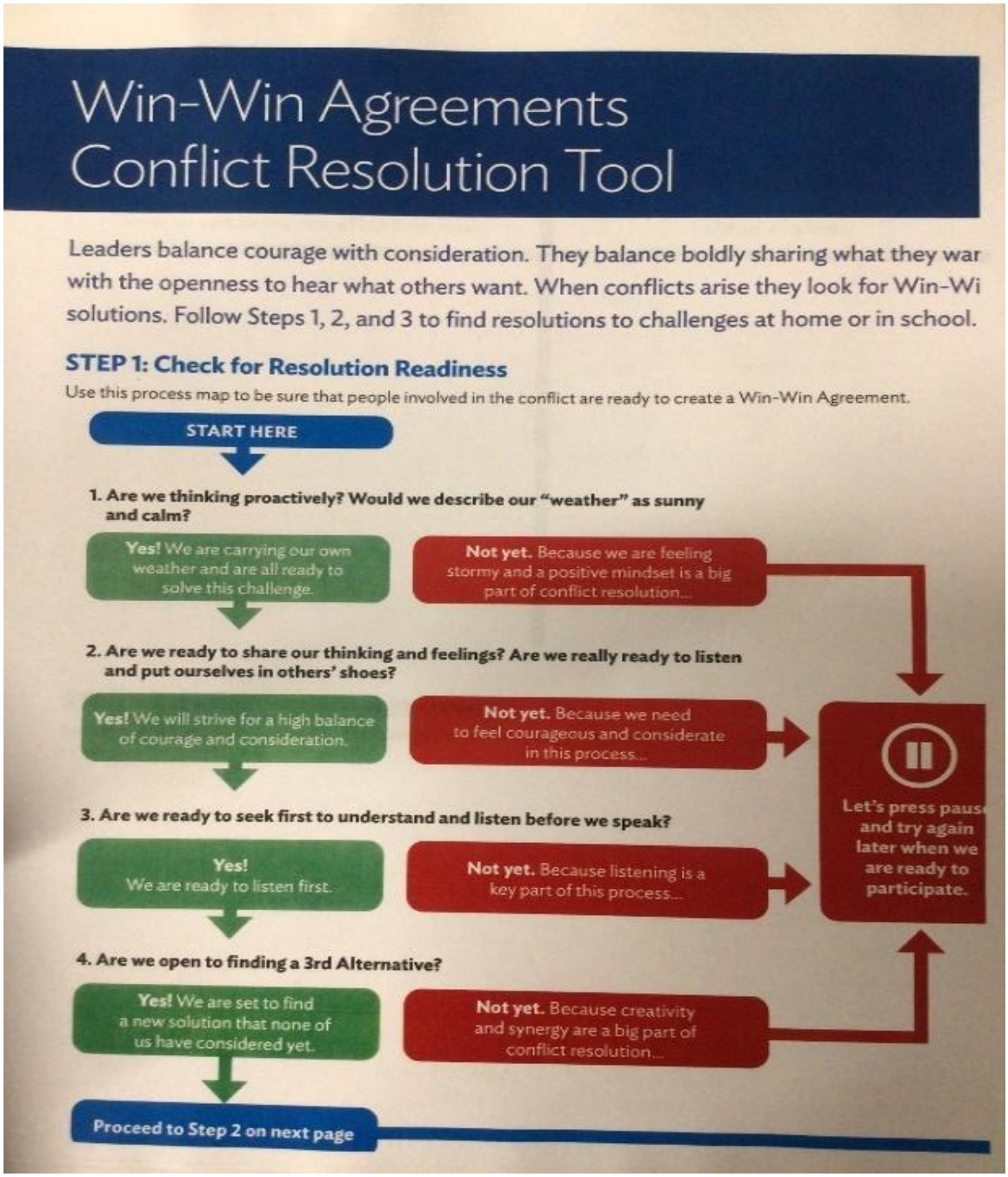
USE
Use a self-assessment tool with students.

REVIST
Finish each unit, lesson, or class by referring to the learning target or goal. Did we meet our learning target? If not, what could we do differently next time?

DON'T BLAME THE STRATEGY
If it falls flat, go back to the Model of Empowered Learning. What is missing? What could be improved?

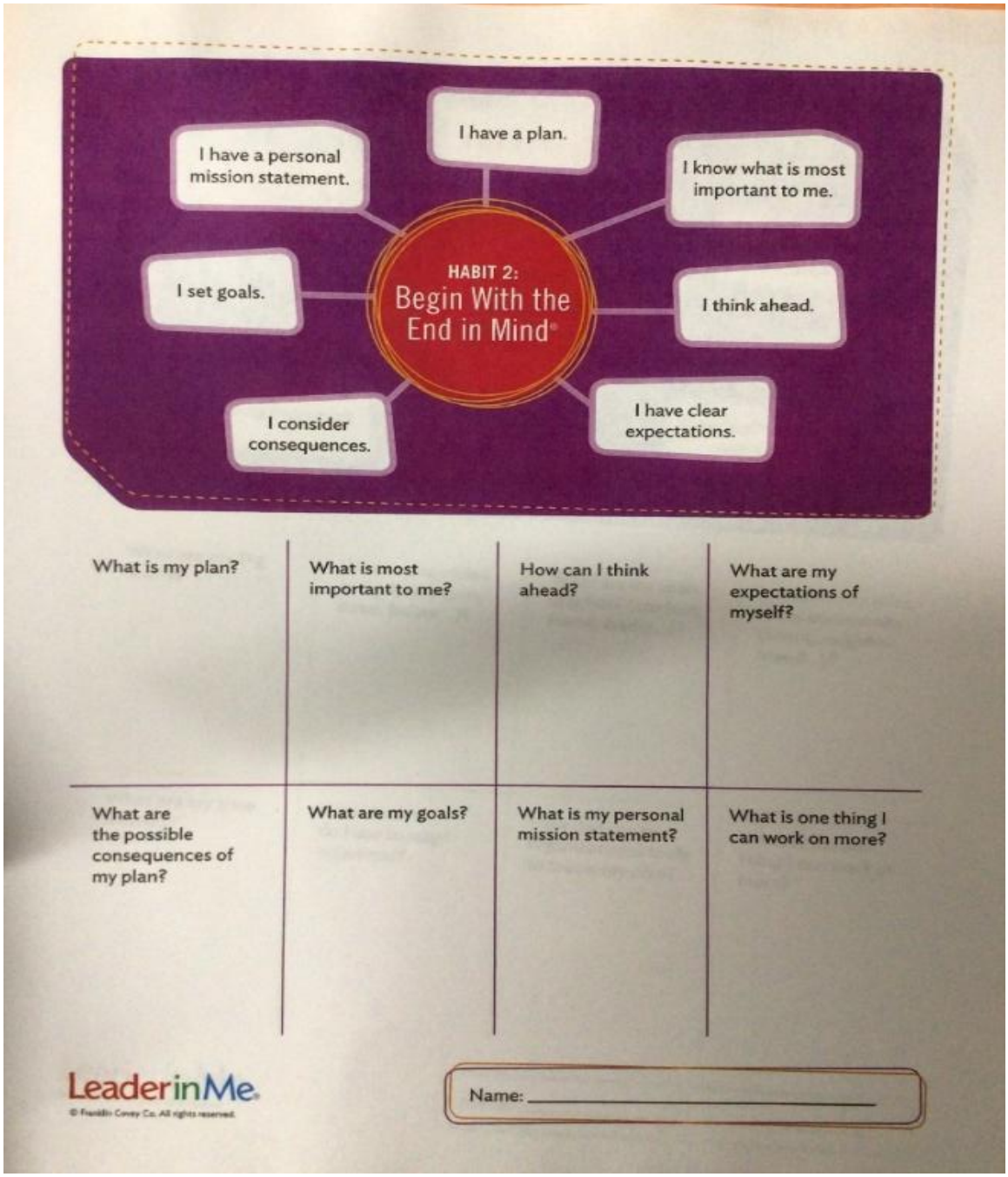
Graphic organizers, such as the Win-Win Agreement Conflict Resolution tool (Figure 19) show how to guide students in using the principles of the habits. This tool supports Habit 4, Think Win-Win, by walking one through the steps needed to resolve conflict.

