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Applying Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory to Understand the Barriers to the Implementation of Restorative Justice in Public School Organizations

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Abstract

This systematic review identifies the barriers to implementing restorative justice programs in public school organizations. Due to the novelty of restorative justice in schools, barriers often hamper the implementation process. Thus, it was necessary to identify barriers and how they can be mitigated. The PRISMA tool was utilized to examine 17 studies. The review harnessed Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucracy framework to understand the roles of street-level bureaucrats in the education bureaucracy and how the barriers align with the variables that comprise the framework. The results indicated that several barriers existed which include resources, bureaucratic discretion, and role ambiguity.

Keywords: *street-level bureaucracy, restorative justice, public schools, public organization*

School systems and communities across the United States (U.S.) have toiled with the effects of discriminatory policies, specifically racial disparities in disciplinary outcomes (Hoffman, 2014; Mizel et al., 2016; Wald & Losen, 2003). Many of the negative effects stem from zero-tolerance policies (Curtis, 2013; Hoffman, 2014; Skiba, 2014). A zero-tolerance policy can be defined as a school policy that mandates immediate long-term suspension or expulsion for the violation of specific offenses committed by an offender (NCES, 1998). Originally, such policies required immediate expulsion for possessing a firearm on a school campus but have since evolved to incorporate violations of other offenses such as toy guns or knives among others.

Eventually, it became apparent that the retributive response of zero-tolerance not only negatively affected the student accused of committing the violation, but also the school community (Haft, 1999). To right the wrongs of the punitive approaches, schools began to implement restorative justice programs (Kreger et al., 2018). Former President, Barack Obama denounced the use of zero-tolerance policies in U.S. schools. The U.S. Department of Education followed by supporting the implementation of restorative justice programs in schools to mitigate the effects of zero-tolerance policies (Payne & Welch, 2018). The federal government continued to provide ample support to schools by examining the effectiveness

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of restorative justice programs by allocating millions of dollars to evaluation efforts While hardly new internationally, the implementation of restorative justice in U.S. schools is a recent phenomenon. These programs emerged as one of the most effective ways to counter zero-tolerance policies and keep affected students enrolled by changing the approach to discipline (McCluskey et al., 2008; Song & Swearer, 2016).

The purpose of this review is to apply the theory of street-level bureaucracy to understand the barriers to the successful implementation of restorative justice programs in K-12 public schools in the U.S. The overall goal is to provide street-level bureaucrats in the education bureaucracy and all other stakeholders engaged in the implementation process with timely information about the barriers and mitigating strategies. This review of 17 studies not only serves as a compendium of scholarship on the topic of restorative justice in K-12 public schools in the U.S. but also as a guide by which the value and significance of each study may be magnified. This review is guided by the following questions:

> RQ1: At the implementation stage, what barriers affect the enactment of restorative justice practices in K-12 public school education?
>
> RQ2: Do barriers differ by school setting (elementary, middle, or high school)?
>
> RQ3: What practices mitigate the barriers to the implementation of restorative justice in K-12 public schools?

Theoretical Framework

The current review harnessed the Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucracy frameworkas a basis for understanding the roles of street-level bureaucrats in the education bureaucracy and to understand how the barriers identified align with the variables that comprise the framework. Street-Level bureaucrats "work at the intersection between citiens and government" (Chang & Brewer, 2023, p. 7). They interact with the public and make highly influential on-the-spot decisions. While the street-level bureaucracy framework has been utilized in the contexts of organizational behavior in healthcare (Tao, 1990; Thomas & Johnson, 1991), school administration (Crowson & Porter-Gehrie, 1980; Hultman, 1989), client treatment in government agencies, and the implementation of policy by school psychologists (Summers & Semrud-Clikeman, 2000), no studies could be found that applied the street-level bureaucracy framework to the context of restorative justice in the K-12 public school setting.

Bureaucratic Discretion

Lipsky (1980) contended that wide levels of discretion were necessary for street-level bureaucrats to carry out their job functions, which were characterized as complex and ambiguous. In the context of the current review, Lipsky's three arguments as to why street-level bureaucrats' discretion cannot be severely reduced present a clear picture of how their discretionary powers could possibly mitigate the effects of barriers to implementation. First, it is argued that their job functions are too complex to be circumscribed by programmatic formats. Lipsky presented the example of how policemen did not carry manuals with in-

structions on how to deal with hostile clients. However, the problem that some scholars pointed out is that biases in discretion may occur resulting in racial disparities in disciplinary outcomes.

