What is School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports?

Improving student academic and behavior outcomes is about ensuring all students have access to the most effective and accurately implemented instructional and behavioral practices and interventions possible. School-wide PBIS (or SWPBS) provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes. More importantly, SWPBS is NOT a curriculum, intervention, or practice, but IS a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

School-wide PBIS vs. "Traditional" Discipline

The discipline of students with behavior problems continues to be a major concern to most schools. Many schools use traditional ways to discipline students who exhibit problem behavior. Discipline methods that are very reactive in nature tend to focus on short-term solutions. Typically, a child is disciplined after the problem behavior occurs and little is done to teach appropriate behaviors or prevent the occurrence of further problem behaviors. Research shows that schools using these traditional types of discipline continue to experience significant increases in violence and destructive behavior as well as increases in the number of students excluded from instruction due to suspension or expulsion.

What Does School-Wide PBIS Emphasize?

In general, SWPBS emphasizes four integrated elements:
(a) data for decision making, (b) measurable outcomes supported and evaluated by data, (c) practices with evidence that these outcomes are achievable, and (d) systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices.

These four elements are guided by six important principles:
- Develop a continuum of scientifically based behavior and academic interventions and supports
- Use data to make decisions and solve problems
- Arrange the environment to prevent the development and occurrence of problem behavior
- Teach and encourage prosocial skills and behaviors
- Implement evidence-based behavioral practices with fidelity and accountability
- Screen universally and monitor student performance & progress continuously
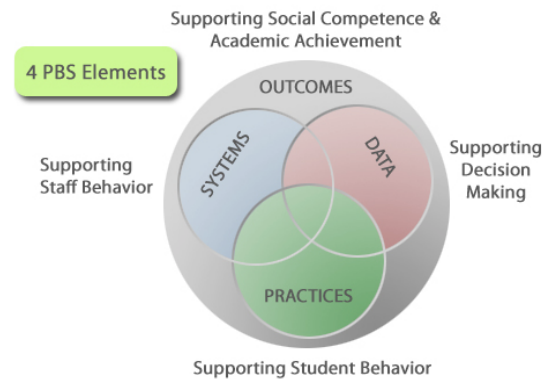
What is a Continuum of School-wide PBIS?

SWPBS schools organize their evidence-based behavioral practices and systems into an integrated collection or continuum in which students experience supports based on their behavioral responsiveness to intervention. A three-tiered prevention logic requires that all students receive supports at the universal or primary tier. If the behavior of some students is not responsive, more intensive behavioral supports are provided, in the form of a group contingency (selected or secondary tier) or a highly individualized plan (intensive or tertiary tier).
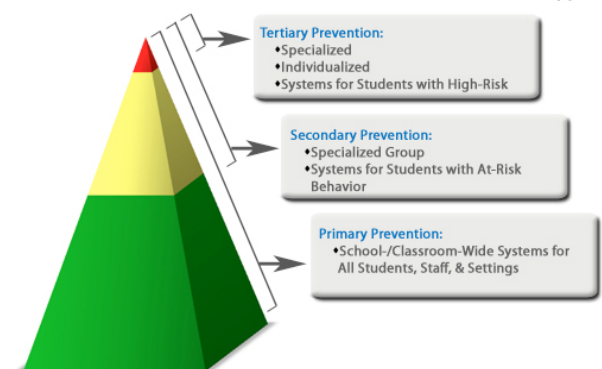

PBIS Outcomes

When implemented with fidelity, PBIS is it is evidence-based to improve the school behavioral climate. This is reflected in:

Decreases in:
- Office discipline referrals
- Suspensions and detentions
- Disruptive classroom behavior

Increases in:
- Academic performance
- On-task behavior
- Parent, student and staff satisfaction
- Staff retention