Figure 19. Implementing the Habits in Our Lives



The graphic organizer shown in figure 20 is an example of how to help students learn and apply Habit 2, Begin With the End in Mind.

Figure 20. How to Practice the Habits Daily



Teachers and students can use these graphic organizers to implement the habits in real life situations. Franklin Covey provides many resources during initial training sessions; however, these resources seem overwhelming to teachers when in the daily whirlwind of teaching. Teachers find it helpful to have access to the school created resources for one stop shopping.

Part Three: Perceptions of Program Effects

The staff survey (Appendix A), conducted first to gather information for participant selection purposes, included information such as years taught at RAE, years taught total, experience in a non-LIM school, and if their previous school had a specialized program. It then moved into rating scales about the program, such as to whether and to what degree it was beneficial, has positively affected the leadership ability of students, affected the school climate and, it resulted in students displaying the 7 Habits daily. Participants were to rate each as strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Once participants were selected for the interviews, the survey was offered to support staff such as interventionists, EC and ESL teachers. I then reviewed all of the results to determine patterns based on the opinions of staff who participated by completing the survey. I shared the survey with 29 total staff members and 22 completed it.

What I Learned from the Staff Survey

As shown in Figure 21, it seems that the majority of the staff see the benefit of the program as 50% strongly agree that the LIM is a beneficial program and 46.2% agreeing with this statement. Meanwhile, Figure 22 indicates that the majority of the participants believe the LIM has positively affected their students' leadership abilities: 50% agree and 42.3% strongly agree.

Figure 21. Staff Survey Results #1

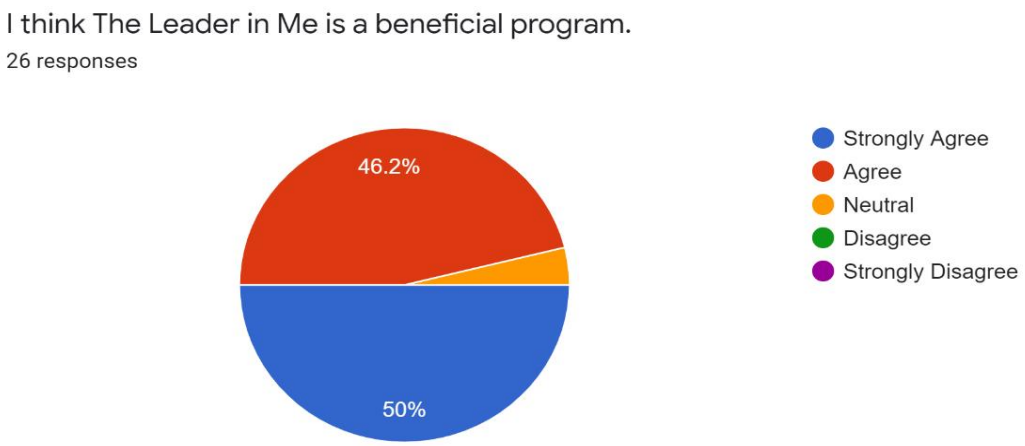
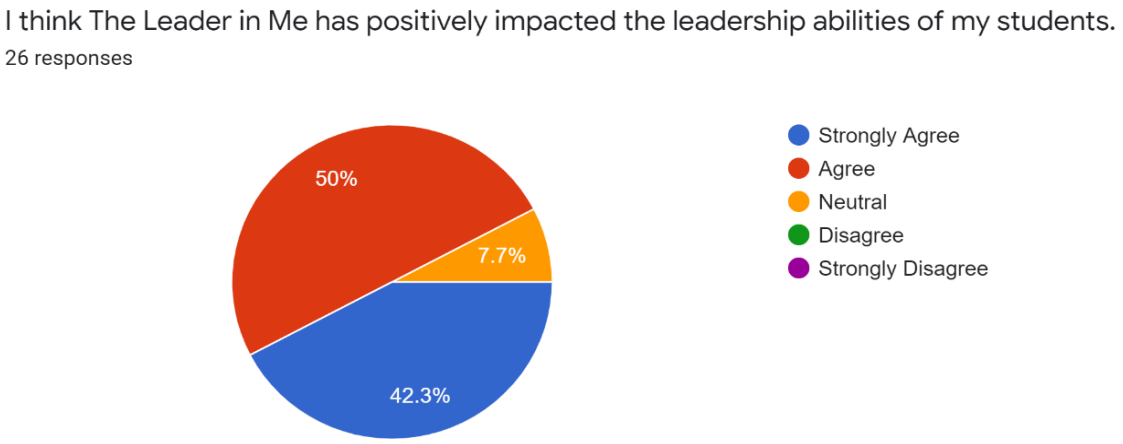
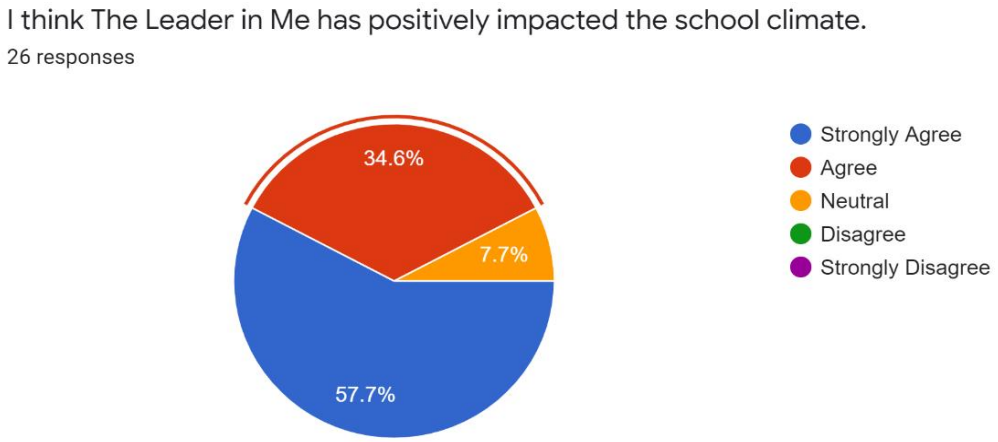


Figure 22. Staff Survey Results #2



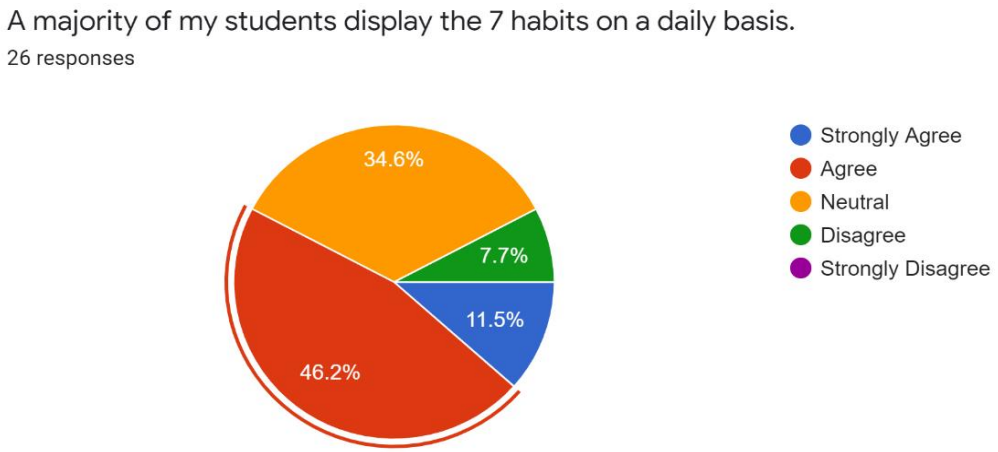
Next, Figure 23 shows that 57.7% of respondents strongly agree that the LIM has positively affected the school climate while 34.6% agreeing with this statement.

Figure 23. Staff Survey Results #3



The last question of the survey, elicited responses that are more diverse with 11.5 % strongly agreeing and 46.2% agreeing that their students display the 7 Habits daily, (Figure 24). The remaining percentages were 34.6% neutral and 7.7% in disagreement. The results of the survey demonstrate the status of intended impacts of the program, but also point to areas where attention needs focusing, such as students displaying the habits daily.