Second, Lipsky (1980) discussed how street-level bureaucrats responded to human dimensions of situations. I advance that the ability to respond to human dimensions may contribute to the successful implementation of restorative justice programs due to the sensitive observation and judgment of bureaucrats' tasks. For example, teachers and principals who perceive the unique potential of students will likely support the implementation of such programs that provide second chances to the offender. Here the focus is on passion and flexibility. Street-level bureaucrats are expected to consider the individual potential of each student. Finally, Lipsky argues that street-level bureaucrats promote client self-worth and convince clients that their future lies in the hands of the agent. Considering this in the context of the review, I also contend that students who believe that faculty truly care about their well-being will likely buy into the program, restrict their disruptive behaviors, and encourage their peers to cease disruptive behaviors.

Conditions of Work

Another barrier expressed in the international literature on restorative justice in public schools was the problem of resources. For example, Hopkins (2002) asserted that time was a barrier to implementation, specifically time for training, support, and evaluation of practices. When examining how 18 pilot schools implemented restorative practices in Scotland, Kane et al. (2009) noted that time was also a barrier to implementing restorative justice in Kenway High School, among others. According to Lipsky (1980), "resource inadequacy is not only a theoretical consideration but a highly practical one as well" (p.29). The problem of resources is a chronic constraint on street-level bureaucrats, Lipsky argued. There are two primary issues with resources. First, providing services can be conflictual as the demand for services is often unexpected. Second, the resource problem cannot be solved in bureaucracies further complicating the complex job functions of street-level bureaucrats.

Ambiguity in Role Expectation

Lipsky (1980) presented three dimensions through which the complexity of the street-level bureaucrats' role contributes to conflict in goal ambiguity and expectations. First, disagreement in the role expectations of street-level bureaucrats is often influenced by the perceptions of the public about the roles of bureaucrats. The second dimension centers on the street-level bureaucrats' peer groups—that is, their fellow workers. Yet, they may be social or family peers. These groups often assemble to develop strategies to cope with work pressures. Lipsky states that work-peer groups directly influence role behavior. His third dimension stated that clients do not primarily or secondarily influence street-level bureaucrats' role behaviors. In addition to overt conflict, Lipsky insisted that lack of clarity also arises from role ambiguity. He concluded that individual performance and organizational direction are both affected by street-level bureaucrats' role ambiguity.

Foundational Elements of Restorative Justice in Schools

Foundational elements of restorative justice inschools include victim-offender mediation, peace-making circles, peer conferences, and peer jury. The impact of restorative practices may be significant.

Victim-Offender Mediation

In 1974, the victim-offender mediation program was first used in Kitchener, Ontario (Umbreit, 1985). In the U.S., victim-offender mediation is popular within the court system but has been expanded to restorative justice programs in schools as well. Mediation within schools is the most common instrument used to combat the effects of zero-tolerance policies by promoting peace and non-violence within schools. Because it involves a meeting between the victim and offender, the community is not involved in the process (Frias-Armentia et al., 2018). According to Varnham (2005), peer mediation can be defined as the process of systematically settling disputes with the assistance of a neutral person(s) who considers alternative solutions that accommodate the needs of the affected parties resulting in a consensual agreement. When studying an issue between a student and teacher at high school in a small high school in New Orleans, the author found that the key to addressing the problem was mediation. It was noted that mediation was the key to repairing the relationship between the student and the teacher.

Peace-Making Circle

The purpose of a peace-making circle is to bring together key stakeholders to determine how the victim is affected, develop strategies to repair the harm done, reintegrate the offender, and establish a community. Gregory et al. (2016) understood circles in terms of being proactive and described it as a structured approach where teachers initiate meaningful discussions about academic, emotional, and classroom-specific topics while students face each other in a circle. The Center for Restorative Approaches in New Orleans found peace-making circles to be very effective, as it saved students 1,800 instructional hours by amending the student-teacher relationship, where open dialogue helped to understand the root cause of conflicts.

Peer Conferences

Schools in Australia were the first to implement restorative conferences in 1994 (Morrison, 2013; Payne & Welch, 2015). Conferencing involves the victim, offender, and families. Usually, the discussions are not open to the community. In the story-telling phases of conferences, participants are allowed to present their views on the impact of the offense violation. The outcome discussion focuses on how the offender can repair the harm they have caused (Suzuki & Hayes, 2016). The overall goal of the conference is to make amends for wrongdoings (Pavelka, 2013).

