Supporting Inclusive Practices With Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Brandi Simonsen¹ and Heather Peshak George²

¹UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
²UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Setting the Stage

Schools and educators face a progressively complex landscape that includes diverse student needs and abilities, continued pressures for accountability to ensure “every student succeeds,” and unrelenting social, environmental, and most recently, public health challenges. Specifically, approximately 20% of the school-age population currently experiences a mental, emotional, social, or behavioral disorder with a majority of conditions emerging during the early years of learning (e.g., median age of onset age 6 for anxiety, 11 for behavior disorder, 13 for mood, and 15 for substance abuse disorders; Merikangas et al., 2010). Yet less than 1% of all students receive support for an Emotional or Behavioral Disorder (EBD; U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

Children and adolescents with EBD are at greatest risk for a multitude of increasingly negative outcomes (Bradley et al., 2008), and educators consistently state student problem and social behavior success (Algozzine behavior as one of their top concerns (Gable et al., 2012). Problem behavior interferes with instruction and learning, with suspensions and expulsions occurring as early as preschool (Gilliam & Shabar, 2006). Both administrators and teachers report school discipline as one of the greatest demands on their time (Miller-Richter et al., 2012) and a major factor affecting their decision to leave education (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Despite these persistent difficulties, ensuring school safety and establishing a positive and productive educational environment remains critically important for students to achieve maximum benefit from the learning experience. Inclusive schools need a comprehensive, data-driven framework to organize supports for educators and students that maximizes the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for all. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is focused on these important outcomes of students, invests in the adoption of evidence-based practices matched to student needs across a continuum of supports, commits to data-based problem-solving to guide instruction, and provides a multi-tiered framework organizing support to educators and families through high-quality implementation (Sugai et al., 2000).
More than 29,000 schools across the United States implement PBIS, and educational leaders have established efforts to support PBIS in 35 countries worldwide (Center for PBIS, 2020). The immense and growing interest in PBIS may be due, in part, to the work of the National Center on PBIS that has sustained continuous funding since 1998 (Center on PBIS, 2020). Over two decades of research and resources have significantly expanded the field from a set of intervention practices and organizational systems to a clearly defined multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) that articulates core features essential within and across whole school settings to realize positive student outcomes. In this chapter, we present a rationale for and describe critical features of PBIS, highlight empirical support, and provide practical suggestions for establishing positive school-wide and classroom cultures to maximize the impact of effective academic and behavior instruction for all students across all settings.

**Why PBIS?**

Safety and connection to the school environment can be attributed to dynamic teaching, relationship building, and positive social behavior (Goodman & George, 2020). PBIS enables schools to (a) create positive, predictable, and safe school environments and (b) improve the quality of life for students, families, and educators. In this section, we describe the logic of PBIS and explore the (a) relationship between academic and social-emotional-behavioral success, (b) limitations of traditional volatile approaches to school discipline and behavior management that are often reactive and consequence-based, (c) characteristics and features of a positive, proactive and thus, preventive approach to school-wide discipline and classroom management, and (d) application of multi-tiered support systems.

**Relationship Between Academic and Behavioral Success**

Most educators agree that good behavior and classroom management enhance good academic teaching and learning and vice versa (Algozzine et al., 2011). However, in practice, behavior management too often tends to be informal, reactive and provided on an “as-needed” basis. While academic instruction is scheduled, direct, and formalized, social skills instruction is provided for only a few students and only after documented social failures. In PBIS, the importance of teaching, monitoring, and recognizing social behavior has equal priority as teaching reading, math, science, a foreign language, or any other academic subject.

The association between academic and social behavior success is well documented. Good teaching promotes good student behavior, and good classroom management enhances student academic engagement. However, care is needed to understand the complexity of this relationship, and “causality” should not be inferred. Teaching students to read or compute math problems, for example, does not teach them how to behave more appropriately. Similarly, teaching social skills does not teach students how to read or do math. Yet, a growing body of evidence supports a strong association between academic and social behavior success (Algozzine et al., 2011, 2012; McIntosh et al., 2006, 2008; Wang & Algozzine, 2011). Students who experience preventive behavior support (social skills instruction) are more likely to be comfortable in school, academically engaged, and benefit from academic instruction. Similarly, by experiencing academic success, students are more likely to learn and display appropriate social behaviors.

Algozzine et al. (2011, p. 13) described this mutually supportive relationship between academic and social behavior success as follows:

> Viewed as outcomes, achievement and behavior are related; viewed as causes of each other, achievement and behavior are unrelated. In this context, teaching behavior as relentlessly as we
teach reading or other academic content is the ultimate act of prevention, promise, and power underlying PBS and other preventive interventions in America’s schools.