Figure 24. Staff Survey Results #4



What I Learned from the Voices and Images of Students

When asked about the impact of the LIM on student behavior, staff shared that they believe a majority of students (85-90%) respond well to the program, however, the remaining 10% to 15% of students do not respond as expected due to their lack of "control that takes precedence over their reasoning skills to follow the habits" (Susan). Kate stated, "For the most part a lot of the kids are more self-aware than other kids their age of how I am feeling and how that is affecting my performance." A common theme appeared in the answering of this question as Tom and Leah mentioned better communication and a common language, which assist in management of behavior. Staff now have a language to communicate with students about the choice made in a given situation and making better choices next time. Jessica further supported this when she stated repetition and practice influence the implementation of the habits. Susan sees students demonstrating a good understanding of the LIM. They can use the language, interact with the content and understand the essence of the habit when engaged in conversation with adults.

Prior to implementing the LIM, RAE was a PBIS school. PBIS was not thrown out when the LIM was put into practice. Rather, the two meshed through common expectations and consistent reinforcement of positive choices. The 7 Habits are used as classroom expectations which allows for practice living them daily at school. This also allows students to understand the impact of their negative choices as well as how to make positive choices instead.

Students can have school-wide and classroom leadership roles. Many of them apply for the role they feel best suits their personality. Encore teachers have modified leadership roles due to seeing all students in the school for only 40 minutes once a week. The common thought about leadership roles is that they build responsibility in students leading to doing things because it is

the right thing to do. The theory of action behind the leadership program is that students develop a sense of pride in themselves and their school when they have a role to play. Their confidence levels rise and they develop a sense of accountability within the school. It opens opportunities for student voice as students share their likes, dislikes, and opinions, and discover surprises as they apply for roles and carry out their daily responsibilities. Students not only have the opportunity to take on classroom leadership roles, but can lead at the school level as well. This tends to be more for upper grade students although the goal is to incorporate younger students as well. However, Julie was the only student in my focus group to remember having a school-wide leadership role. She had assisted our PE teacher when he set up the gym for family events. The other students in the group held classroom roles, but not school-wide roles. Figures 25-29 are photographs that show students enacting different leadership roles.

For example, teachers model classroom procedures and daily activities, gradually releasing responsibility to their students. This student demonstrates the classroom leadership role of *Calendar Leader* as he leads his classmates in a discussion around the calendar (Figure 25). The student (Figure 26) held the school-wide leadership role of *Morning Announcement Leader*. Each morning she read the school's mission and vision statement as a reminder for all. Another student read the pledge to the flag each day. The student in Figure 27 acted as the *Afternoon Dismissal Leader*. In this role, she checked off the teacher's name as each class entered the gym to ensure all classes were dismissed before buses left campus. She also posted any bus changes on the sign on the gym door and reminded students of the dismissal expectations

Figure 25. Calendar Leader

Figure 26. Morning Announcement Leader

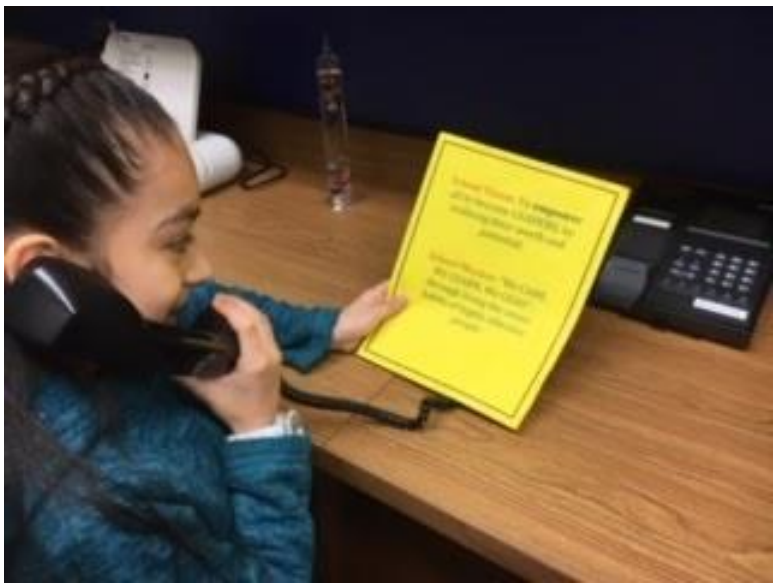


Figure 27. Student Leader Supervises Afternoon Dismissal

The two boys depicted in Figure 28 greeted visitors to a *Victory Celebration* while in the role of *Special Events Greeters*. Victory Celebrations are held quarterly in each classroom. During this time, teachers celebrate with their students the progress made toward WIG goals. Parents are invited to attend, and students share their leadership notebooks with their parents. Students also receive awards related to their demonstration of leadership throughout the school day and building.

The students shown in Figure 29 acted as *Morning Arrival Greeters.* They welcomed staff, students, and visitors to the building as they entered the front entrance of the school.

Figure 30 depicts a collage of photos showing a student performance created and directed by students and two students speaking about the principles of the LIM at the school's 1st annual *Leadership Day*. The musical gave students voice and choice as they chose the songs and the

order of the program. During *Leadership Day*, students demonstrated their learning, knowledge of the LIM, and its positive influence on their lives. Parents, community members, and district level leaders attended these events.

Figure 28. Special Events Greeters

Figure 29. Morning Greeters Bring a Smile to Your Face

Figure 30. Musical Performance (Top), Leadership Day (Bottom)

The students in the focus group shared specific examples of how learning the seven habits helped them either at school or at home. All of them related this back to a habit. For example, Hank and Jennifer gave examples of Habit 1 be proactive, when they talked about getting along better with others including their parents and teachers. Hank stated, "By being proactive by controlling my actions more than I used to." Nick discussed using Habit 2 to help him create a plan in order to accomplish the tasks before him. Julie related to Habit 3 when she talked about doing her big rocks first then working on her little rocks. She began to address Habit 5 when she mentioned, "Sometimes it's better to know the whole thing that happened

instead of going into it knowing nothing." Kim mentioned a time when she was able to help a friend going through a hard time further elaborating on Habit 5.

What Students Like Best about LIM

The group of fifth grade students in the focus group attended RAE since Kindergarten, the first year of implementation of The Leader in Me. Questions posed to this group focused in part on gaining an understanding of which elements of the program the students liked best. The meeting with the students was conducted via Zoom as they were learning remotely at the time. Holding the meeting via Zoom allowed me to see the students to read their body language. It also allowed them to see their peers and me.

I asked the question, "What is your favorite habit and why?" I then gave the students think time before they shared their thoughts. The students were able to maintain focus on the question and provide a clear explanation of why a habit was their favorite. They listened to each other's answers and appeared to be seeking to understand each other. Two students each chose Habit 5 and two others chose Habit 3. Even though the second child to give each habit as their favorite had heard the reasoning of the first child, they each supported their why in different ways. This and the other answers of each child led me to believe they have internalized these habits and truly enjoy practicing them daily.

In table 6, one gains a glimpse of the students' perception of the nature of the LIM as they describe which of the 7 Habits is their favorite and why. When asked what they like or enjoy most about the LIM, two of the boys responded that they enjoy the cartoon videos provided as a resource for teachers to use when teaching the content. The girls were more in focus with the intended impacts of the program as demonstrated by their answers. Julie said she likes the LIM because it "has helped me be a better person.

Table 6. Our Favorite Habits

Student	Habit	Why
Adam	2- Begin with the end in mind	I get to think through what I want and how I am going to get it.
Jennifer	5- Seek first to understand then to be understood	It helps me understand people.
Hank	6- Synergize	I get to help other people that need help in something.
Julie	3- Put first things first	I like how I can put my big rocks first and it helps me get things done.
Kim	5- Seek first to understand then to be understood 8- Find your voice	It helps you understand and listen to others. Just because you are a child doesn't mean you can't speak out.
Nick	3- Put first things first	It helps me do my important things first instead of procrastinating.
Sarah	7- Sharpen the saw	I can get some rest and stay healthy.

