**What is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports?[[1]](#footnote-1)**

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

**DRAFT version: 10 Aug 2014**

The purpose of this brief is to answer common questions about Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

**What is “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports?**

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is a prevention framework for establishing and sustaining effective school-wide and individual behavior supports needed to enhance academic, social, and behavioral outcomes for all students.

**Why do Schools Consider and Implement PBIS?**

Most schools consider and implement PBIS because they are interested in

* Increasing academic engagement and achievement.
* Decreasing the use of reactive management
* Improving classroom and school-wide climate and culture
* Enhancing behavior support for students with chronic problem behaviors
* Increasing capacity to integrate and implement academic and social behavior practices and systems with high accuracy.

**What is the “Prevention Logic?”**

The PBIS framework is based on a three-tiered prevention logic that has been promoted by the public health community (see following figure).

* Tier 1 or primary prevention practices are established in all classroom and school-wide settings to (a) teach and encourage expected behavior, (b) prevent problem behavior, and (c) most importantly, maximize academic achievement. Tier 1 practices are implemented for all students by all staff across all settings.
* Tier 2 or secondary prevention practices supplement Tier 1 to provide further behavior supports for students whose behaviors are at risk of failure and/or are unresponsive to Tier 1 practices. Tier 2 practices are implemented across small groups of students, usually across all school settings and by staff members who are responsible for teaching these students.
* Tier 3 or tertiary prevention practices are implemented for students who behaviors are high risk of failure and/or unresponsive to Tiers 1 and 2. Tier 3 practices are highly specialized and implemented at the individual student level by a team with behavior expertise.



**What are the Core Features or Characteristics of PBIS?**

The PBIS framework is based on the same core features (see following figure) as response-to-intervention (RTI), multi-tiered support systems (MTSS) approaches, and multi-tiered behavior (MTBF) frameworks.

**What are the PBIS Implementation Elements?**

Effective PBIS implementation is iterative, informing, continuous, and team-based. Four essential interactive elements serve as the core of the implementation process.



**How is the Capacity to Implement PBIS Established?**

Capacity for high fidelity implementation of PBIS is addressed directly and deliberately at the school, district, and state levels. PBIS action plans include activities that focused on key implementation drivers or elements summarized below.



**What does Implementation Look Like?**

When PBIS systems are implemented, leadership teams across levels (blue shaded) are responsible for development and coordination of implementation action plans (white shaded), including coaching support (yellow shaded) to ensure high fidelity of implementation. Student benefit is always the primary implementation target and evaluation criterion for success.



**What does Implementation Look Like in a School?**

When a school is implementing PBIS with fidelity, school staff members are likely to be seen engaging in behaviors that collectively would be described as a “positive school climate.”

To establish and sustain positive school climate in PBIS classroom and school-wide settings, school staff members are

* Visible and actively supervising student behaviors.
* Having more positive than negative student contacts and interactions.
* Teaching (prompting, modeling, practicing) school social skills to all students.
* Acknowledging and recognizing students for their displays of school social skills.
* Actively engaging students with effective academic instruction.
* Following small group and individual behavior intervention plans for students whose behaviors require extra behavior supports.
* Handling minor problem behaviors quickly and efficiently to prevent behavior escalations by emphasizing expected social behavior.
* Handling major problem behaviors preventively and consistently based on agreed upon school procedures and policies.
* Working as teams to collect and analyze behavior data on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis to assess implementation fidelity and student progress.

**What is the Evidence Base for PBIS?**

The supporting evidence base (see Reference list) for PBIS practices and systems has documented the following outcomes:

* Reduced major disciplinary infractions
* Improvement in aggressive behavior, concentration, prosocial behavior, and emotional regulation
* Improvements in academic achievement
* Enhanced perception of organizational health and safety
* Reductions in teacher reported bullying behavior and peer rejection
* Improved school climate.

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1. The Center is supported by a grant from the Office of Special Education Programs US Department of Education (H326S03002). Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the US Department of Education, and such endorsements should not be inferred. For more information, contact Rob Horner ([Robh@uoregon.edu](mailto:Robh@uoregon.edu)), Tim Lewis, ([lewistj@Missouri.edu](mailto:lewistj@Missouri.edu)), or George Sugai (George. [sugai@uconn.edu](mailto:sugai@uconn.edu)). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)