Peer Jury

The peer jury or teen court consists of a group of trained peers who hear cases under the direction of a presiding juror and arrive at an optimal punishment for the offender. These

juries typically address offenses that would normally result in a misdemeanor charge. Most juries do not determine whether the offender is guilty or innocent but rather make decisions based on what occurs during the process. The sanctions passed down often include "community service, letters of apology or other written reflections, educational workshops, participation in the peer jury, mediation, tutoring, counseling, or similar interventions" (Fishman & Hack, 2012, p.157). When incorporating restorative justice into peer juries, all of those who are affected by the offender's decision is given a voice. This provides opportunities for the offender to be accountable to all victims including community members (Fishman & Hack, 2012). Thus, the peer jury can be understood as a positive interaction between all parties involved with the hope of repairing the harm done to everyone affected while also providing remediation for the offender.

Method

The current review of the literature followed the evidence-based Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)(Moher et al., 2009). The PRISMA Flowchart served as a guide for data identification and collection. The PRISMA checklist consisted of 27 items across the title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and funding categories. PRISMA is composed of four stages whereby scholars shall arrive at an optimal number of studies for a systematic review or meta-analysis.

Literature excluded from the study consisted of systematic reviews, books and book chapters, and bachelor's and master's theses. Since the implementation of restorative justice practices in schools within the U.S. is relatively recent, only literature within the years 2008-2018 was included in the study. Studies that included the key search terms were included. Studies that were outside of the U.S. were excluded as well. This was necessary as the focus of the current study targeted U.S. studies addressing barriers to implementation. Other exclusionary criteria included literature that failed to discuss implementation or those that discussed restorative justice outside of the context of the current study.

During the identification stage, 241 records are identified, where 168 records are extracted from databases, and the remaining 73 records are taken from grey literature. Next, the 241 total records are screened. This results in the exclusion of 210 records at the eligibility stage for reasons such as being a book or book chapter, being discussed as restorative justice but outside the context of schools, or being published outside of the years 2008 to 2018. During the eligibility stage, of the 31 records that remain, 14 are excluded for several reasons: they had an international focus, were literature reviews that were by-passed during the screening stage, discussed implementation vaguely or not at all, were a bachelor's or master's thesis, or a duplicate study that was not removed during the screening stage. Finally, a total of 17 records are found eligible for data extraction and synthesis.

Results

This review posed three research questions about the barriers to implementation, differing barriers, and implementation support.

Barriers for Implementation

The first research question asked At the implementation stage, what barriers affect the enactment of restorative practices in K-12 public school education?

When examining the following articles, it was apparent that the resource barriers were directly connected to each other. For example, while some authors noted that there was a lack of staff training and development at the school(s) they were studying, this often occurred due to the lack of funding that could be allocated towards those efforts, as well as time constraints placed on both administrators and staff. The theory of street-level bureaucracy outlines the problem of resources in the context of street-level bureaucrats as discussed previously. The resource constraints below are not only barriers to implementation but are the conditions of work that complicate the job functions of the street-level bureaucrat. As Lipsky (1980) stated, however, these street-level bureaucrats ultimately develop routines to help them adapt to their environment. When applying this to the school context, the key stakeholders are constrained by the barriers discussed below. To ensure the proper implementation of restorative justice, it is imperative that these bureaucrats augment their routines to adjust to the changing climate and culture of their school environment.

Staff Training and Development

When assessing the synthesis matrix for data extracted from the articles, several barriers were evident. One of the barriers to implementation identified was staff training as mentioned in seven articles (Anyon et al., 2016; Archibold, 2014; Gournic, 2018; Jain et al., 2014; Mansfield et al., 2018; McFaul, 2017; McMorris et al., 2013). A comprehensive report was presented by Jain et al. (2014) about the implementation efforts of restorative practices in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). The report indicated that implementation has occurred over the course of ten years, which has yielded enough data to show the effectiveness of restorative practices in reducing suspensions and the challenges, and strategies developed during the process. The Oakland Unified School District served 45,000 students, one-third being African American and a high percentage of low-income students. The authors noted that participants indicated that there were often power struggles between adults and youth, as many adults were reluctant to give up control. Lipsky (1980) speaks to such power struggles between street-level bureaucrats and clients in bureaucracies such that, if one group conspires to control another group, the second group will increase the difficulty of the first group exercising control even if the first group is more powerful. When discussing the third dimension of control over clients, Lipsky discusses how students are socialized to the common practices and procedures of classrooms where teachers possess total control. He goes on to state that if the client or in this case, the student, becomes deviant the bureaucrat may revoke certain privileges. With the request to implement restorative justice school-wide, control is reduced, thus potentially creating a culture shock for these street-level bureaucrats and disrupting implementation efforts throughout the school. Other barriers included limited training and capacity, inconsistency in the application of restorative justice within schools, student attitudes and misuse of restorative justice, unclear