Every habit teaches me more about how to be a better person." Sarah enjoys the activities completed in class such as "answering questions and working together to make stuff" because the students have to help each other during these activities. Kim said, "The LIM is all about a positive program and it's about being helpful to others; (it) helps you to be positive about things."

The students seem to have a limited understanding of the level of participation they have in school-based decisions, or there is little opportunity for student voice at this time. The students' answers varied from they have many opportunities to answer questions to they are in control of their own learning. One student stated her teacher lets them narrow down the options then choose what they want to do. Kim gave the most insightful response when she said, "That's hard because I can't change their schedule and what they wrote down, but if I had to, I would say yes because if it's like reading level or Lexile level or math level you have a say because you are the one taking the test." The LIM sets out for students to understand they are in charge of themselves. This includes behaviorally as well as academically.

What I Learned from Teacher Interviews

Tom recounted an experience with leadership roles he implemented during a previous K-2 field day. He selected older students not normally chosen for responsible roles to act as field day helpers. The students did an excellent job in his opinion. Tom stated, "I see those leadership qualities coming out because we are giving those opportunities to kids and not being so concerned that they're going to mess up," student voice and choice. Patty also stated she often chooses students who need a confidence boost for certain roles in her classroom. Many of her students developed more ownership in all parts of daily school life. Jessica said students are more reflective about their academic progress when they lead in some capacity. They set goals and monitor them and many work outside of school hours to meet their goals. Molly believes students want to be a role model of leadership through their roles. They develop a sense of pride, understand the importance of their role, and desire doing it right.

According to conversations with staff, student interactions with peers have shown some improvement, however, there is a lack of carry over to all aspects of the day. For example, the two encore teachers stated they have not seen major improvements, but have noticed students being more aware of the actions/behaviors of others. Patty seconded this belief when she stated she has seen an improvement in the classroom even if the transfer to other parts of the day has not occurred. In addition, Leah, Jessica, and Molly have noted a better understanding of how students' actions affect others. For example, younger students will comment on the behaviors of others and state they are not being leaders when they behave in particular ways. Moreover, students have begun demonstrating an understanding of differences in others and their reactions to situations. For instance, younger and older students seem genuinely happy for their peers when they see someone else celebrated. Molly commented, "That's just their mindset because

they're actually happy for their friends and peers when they win something." Julie also stated, "It's okay for us to celebrate everyone's successes because it's showing growth not competing against others." Susan observes a positive increase in relationships; however, she stated, "Our kids fall back to their home environment upbringing to solve problems and interact with one another." They need frequent reminders of living the habits.

Relationships between students and teachers are key to success. Through the LIM, teachers at RAE have developed stronger relationships with students due to better understanding of each other. Through these relationships, respect has grown according to Kate. Tom sees teachers as more nurturing and less rigid as they try "to grow a child." Teachers use the language of the LIM with students when handling behavior concerns. Leah discussed how she has conversations with her students to discuss what they did and how they could have handled a situation differently for better results. Patty feels the conversations held help the teachers better understand the students and not just jump to conclusions about what happened. Students understand and realize that all staff members care about their success in school due to the sharing of WIGs according to Molly.

There seemed to be an overall understanding among teachers that staff members must have a strong understanding of the program in order to grow students' understanding. Moreover, staff must act as role models of the LIM throughout the day in order for students to learn. Teachers seemed to agree that the adults' use of the language and evidence of living the habits appears daily throughout RAE school and realize they must live the habits in order to teach them. Leah put it nicely when she said, "Changing yourself and how you look at things."

Teachers also expressed that most students demonstrate a beginning level of understanding with older students being able to articulate more about the habits and their

principles and practices. According to the teachers interviewed, the students do understand the context of each habit and are beginning to use the language. They agree more time and teaching/learning about the habits will lead to a deeper understanding. This is an area for consideration during future planning sessions involving the *Lighthouse Team*, a group of staff members with representatives of all grade levels. This team makes decisions for the school about the LIM. Action teams also exist, which focus on each section of the framework. These teams work to ensure the school continues to grow in order to maintain sustainability. All staff members join an action team of their choice to allow all to have a voice in decision-making.

While teachers reported that the LIM manifests in students at school, teachers wondered whether the program carried over to student and parent interactions at home. Parents have an awareness of the program through their attendance to school events and sharing by students at home, but staff fear that the families do not live the habits at home. Jessica stated, "When you start to live it yourself you start to show value then it is not so much a program… it becomes a way of life." Teachers wondered aloud about what can be done to enhance the school to home transfer of learning.

What I Learned from Student Discipline Data

My review of the discipline data revealed the following information about the effects of the LIM. During the 2016-2017 school year, the office of RAE received 222 office referrals, 191 of those were for male students with 127 being Black identifying males, 13 White identifying males, 46 Hispanic identifying males, and 5 multiracial identifying males. Please note the total number of referrals each school year does not represent individual students. Many of the students involved had multiple referrals. The three highest infractions were physical aggression (n=79),

non-compliance/disrespect (n=71), and inappropriate language (n=27). These infractions became the focus for improvement because of the high occurrence rates experienced.

The following year, 2017-2018, the number of referrals decreased to 101. The number of males decreased to 88 with 49 students identifying as Black, 3 identifying as White, 35 identifying as Hispanic, and 1 identifying as multiracial. The breakdown of the referrals was 35 physical aggression, 23 non-compliance/disrespect, and 12 inappropriate language. The school met its school improvement goal for the 17-18 school year by decreasing the total number of office referrals by over half.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the number of referrals continued to decrease and totaled 64 with 52 males with 25 of which identifying as Black, 18 as Hispanic, 6 as White, and 3 as multiracial. Ten of the referrals were for non-compliance, 34 for physical aggression, 6 for inappropriate language. All infractions experienced decreased numbers from 17-18 to 18-19. The office addressed 34 crisis level outbursts in 18-19. This was the first year this distinction was made between behavior referrals and referrals for students with severe mental health concerns. The students involved in these incidents were the tertiary students needing more support.

The 2019-2020 school year was interrupted by COVID-19 allowing for data collection spanning from August to March only. That year 52 referrals were reported to the office. This total consisted of 42 males with 31 Black identifying, 10 Hispanic, and 1 White. The breakdown included 24 for physical aggression, 12 for non-compliance/disrespect, and 4 for inappropriate language. This number may have been higher had the school year finished with students learning face to face in the building. Analysis noted decreases in each infraction type, but the data presented as skewed due to the students not completing the school year learning in person.

In the 2020-2021 school year, the data continued to present as skewed due to the majority of the school year again spent with students learning remotely until March 2021, at that time about half of the students returned to in person learning. After Spring Break in April of 2021, more students returned to in person learning, but class sizes were still smaller than normal. The data for this school year consisted of 5 referrals all male, with 1 Black identifying and 4 Hispanic. They were from different infraction categories than before due to the difference in the manner of learning (at home online, versus face to face at school), with 1 disruption of class, 3 weapons in class (toy guns held up in front the camera on the computer and a kitchen knife), and 1 inappropriate website.

In this data review, I focused on male students primarily as the largest number of office referrals at RAE historically involved males. However, in Appendix F, the tables show the number of referrals for female students as well since the school goal involves lowering the total number of referrals received each school year. This goal was met with success each year prior to COVID-19, which appeared to skew the data in the 19-20 and 20-21 school years due to the disruption of face-to-face instruction. When considering the reduction in the number of referrals each school year from 16-17 to 18-19, it appears that, the LIM has been successful in influencing the overall discipline of the school. There are other factors involved in many of the cases that need consideration in future planning.

Summary

In summary, based on the findings of my study there are multiple positives for celebration, such as consistency and common expectations throughout the entire school, the child friendly nature of the LIM, supportive coaching provided by Franklin Covey, goal setting, and accountability.

The students who participated in the focus group shared similar perceptions as the staff; however, differences appear in the data analysis. When considering implementation, the students responded with an understanding of how the habits help them in daily life, but then contradicted themselves when some mentioned a lack of learning real world application from the lessons taught. Students grasped the intended impacts as they stated the LIM helps them be better people by helping others. They understand the habits and their use for the purpose of self-improvement. They did note a lack of student voice in the school, but have an awareness of being more in control of themselves.

The discipline data demonstrated a consistent decrease in office referrals up to the 19-20 school year at which time the data appears skewed due to the change in learning environment brought on by COVID-19. By tracking the data in the manner in which the school staff did, they were able to gain valuable information about students who needed continued support. Evidence of the positive influence of the teaching of the 7 Habits appeared in the steady decrease in office referrals. Further analysis of this data in the future should occur to see if this pattern continues.

The physical environment at RAE presents strong evidence to support successful implementation of the LIM. Staff focused on the environment as their first step in implementation of the program. Strengths and talents of the staff and students appeared through the painting of murals and display of student work samples. The positive culture of the school quickly became visible through the murals and displays.

The documents provided by Franklin Covey and/or modified and shared by the administration at RAE support the sustainability of the program. These documents demonstrate a strong need for clear communication and common expectations for all stakeholders to ensure success. A clear need for user-friendly resources appeared through the interviews and review of

the resources. When faced with the daily whirlwind, staff do not have time to search for materials and resources. Quick, easy to use documents provide the best source of help to busy teachers.

The ultimate goal of RAE is total integration of *The Leader in Me* into all aspects of the school: leadership, culture, and academics. When this occurs, evidence of the LIM will be demonstrated in all parts of the school day, and in all areas of the building. Students and staff will live the habits by nature and transfer will appear outside of the school day.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to extend the discussion of findings that answered the first two research questions. That is, this chapter is a discussion of my meaning making about what I learned in terms of any relationships that can be inferred between stakeholders implementation experiences and intended impacts that were realized. In addition, I discuss the implications of these relationships in terms of how the nature and implementation of *The Leader in Me* program might be improved to strengthen its intended impacts. I will answer the last two research questions, which guided this study.

3) What relationships can be inferred between stakeholders' (teachers, administrators, and students) implementation experiences and intended impacts in RAE elementary school?

4) How can implementation elements be improved to strengthen intended impacts?

How Program Content and Implementation Efforts Relate to Outcomes

The intended impacts of the LIM program consist of the following:

1) Leadership: Highly effective students and adults, who are leaders in their school and community,

2) Culture: A high-trust culture where every person's voice is heard and his or her potential is affirmed,

3) Academics: Engaged students who are equipped to achieve and entrusted to lead their own learning (Franklin Covey, Leader in Me Framework).

When a school begins the process of implementing the LIM, the staff receives training and coaching in the areas of leadership and culture. The paradigm of leadership is for all, not

just a select few is highlighted and stressed. Staff members learn how trusting relationships amongst themselves as well as with their students lead to positive results in the classroom. A culture of trust is vital. Student voice also stands out in the LIM as students set goals and plan their learning alongside their teachers. When all of these things become part of the school culture, the area of academics becomes the focus.

The data gathered from the interviews demonstrate a strong sense of understanding of the intended impacts of the program (Leadership, Culture, and Academics). Staff view the LIM as positive versus punitive and see students developing a sense of responsibility for themselves as well as a sense of self-awareness. A major concern for the school remains in the area of tertiary students who are not responding as well to the program. These students experience mental health concerns, and need more in the area of social and emotional development and support than is currently provided by the LIM.

Relationships between the implementation process and the intended impacts of the program stand out as the need for adults and students to act as role models for the program by living the 7 Habits daily. The physical environment also plays a tremendous role in the success and sustainability of *The Leader in Me*. The need for fidelity, consistency, real world connections, and a common language were consistently mentioned throughout the conversations with participants. The teacher interviews and staff survey reflected a shared belief in the LIM program and a learned understanding that it applies to all stakeholders, not just the children.

All participants felt students developed a sense of responsibility for their actions including work habits after the implementation of the LIM. Student Leadership roles played a part in this development whether they were school-wide or classroom roles. The need for more student voice and choice continues to come up in discussions with staff and students, however.

Time, transfer of living the habits at home, and tertiary students also appeared as areas of concern for staff members throughout the study. With consistent implementation of the program and the use of a common language, the improvement results in student behavior and academics appear to be more satisfactory.

In order to build trusting relationships with others, we have to believe in those around us. Students need to have a chance to communicate when in situations where misbehavior occurred. One must not jump to conclusions and offer a punitive consequence immediately. This is an important aspect of the LIM as the participants of the study view the program as celebrating positive outcomes and they mentioned having a shift in their paradigm, which is stressed in the initial training as a must have. Tom stated, "I had a mentality of I'm the grown-up, you're the kid" prior to receiving training. He had already realized this did not work for classroom management, but found new ways to address student behaviors in his class through the LIM program. He also feels "The LIM focuses on the positive and a growth mindset," meaning we can change the outcomes because they are not set in place yet. Molly acknowledged that students take more responsibility for their actions now and have more choices.

Teachers demonstrate a change in how they view behavior management after the implementation of the LIM. For example, Leah as she admitted she better understands her role in the support of student discipline as it "Allows me to understand and put myself in their shoes." According to Patty, "Teachers have more conversations with students using the language." Students and adults understand their circle of control as they determine what they can and cannot control based on what Jessica has learned through her teaching of the LIM. Susan also showed an understanding of the connections between content, implementation, and outcomes, expressing her belief in the foundational paradigms that ground the practices, how they lead to greater

understanding of human behavior, and developmental responses. Since learning about the LIM, she thinks "deeper about the root causes of behaviors and common responses of empowering students instead of punitive responses." This leads to conversations with students and the stakeholders who work with them allowing plans to be created to support the students in their area of need.

Adult stakeholders realize they must live the 7 habits and act as role models daily as the teaching of the habits comes from living them as an example for others to see. When dealing with student behavior concerns teachers must remember to use the habits and the common language as they have a conversation about the actions of the student and seek a better way to have dealt with the situation. According to the LIM, students should be given an opportunity to correct their behavior versus receiving a punitive consequence. Kate reflected that understanding by stating students need a reminder of what they should be doing so "they can say 'okay, this is how I should be acting. Let me get my act together." Tom agreed with this and further stressed the importance of the physical environment, which relates to the culture of the school. The attractive and substantive visual reminders throughout the school assist in the learning and living of the habits for students and adults. *The Leader in Me* must be implemented with fidelity with conversations during lessons and when dealing with behavior. Students need constant reminders to enable them to implement the habits into their daily lives with consistency.

The participants of the study held an overall high opinion of the program. Most have found the benefit of the program for themselves as well as their students. Kate was nervous in the beginning due to the fear of this being a short-lived program. She now sees the potential for the LIM to have real life application. Tom enjoys the common language that will travel with students throughout life. Leah sees the benefit for students from challenging economic

circumstances as they gain life skills. Julie thought the program was just for kids, but now knows it's "just good habits for everybody." Patty appreciates the goal setting aspects and sees the huge difference it is making in her students. Molly discussed how the students develop a better understanding of their personal responsibility for their actions and the development of coping skills when faced with real life situations.

All of the participants enjoy teaching one habit a month and the classroom teachers appreciate the devoted block of time in the morning for social and emotional learning (SEL) including LIM. In fact, the School Improvement Team will continue to be a part of the master schedule for the coming school year.

The students at RAE have the opportunity to lead in their classrooms as well as in school-wide leadership roles. This tends to be more for upper grade students although the goal is to incorporate younger students as well. When speaking with the fifth graders in my focus group it seemed the students had forgotten their leadership roles. This could be understood, as they had not been in school face to face since March of 2020. They had not held leadership roles will learning virtually. Teachers were adjusting classroom leadership roles in an attempt to offer opportunities for children to lead virtually, but this was still a work in progress. Still some of the students were able to discuss the classroom leadership roles they had had previously and why they enjoyed carrying out that role. Julie however was the only student to remember having a school-wide leadership role. She had assisted our PE teacher when he set up the gym for family events.

Hank, Nick, and Julie each described how their classroom roles allowed them to be helpful to others. Hank did not recall the exact role he had, but remembered it was helpful to his classmates. Nick discussed cleaning the tables at lunch. He liked this role because it allowed

him to clean the tables creating a clean environment for the next students to use. Julie was responsible for taking the lunch count to the cafeteria. She expressed that this helped the cafeteria know how much food to cook so everyone would get enough food. Adam could not recall exactly what his role was, but he was "pretty sure" he was helpful. Kim could not recall a leadership role at all. This lack of remembrance of roles held or the fact that students did not have the opportunity to lead in school-wide roles becomes an area of concern for RAE. I will discuss options for how to improve in this area later in this chapter.