discipline policy for serious offenses, and communication between the restorative justice coordinator and teachers.

The report by Mansfield et al. (2018) presented results from a community-engaged project that evaluated the impact of restorative justice discipline practices on discipline gaps in race, gender, and special education identification. Results were derived from a case study on Algonquin High School of Tenakomakah Region Public Schools in Central Virginia. Early evaluation results indicated that while the high school had 3,000 office referrals in a single year, after four years that number had greatly diminished to approximately 500 referrals. Further, both the number of in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions dropped significantly within the 5-year period. The authors proceed to discuss challenges to implementation and sustainability. These included teacher turnover and promotion, funding, and training for new staff. One participant, a principal, expressed concern about the implementation of restorative practices due to the resistance from teachers. This is clearly an issue of buy-in and calls into question teacher willingness to have their discretionary powers reduced. The authors concluded by discussing the success of restorative practices in the school and argued that it is a viable alternative to punitive approaches.

Funding

Four articles indicated that funding was a barrier to the implementation of restorative justice in schools (Archibold, 2014; Lustick, 2021; Mansfield et al., 2018; Monell, 2018). Due to Archibold (2014) and Mansfield et al. (2018) being discussed previously, this section will simply summarize both Lustick (2021) and Monell (2018), who stated that funding was a barrier to implementation. Lustick used data from a multi-case ethnography that sought to determine why racial disproportionality still existed in schools that implemented restorative justice. When discussing the barriers to the implementation of restorative justice in the sites, the author noted that one of the principals stated that not enough funding exists to hire multiple social workers which is why deans were increasingly hired in the school. The principal was able to hire these deans due to their lack of college degrees which means they can be offered a lower salary than would a counselor or social worker. The author suggested that it may save school funds by providing additional training for staff who were already in the school rather than hiring new counselors. The author also noted the time limitation which led to students and teachers spending more time on restorative practices as opposed to academic instruction.

Time

Nine articles listed time as a barrier to implementation (Archibold, 2014; Ashley & Burke, 2009; Gournic, 2018; Jain et al., 2014; Liberman & Katz, 2017; Lustick, 2021; McFaul, 2017; McMorris et al., 2013; Monell, 2018). The report by Liberman and Katz (2017) discussed the implementation of restorative justice programs in several middle and high schools in Rhode Island. The project focused on implementing restorative justice conferences in the schools. The implementation report examined the first year of restorative justice conferences in the schools. Several challenges to implementation were documented.

These included staff buy-in, role ambiguity, specifically having a shared understanding of the facilitator's role in the daily operations at the schools, parent engagement, and time. The authors suggested that participants in the study indicated that a slow turnaround time existed between the initial referral given to the student and the subsequent conference with parents.

Buy-In

Seven articles expressed the need for buy-in from teachers and school staff (Chicago Public Schools, 2017; Gardella, 2015; Gournic, 2018; Jain et al., 2014; Liberman & Katz, 2017; McMorris et al., 2013; Monell, 2018). As mentioned previously, the buy-in of key stakeholders into the restorative justice process in schools has been a barrier to implementation. When discussing buy-in, Liberman and Katz (2017) expressed the issue with staff buy-in at the schools specifically for employing the restorative justice conferences, as there was a struggle with viewing the conferences as an alternative to traditional discipline approaches. The authors discussed the importance of shifting the philosophy before shifting the action.