How Content and Implementation Might Be Improved

The interviews yielded many positives about the LIM, such as the consistency felt by having a common language and common expectations school-wide. Kate stated everyone is held to the same expectations so students know what to expect in all areas of the school. Tom agreed with the consistency piece and the increase in positive communication between teachers and students. Patty feels the program is kid friendly and that the goal setting provides a motivational tool for the students. Molly enjoys the cross grade level accountability buddies that have been established as this allows older students to come together with younger students to share their leadership notebooks, WIG goals, and the progress being made. This in turn creates a sense of pride in each child's accomplishments. Susan sees the quality materials, supportive coaching, and ability of everyone to participate as a positive of the LIM.

Although the participants had a high regard for the LIM, they still had some concerns about the program with areas of improvement that would allow for enhancement of the implementation and sustainability of *The Leader in Me* at RAE. The biggest challenge stakeholders have found is time, to teach and to monitor WIGs. Other areas that stood out and will be discussed further in chapter five include, more interactive lessons, culturally responsive

videos, more student voice and choice, more opportunities for students to lead, and increasing family involvement and the transfer of living the habits at home.

The main concern was time to devote to the teaching of the habits and to management of WIGs. The school recently developed a new master schedule that includes a daily SEL time each morning due to concerns about students' emotional well-being brought on by COVID-19. This time used for SEL lessons, includes teaching of the LIM habits. Teachers want to see this continue to be a part of the daily schedule as well as beginning to integrate the content throughout all subjects and all parts of the day. Even with this block of time devoted to LIM there is still concern about enough time to do justice to the program, for example finding time in the day to focus on student WIGs to the level necessary for fidelity of implementation to occur. Students need time to track their data and progress as well as to make changes to their lead measures. Teachers need to meet with students to discuss their progress toward their goals as well. Accountability partners meet to celebrate and adjust each other's goals as needed. All of this requires extra time that is limited in the daily schedule.

The participants of the study support the need for more time devoted to management of WIG goals as well as time to teach all of the content of LIM. Jessica would like to see more time for students to analyze their data and work on refining their lead measures, action steps. This is also a concern for Molly who stated the younger students need fewer options from which to choose their lead measures for reaching their goals. They have a difficult time narrowing down the choices and experience a sense of being overwhelmed by so much to choose from. Patty finds a concern to be the amount of vocabulary involved with each habit. It seems overwhelming when trying to teach the habits, and students experience difficulty remembering everything. These concerns should be considered when other schools are considering

implementing the program. For RAE, these concerns should be considered by their Lighthouse Team in an effort to make improvements to the program.

When asked about changes to the LIM, most of the participants felt no major changes were needed. However, Leah did bring up the matter of the need for more interactive lessons for younger students. She would also like to see more videos that are culturally relatable for the school's student population. Patty would like to see changes to the videos as well, such as more about a transition person and use of the pause, a strategy taught to the students through the Zones of Regulation and LIM, where they stop and think about their reaction to a given situation before choosing how to react. Molly would like to see more student led activities, similar to Leadership Days. During Leadership Days, students lead the entire program. Teaching visitors about the LIM through speeches about what they have learned, their leadership roles, etc., singing of songs, demonstrating activities from clubs, and many more examples. This correlates to Patty's request for more student voice and choice. Susan also sees the need for more active participation, encouragement of the use of the language daily, and the opening up of more opportunities for students to lead in the school. Other areas of improvement noted included more family involvement, and continuing to dig deeper into the content. The ultimate goal of RAE is total integration of the LIM in every aspect of the school.

I asked participants about other supports they may need. The overwhelming response was how to involve parents more. All participants feel parental involvement occurs on the surface level at this time. They seek ways to involve parents to continue the implementation of the program outside of the school day. This could be accomplished through holding workshops to educate parents about the LIM. Susan also feels teachers and other staff members need more time to learn the wealth of content provided. This will allow them to more effectively model and

teach the habits, principles, and practices of the LIM. She also believes tertiary students need more in order to experience success not only with the LIM, but also in all aspects of the school day. "TLIM is a CASEL approved social and emotional program, but teachers must have other tools such as Zones, Dojo, and PBIS to support TLIM." (Susan)

In order to increase student understanding of the LIM the participants feel the home and culture connection will be beneficial as well as real life application. They would like the SEL time to continue to be in the master schedule and for instruction and use of the Zones of Regulation to continue. The only change to implementation was more training in the beginning related to academics. Overall participants seemed pleased with the LIM and the implementation process at RAE.

During focus groups, the students were eager to share their thoughts about possible changes. They had some interesting ideas. In terms of lessons, students' perceptions of teacher intentions appeared different from those of the teachers in several examples given.

Adam would like to see more teacher created activities related to the habits for the students to complete. He felt there was too much time spent on writing paragraphs about the videos watched about the LIM. I asked him what he would rather do and he gave an example of a game related to Habit 2 (Begin with the end in mind). The game would consist of having to work to get money in order to buy something the student desired. Nick agreed about more games and less worksheets. Hank simply stated, "Less work. Less writing." I am not sure if he wanted to avoid work altogether or if he wanted more interactive tasks. Of course, I had to keep in mind that these students had been remote for almost an entire school year at the time of our meeting. The teachers tried to find new ways to teach the content, but struggled with this as students participated in class virtually. Even when students returned to in person learning the

safety restrictions hindered the type of learning opportunities provided to students related to the LIM. Social distancing did not allow for as much collaboration and communication as what students would have normally experienced with LIM and SEL lessons. Moreover, participants who taught at RAE during the initial stages of implementation felt overwhelmed with the amount of content to learn and the expanse of language. While the school cannot necessarily change the entire implementation process, administration and LIM coaches can take staff feelings and information overload into account as they plan for future trainings needs.

Conclusions and Additional Recommendations

Based on the results of my study, *The Leader in Me* is a good match for RAE Elementary School. The staff, students, and administrators have put much effort into the implementation process, and the results are positive.

COVID-19 did hinder the school's progress to a degree as students were forced to learn remotely for two halves of two different school years. This disruption to face-to-face instruction appears to have created gaps in students' and the staff's continuation of living the habits and the principles of the LIM. Still the school earned Lighthouse recognition, demonstrating the ability to be a guiding light for others schools as they complete the implementation journey.

The LIM is a CASEL approved SEL program and as such, it promotes the overall well-being of students. As noted previously 12% of school age children have been diagnosed with one or more emotional or behavioral disorders (Bruhn, Gorsh, Hannan, and Hirsch, 2014), leading to the understanding of the need for a caring, supportive, safe, and empowering environment (Brackett and Rivers, n.d.). To supplement the LIM program and to better support the students of RAE, the school staff uses the Panorama survey data completed twice a year to determine areas of need. The Panorama platform offers lessons to support SEL in the classroom.

These lessons in combination with lessons provided by Franklin Covey through the LIM website give teachers many sources to draw from for supporting the continued learning of students.

Noting that more and more students demonstrate social and emotional needs necessitates additional training and resources for teachers to better understand student needs and the behavioral issues that arise from these needs (Horsch, et al., 2002). Waiting until teachers are in their classrooms alone to provide this training and resources is not adequate. Moreover, universities could incorporate training into their beginning teacher programs to allow pre-service teachers to build their toolboxes in advance of entering their classroom for the first time.

Based on the interview data, the teachers have learned that daily lessons enhance the learning of students. Just as role models of living the habits are needed to support the continued living, learning, and deepening of the habits in one's life, these lessons continue the process for the students. Keeping the LIM practices and principles at the forefront of all stakeholders' minds as they move throughout life hold potential for enhancing the rate of success.

When implementing the LIM, administrators should monitor teacher usage of lesson resources and gauge whether and how the lessons and suggested resources meet the needs of their staff. As discovered during my study, the staff appreciated the resources provided by Franklin Covey, but often felt overwhelmed by the detail and complexity. Ensuring that the resources provided are differentiated for the needs of the staff will offer more enhancement of use and better success for the program. While all of these resources provide support for teachers, reminders of what is available may need to occur especially when new staff members join the school.

Recommendations for Current LIM Schools and Those Considering Implementation

RAE Elementary School continues to demonstrate a model of the LIM through the teaching of the habits on a daily basis. However, findings show that school leadership does need to continue taking a deeper dive into the content involving teachers to further the students' understanding of the practices, principles, and habits, implementation fidelity can only enhance success for all stakeholders. In order to accomplish this, I suggest a monthly booster focused on some aspect of the LIM, sing a pulse check with the staff to determine the level of living the habits in order to provide role models would allow for planning of the professional development boosters. This could be a task assigned to an action team or the Lighthouse Team.

Another concern all participants discussed involved the need for workshops for parents. The focus of these workshops could be to teach family members more about the program. The intent of this being the continued learning of the habits by the students as they practice living them at home with their parents.

The participants also mentioned the need for more cultural connections and real life application for the students. Additional consultation with the Franklin Covey coach is needed to address these cultural connection needs. The coach could recommend sources to support this need or make recommendations to Franklin Covey to support this change. The students in the focus group also spoke to the need for real life connections. *The Leader in Me* online and *Leader in Me Weekly* provide supports and suggestions for how to use the LIM in daily life. Both staff and students would benefit greatly from focusing more time and attention to these types of resources. It may be helpful for the Lighthouse Team to conduct a review of how to access resources on the website. In addition, weekly principal's announcements ("Odds and Ends") could include reminders from the *Leader in Me Weekly*.

The LIM fosters the greatness in all. Therefore, leadership is for the majority not the few. This philosophy brings to light another area of improvement for RAE Elementary School. As discussed previously, students are offered opportunities to lead in school-wide leadership roles. However, this has been noted as an area of improvement. It is imperative that educators create additional leadership roles for all students in grade 3-5 who applied to serve in various capacities. In addition, educators' hesitancy in involving K-2 students in school-wide roles needs to be addressed. The school would benefit from allowing these opportunities for all interested students as much as possible in order to grow leadership in all students.

For schools considering implementing the LIM, I would strongly recommend the following to support a successful implementation process and sustainability:

1) Educators should research the program thoroughly in advance to determine if it is a good fit for all stakeholders. This research process should involve all stakeholders to create the most buy-in. Without buy-in from all or at least most, the program will not be sustainable, as it requires everyone to believe in the process.

2) A well-defined plan for program implementation is essential. Undertaking implementation of this program without beginning with the end in mind will create a chance for a higher rate of failure. The entire school community must be considered to ensure all needs are met. Clear expectations for staff implementation must be established and upheld by administration, and all stakeholders should establish clear expectations for students during this process. Including check points for fidelity of implementation throughout and pulse checks for sustainability beyond initial implementation. Without strong leadership and support, the LIM will not produce the results hoped for as it is not the program, but the fidelity of the stakeholders who make it work.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Due to the forced remote learning caused by COVID-19, I had to change my original plan of observing in classrooms and throughout the school. I had hoped to gain insight into the lessons taught based on LIM as well as the status of relationships between staff and students. I felt this would have allowed me to see the level of interactions to determine the influences of the LIM on staff to student, student-to-student, and staff-to-staff relationships. Trusting relationships are crucial to the success of the LIM as well as the success of the students during their educational journey. Positive relationships with teachers provide the foundation for lasting learning (Zins and Elias, 2006). As noted previously relationships lead to a greater rate of academic success due to higher rates of connection to school and learning (Brackett and Rivers, n.d.)

Another limitation brought on by COVID was the impact on the school's discipline data. While steady decreases in the number of office referrals was noted prior to COVID and the number remained low during remote learning, the impact of learning remotely still skewed the data to the point it could not be used to fully support the influence of teaching the practices, principles, and habits on student behavior. This is not to say the LIM was not having a positive impact. The school should continue to monitor discipline data and determine further supports to continue the reductions in these numbers.

This data unearthed the need for more supports for tertiary students, those presenting with mental health needs. These students continued to struggle with controlling their emotions and behavioral reactions to situations beyond their control. Further research in this area would allow schools to determine how to supplement the needs of these students beyond what the LIM can

provide. While RAE Elementary School has experienced progress with some students there have been many extra resources and supports used to enhance the LIM.

Another study of interest would be one tracking students as they progress through the grades at a LIM school. The LIM has a secondary level to the program; however, it is not widely implemented. A study tracking students' progress through grades K-5 could provide support for the continuation of the program into the middle and high school years.

Final Thoughts

While the results of this study noted many positives, hindrances such as time and transfer of learned skills are concerning. Time becomes a constraint when teachers seek to incorporate all elements of the LIM into their daily schedule; whether it be time to cover all the content, time to learn the content themselves, or time to focus on WIG (Wildly Important) goals. Participants of the study also stressed concern about the transfer from school to home. Students demonstrate a strong understanding of the content at school, but teachers fear they are not living it at home with their families. All stakeholders seek a means to ease this transfer from home to school. Finally, about 85 to 90% of students experience positive results from the LIM. The remaining 10 to 15%, tertiary students with mental health concerns, need extra support not provided by the LIM.

I had just completed my interviews at the time the school went through its Lighthouse Review. This process involved two outside observers interviewing staff, students, and parents as well as observing in virtual classrooms. The results and recommendations that emerged from this review matched the data gathered from my interviews, focus group, and analysis of the discipline data and physical environment of the school.

When one lives in an environment, details often become static and go unnoticed. Through this study, I realized how true this is for me. Being a member of the staff of RAE I was

concerned about conducting my study using the staff and students at this school. I am glad that I did however as I feel my eyes have been opened to static things as well as seeing new opportunities for growth.

Through conducting this study, it is apparent as to how difficult the sustainability of staff motivation and endurance can be when continuing a program such as the LIM. While time-consuming and often stress inducing, administration must stay on top of things in order to maintain the flow of momentum first felt when excitement over a new program first began. All stakeholders must remember to sharpen their saws and support each other during both the high times and the lows.

Another surprise came in the form of the results of the survey questions about students displaying the habits daily. While the data indicated 46.2% agreement and 11.5% strong agreement, I predicted results would have been higher based on my own perceptions. Further, I was shocked to see results of 34.6% neutral and 7.7% disagreeing. Going beyond my own perceptions and learning through the eyes of the staff underscores the need for further work: to understand the need for daily lessons, real life connections, and role models in order to live the habits clearly and consistently.

I was also surprised to hear the participants talk about the common language used after implementation and the importance of this aspect of implementation. Participants discussed how they see this language as helpful to students because they hear the same things from all adults supporting the importance of their behavior and actions as they move throughout the building. Tom also expressed how this language moves with the children as they progress through the grades at RAE allowing them to continue to experience the same expectations each school year. Participants continually addressed the overwhelming nature of all the content coming at them at

once alluding to the need to differentiate the delivery of learning for staff during the implementation process. This information presents helpful for schools considering implementing the LIM as they can better meet the needs of their staff from the onset.

Another aha moment I experienced involved the students as I listened to the focus group discuss their perceptions of how their teachers introduce new learning. I wonder if this was due to the nature of their remote learning experience. It was interesting to learn that students who had learned remotely for almost a full year could not remember leadership roles they had held previously. Much emphasis is placed on leadership for all in the LIM, however, at RAE this may not be the case. This data brings to light the need for more opportunities for students to lead at the school level and the incorporation of K-2 school-wide leadership roles. Yet, I wonder if students' perceptions would be different now that students are learning face-to-face again.

I had a strong sense of the importance of the physical environment of the school prior to the study, however, after conducting more intentional observations of RAE's environment, and speaking with staff and students it has become much clearer that the physical environment is of high importance. In addition, clear and concise communication is essential, influencing program sustainability—especially during Covid-19. Without this, all efforts will be for naught.

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APPENDIX A: STAFF SURVEY

Name:

Number of years taught at RAE:

Number of year taught total:

Have you ever taught at a non-LIM school?

Did your previous school have a specialized program? If so, what was it?

I think The Leader in Me is a beneficial program.