Breaking Away

The purpose of the guide published by Ashley and Burke (2009) was to contribute to the implementation of restorative justice in Illinois schools. Key concepts surrounding restorative justice were introduced, new tools were shared, and specific ways to enhance school environments were provided. One of the barriers noted was "resistan[ce] to moving from a punitive to restorative response to conflict and misbehavior. The authors state that restorative responses may be viewed as a disciplinary practice that is too lenient" (p.16). Monell (2018) argued that restorative justice in schools struggled to survive due to punitive disciplinary approaches that remain in the schools where restorative approaches are implemented. This could be the result of bureaucrats' lack of courage to withdraw from punitive approaches to discipline (McFaul, 2017).

Surveillance for Order and Control

Lustick (2021) indicated that both surveillance and the need to retain order and control were barriers to school staff implementing restorative practices in an authentic manner. According to Monell (2018), school bureaucrats' control mindset directly conflicted with the implementation of restorative justice in schools. Monell argues that a control mindset is an idea and expectation that teachers and administrators are the locus of control within a school. As discussed previously, Lipsky (1980) asserts that street-level bureaucrats do not readily relinquish control and discretion. I believe that this can be attributed to the fears of uncertainty in their augmented roles.

Fidelity

When considering validity issues, one major concern is that restorative practices are not being implemented with fidelity. For example, "Chicago Public Schools utilize restorative practices as a way to prevent suspensions, but the policy is still written so that consequences

for offenses can be exclusionary, such as suspension or expulsion" (Monell, 2018, p.53). In the article by Nussbaum (2018) the jurisprudence theory was exploited to advance a series of legal rules and standards that formalize school-based restorative justice thus establishing the practicality of policy. While Nussbaum (2018) agrees that law-based interventions were needed for the reformation of current approaches to school discipline, the author argues that past attempts at doing so by implementing restorative justice programs in schools have been largely unsuccessful. The author declared that one of the main barriers to implementation is the wide discretionary powers allocated to public and private stakeholders via legislation and court orders. Concurring with Liberman and Katz (2017), the author declared that such regulations often failed to address the need for understanding the philosophical underpinnings of such practices. The author asserts that curbing zero-tolerance policies discipline with vague philosophical underpinnings is a difficult undertake.

Role Ambiguity

Monell (2018) stated that principal role ambiguity was a barrier to implementation. Gardella (2015) insisted that restorative justice often does not align with the needs of administrators and their leadership styles. Archibold (2014) concurred stating that "many of the practices that will help schools to manage whole school change are not a part of the repertoire of typical school administrators (p.63). Many school administrators and staff do not have the skills to develop the whole-school approach to restorative justice in their schools. Nussbaum (2018) also stated that an examination of different school-based programs revealed confusion about what restorative justice means in the school setting as well as what it takes to establish the whole-school approach to restorative justice and when practices should be employed. Some schools use restorative justice to address conflicts in the classroom while others may use it as an alternative to punitive approaches to discipline. Further, role ambiguity in the school also consisted of staff not fully understanding who should be doing what in the restorative process.

Stakeholder Support

Three articles identified support and the inclusion of key stakeholders in the implementation process as key barriers (Mansfield et al., 2018; McFaul, 2017; Pavelka, 2013). Since both Mansfield et al. (2018) and McFaul (2017) have been outlined in previous sections, Pavelka (2013) will be summarized in this section. The purpose of the article was to provide best practices and policies for implementing restorative justice within schools. The author discussed two key challenges: restorative justice moving beyond zero-tolerance, and second, the degree of restorativeness. The first challenge mentioned the process of ultimately embracing stakeholders in an interactive process to repair harms done by the offender. The second challenge indicated that restorativeness often does not completely exist in schools that claim to be restorative. Several reasons were provided for this occurrence, such as a lack of inclusion of key stakeholders of victims or not fully addressing the initial conflicts. The author argued that the remedy consisted of continuous and constant use of restorative justice and adapting the set of principles associated with restorative justice as opposed to

implementing one particular approach.

School Setting

The second research question askedthe following: Do barriers differ by school setting (elementary, middle, or high school)?

Of the seventeen articles, dissertations, and reports selected for the current review, seven did not perform any type of experiment using restorative justice within schools or simply did not discuss a particular school setting. The seven articles and reports that do not meet the selection criteria to address this research question were not quantitative experimental designs utilizing restorative justice as an intervention. Of the articles that utilize quantitative research methods, seven examined elementary schools. It must be noted that six of the seven studies also incorporate other school settings (Anyon et al., 2016; Ashley & Burke, 2009; Chicago Public Schools, 2017; Gournic, 2018; Jain et al., 2014; Mansfield et al., 2018; Monell, 2018). There were no studies that focused solely on middle schools. Studies that discussed middle schools also incorporated elementary and high schools or middle and high schools. The remaining studies focus only on high schools. Studies, where the setting was middle and high schools, included the following: (Anyon et al., 2016; Chicago Public Schools, 2017; Gournic, 2018; Jain et al., 2014; Liberman & Katz, 2017; Lustick, 2021; Monell, 2018). Studies where the setting was solely high school(s) included Mansfield et al. (2018) and McFaul (2017).

One challenge to addressing this research question is the fact that the studies that focused on more than one school setting (elementary, middle, or high school) did not express whether the barriers to implementation are the same or different across schools or school settings. For example, Anyon et al. (2016) focus on all school levels in Denver Public Schools; however, it is stated that lack of training or staffing, poor alignment between a restorative philosophy and the norms or values of school personnel, and/or limited opportunities for practitioners to improve their skills are barriers to implementing restorative justice. The researchers failed to discuss whether these barriers varied by school setting. Since street-level bureaucrats of the same role typically have nearly identical job functions, it is assumed here that there is no variation in barriers across school settings.

The results indicated that the barriers found in this review varied little to none by school setting. However, these were derived from reports that did not focus on any type of school setting. This indicates that in each school setting, key stakeholders can expect to deal with the barriers discussed in this review during the implementation phase. Therefore, it is imperative that restorative justice facilitators carefully formulate the implementation plan to ensure that the whole-school approach is thoroughly designed and implemented with fidelity. More empirical studies are needed to assess other barriers that exist across school settings.

Implementation Support

The third research question asked what practices mitigate the current barriers to the implementation of restorative justice in K-12 public schools?

Each study shared methods through which these barriers can be mitigated. Many of the suggestions were derived from the authors of the studies, students, school leaders, and community members, among others. Table 3 in the Appendix presents the full details of the barriers to implementation listed by individual studies. According to Anyon et al. (2016), additional resources such as coordinators trained in restorative justice may be key to successful implementation. Archibold (2014) indicated that there is a need for best practice models to be distributed across the U.S. While the author noted the importance of partnerships, Lustick (2021) emphasized the importance of collaboration, specifically referring to the hiring of relational brokers. Several articles that were not included discussed the importance of a set of principles underlying the implementation of such programs. In fact, Pavelka (2013) suggests that "the essence of implementing the restorative model is not, necessarily, the adoption of one particular practice, but rather, a set of principles at every stage of the process" (p.17). Students who fail to realize that their actions affect the greater community continue to carry out crimes upon the exit of their high school no matter if they graduate or not. Thus, must carefully operationalize discipline to ensure the successful implementation of restorative justice practices. Discipline must not simply focus on whether students follow pre-determined rules, but instead be conceptualized in a manner through which an offender can understand how his or her misbehavior affects the school community and how he or she can grow from the experience (Payne & Welch, 2018). Taken together, these mitigating strategies provide support for schools trying to implement restorative justice or seeking direction after evaluation. The resource page located below the review implications provides further essential information on restorative justice.

Discussion

The current systematic review is pertinent in a time period where a shift exists in the climate and culture of many schools worldwide. The findings of the current review can be generalized to other areas as many of the barriers identified tend to be shared across school systems in the U.S. Addressing these barriers is no easy feat. Until there is a shared vision among stakeholders, a goal, and a means by which the vision and goal shall be executed, policymakers cannot adequately address the damage that arises from punitive approaches to school discipline. Reducing turnover, providing more support and professional development for teachers, as well as providing more resources to schools have often been on the agenda of school systems for years with minimal headway being made. Before the formulation of a plan is drafted and before the implementation of such a plan is initiated, the barriers must be combatted. It is clear from examining the street-level bureaucracy framework in this context that individuals analyzing the educational bureaucracy must look from the inside-out. This highly structured environment is not simply characterized by bureaucrats serving their own interests, but rather seeking to work in the best interest of their clients—the students.

Limitations

A limitation of the study is the lack of documents that discussed barriers to implemen-

tation, as well as documents that allow the author to extract enough data to discuss the trends in barriers by the school setting (elementary, middle, and high schools). Moreover, even though it is possible to contrast barriers to implementation by school setting, studies that focused on more than one school setting did not specify whether identified barriers are the same across schools, as well as across school settings.

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