_____ Strongly Agree

_____ Agree

_____ Disagree

_____ Strongly Disagree

I think The Leader in Me has positively impacted the leadership abilities of my students.

_____ Strongly Agree

_____ Agree

_____ Disagree

_____ Strongly Disagree

I think The Leader in Me has positively impacted the school climate.

_____Strongly Agree

_____ Agree

_____ Disagree

_____ Strongly Disagree

A majority of my students display the 7 habits on a daily basis.

_____ Strongly Agree

_____ Agree

_____ Disagree

_____ Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B: TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Background

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
2. Tell me about your teaching experience
3. Tell me about your educational background (where you went to school, degrees, certifications, etc.)
4. How long have you taught in a *Leader in Me* school?

Implementation

5. How did your school choose *The Leader in Me*? What role did you play in that decision?
6. Tell me about the implementation process of *The Leader in Me* at your school.
7. What role did you play during the implementation process?
8. Were there changes in the administration during the implementation period?
9. What was the staff turnover rate during implementation?
10. How transient was the student population during implementation?
11. What would you change about how *The Leader in Me* was implemented at your school?

Behavior and Classroom Management

12. Describe any training you have had to support behavior and classroom management.
13. Did your previous school have a specialized program? Tell me more about it.
14. What impact has *The Leader in Me* had on you and your knowledge of discipline?
15. Have you noticed any impact of *The Leader in Me* on the behaviors of your students in general?
16. What have you noticed about students' adherence to classroom rules and procedures since the implementation of *The Leader in Me*? What about school-wide rules and procedures?

17. Describe your perception of the support of the administrative team with discipline in your class.

The Leader in Me

18. What are the expectations for the staff and students related to *The Leader in Me*, and how it is lived and taught in the schools?
19. Overall, what is your opinion of *The Leader in Me*?
20. Describe any pros and cons you have discovered with the program.
21. What changes would you make to the program itself?
22. Is there anything else you would like to share about *The Leader in Me* or how behavior is handled at your school?
23. Do your students have leadership roles within your classroom?
24. How do you think this helps your students develop leadership skills?
25. What influence do you see the leadership roles having on their behavior in class and throughout the school?
26. Do you think *The Leader in Me* acknowledges and responds to students' cultural backgrounds? If so, how? If not, why not?
27. Describe your perception of the support of the administrative team with discipline in your class.
28. What other supports would be beneficial to teachers, parents, and students?

Relationships

29. What have you noticed about students' interactions with peers since the implementation?
30. What have you noticed about students' relationships with teachers and other staff members since implementation?

31. What have you noticed about staff interactions with one another since implementation? What about staff's overall attitudes about the school and work?

Stakeholders' Understanding

32. In your own words, explain your understanding or your experiences with *The Leader in Me.*
33. Do you think other stakeholders, such as your colleagues, parents, students, and community members, value the program? What evidence of this have you seen?
34. Do you think the students understand the components of *The Leader in Me*? What are some examples of this understanding?
35. Is there anything else you think could be done to improve the understanding of the students?

APPENDIX C: ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESITONS

Background

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
2. Tell me about your experiences as a school level administrator.
3. Tell me about your educational background (where you went to school, degrees, certifications, etc.)
4. Did your previous school have a specialized program?
5. How long have you been an administrator in a *Leader in Me* school?

Implementation

6. Why did you choose to implement *The Leader in Me*?
7. What other programs did you consider?
8. How did you involve other stakeholders in the decision making process?
9. Tell me about the implementation process of *The Leader in Me* at your school. What steps did you follow?
10. What challenges did you face during implementation?
11. How have you adapted the program to meet the needs of your school?
12. Were there changes in the administration during the implementation period?
13. What was the staff turnover rate during implementation?
14. How transient was the student population during implementation?
15. What would you change about how *The Leader in Me* was implemented at your school?

Behavior and Classroom Management

16. Describe any training you have had to support behavior and classroom management.
17. What impact has *The Leader in Me* had on you and your knowledge of discipline?

18. Have you noticed any impact of *The Leader in Me* on the behaviors of your students in general?
19. Is there anything else you would like to share about *The Leader in Me* or how behavior is handled at your school?

The Leader in Me

20. What are the expectations for the staff and students related to *The Leader in Me*, and how it is lived and taught in the schools?
21. Overall, what is your opinion of *The Leader in Me*?
22. Describe any pros and cons you have discovered with the program.
23. What changes would you make to the program itself?
24. Do the students have leadership roles at the school level?
25. How do you think this helps your students develop leadership skills?
26. What influence do you see the leadership roles having on their behavior in class and throughout the school?
27. What other supports would be beneficial to teachers, parents, and students?
28. Do you think *The Leader in Me* acknowledges and responds to students' cultural backgrounds? If so, how? If not, why not?
29. Is there anything else you can tell me about your experience with *The Leader in Me* that we have not already discussed?

Relationships

30. What have you noticed about students' adherence to classroom rules and procedures since the implementation of *The Leader in Me*? What about school-wide rules and procedures?
31. What have you noticed about students' interactions with peers since the implementation?

32. What have you noticed about students' relationships with teachers and other staff members since implementation?
33. What have you noticed about staff interactions with one another since implementation? What about staff's overall attitudes about the school and work?

Stakeholders' Understanding

34. In your own words, explain your understanding or your experiences with *The Leader in Me*.
35. Do you think other stakeholders, such as your colleagues, parents, students, and community members, value the program? What evidence of this have you seen?
36. Do you think the students understand the components of *The Leader in Me*? What are some examples of this understanding?
37. Is there anything else you think could be done to improve the understanding of the

APPENDIX D: STUDENT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1) What do you like or enjoy about The Leader in Me?

2) What do you think could be changed about the program at our school?
3) How do you think learning about the seven habits has helped you?
    a) Has it helped you be a better student? Describe how.

    b) Has it helped you be a better friend? Describe how.

    c) Has it helped you at home? How?

4) Do you feel like you have a voice in school-based decisions? Describe how you have been involved in making decisions at school.

5) How does your teacher teach you about The Leader in Me?

6) Do you have or have you in previous classes had leadership roles?

    a) What was it?

    b) Did you enjoy that role? Why?

7) Have you had a school-wide leadership role?

    a) What was it?

    b) Did you enjoy that role? Why?

8) What is your favorite habit, why?

APPENDIX E: STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA

2016-2017 Office Referral			
Number of referrals	222		
Males	191	**Females**	31
African American males	127	**Females**	31
Hispanic males	46	**Females**	4
White males	13	**Females**	2
Multi-racial males	5	**Females**	1
Physical aggression total	79		
Non-compliance/Disrespect total	71		
Inappropriate language total	27		

2017-2018 Office Referral			
Number of referrals	101		
Males	88	**Females**	12
African American males	49	**Females**	8
Hispanic males	35	**Females**	2
White males	3	**Females**	0
Multi-racial males	1	**Females**	2
Physical aggression total	35		
Non-compliance/Disrespect total	23		
Inappropriate language total	12		

2018-2019 Office Referral			
Number of referrals	64		
Males	52	**Females**	12
African American males	25	**Females**	7
Hispanic males	18	**Females**	0
White males	6	**Females**	2
Multi-racial males	3	**Females**	2
Asian males	0	**Females**	1
Physical aggression total	34		
Non-compliance/Disrespect total	10		
Inappropriate language total	6		
Crisis level outburst total	34		

2019-2020Office Referral- Remote beginning in March until June.			
Number of referrals	52		
Males	42	**Females**	10
African American males	31	**Females**	9
Hispanic males	10	**Females**	1
White males	1	**Females**	0
Multi-racial males	0	**Females**	0
Physical aggression total	24		
Non-compliance/Disrespect total	12		
Inappropriate language total	4		
Crisis level outburst total	77		

2020-2021Office Referrals- Remote from August to March, then returned in cohorts with about half of student population attending on alternating days. In April, students came back full time with about 70% of students attending.			
Number of referrals	5		
Males	5	**Females**	0
African American males	1	**Females**	0
Hispanic males	4	**Females**	0
White males	0	**Females**	0
Multi-racial males	0	**Females**	0
Disrupting class total	1		
Weapon total	3		
Inappropriate website total	1		
Crisis level outburst total	0		