The goal of PBIS is to establish positive classroom and school-wide social cultures that maximize the impact of effective academic instruction for all students across all classroom and school settings. As such, PBIS formally and directly emphasizes the teaching of individual, classroom, and school-wide behavior expectations and skills to all students across all school contexts by all school staff members. This PBIS rationale shapes the inclusive school perspective in conjunction with the academic mission.

**Limitations of Other Approaches**

Nearly all schools are required to have disciplinary policies and handbooks that define minor and major rule violations (e.g., disruptions, noncompliance, inappropriate language, physical fighting) and delineate assigned consequences (e.g., verbal reprimands, in-school detention, out-of-school suspensions) with the intent to “punish” occurrences and inhibit future violations. If student behavior is extreme, expulsion may be recommended. These approaches have become the primary tools in the educators’ disciplinary toolbox. Some students respond to these approaches because they have the experience and skills to anticipate the potential consequences (inhibiting). In some cases, one experience of the consequence may be enough to stop future displays of the problem behavior.

Most professionals agree that this reactive (“wait to fail” or “respond after a problem”) approach has limitations. First, the behavior of a proportion of the school population is not responsive to traditional discipline systems. Instead of exploring alternatives, schools typically deliver more frequent or intense versions of the same punitive disciplinary consequences to try to “punish harder.” The result is students with high numbers of office discipline referrals, suspensions, and exclusionary consequences who continue to engage in rule-violating behavior. Second, when schools rely on reactive, consequence-oriented practices, they create a negative school climate, which can encourage lower behavioral expectations, higher rates of problem behavior, and more pessimistic teacher perceptions (Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013). Third, when adults have high rates of reactive and aversive interactions with students, the quality of student—adult relationships is lessened. Fourth, relying on reactive systems results in less attention on preventive approaches, in which students are taught or re-taught what to do and recognized for what they do correctly. Finally, the more time students spend within the disciplinary system, the less time they have access to and are engaged in successful academic activities. In contrast, PBIS strives to promote high rates of preventive and positive interactions between students such that positive relationships are established, the impact of corrective procedures is increased, and the academic mission of the school is supported.

**Shifting Focus to Positive, Preventative, and Proactive Support**

PBIS provides a framework for shifting emphasis from a reactive to proactive approach to school discipline and classroom management. Generally, “proactive” refers to practices that are positive and preventive—that is, catching students before they display problem behavior by recognizing what they are doing appropriately. PBIS adopts the definitions and characteristics of prevention science that originated from the early public health and disease control communities (Biglan, 1995; Caplan, 1964; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Mayer, 1995; Sugai & Horner, 2008, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). Preventative practices and systems are intended to accomplish two important objectives: (a) reduce the occurrence of new cases of a problem (incidence) and (b) reduce the frequency, intensity, and complexity of existing problems (prevalence).
PBIS employs a behavior analytic perspective that focuses on four actions. First, staff members teach social skills to high levels of accuracy and fluency, emphasize multiple examples, provide opportunities to practice, and provide feedback across the many contexts in which these skills are required for academic and social success. Second, staff members explicitly teach all students the same prosocial behavior expectations, such that students are more likely to expect, prompt, and recognize expected social behavior from each other. Third, staff members arrange teaching and learning environments to remove triggers for problem behavior and add prompts for prosocial behaviors (antecedent manipulations). Finally, staff members remove activities that maintain problem behavior and add activities that promote prosocial behavior.

**What is PBIS?**

PBIS is a multi-tiered prevention framework grounded in the principles and practices of behavioral (Cooper et al., 2020; Skinner, 1953), prevention (Biglan, 1995, 2015), and implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005) sciences. This section defines PBIS and its critical features.

**Multi-Tiered Prevention Framework**

Based on decades of research in public health (Caplan, 1964), multi-tiered prevention frameworks emphasize a continuum of preventative supports designed to reduce and mitigate risk. Typically, this continuum is operationalized in three tiers of prevention: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

1. **Tier 1: Primary prevention.** All members of a population receive universal intervention to reduce the likelihood of individuals developing challenges. For example, universal handwashing and annual vaccination are universal interventions to decrease the number of people who contract influenza.

2. **Tier 2: Secondary prevention.** Individuals who are at elevated risk or beginning to experience challenges receive targeted intervention to prevent developing and worsening of challenges. For example, individuals over 65 may receive high-dose vaccines, and individuals exposed to influenza may receive anti-viral medications to prevent complications.

3. **Tier 3: Tertiary prevention.** Individuals at high risk or already experiencing chronic or significant challenges receive intensive intervention to reduce severity and impact. For example, individuals experiencing complications from influenza may receive more intensive and/or individualized medical interventions.

In recent decades, educators have adopted prevention frameworks to organize social, emotional, behavioral, and academic supports into multiple tiers of intervention (Walker et al., 1996). Like other multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) frameworks (see Chapter 6), PBIS emphasizes systems of evidence-based and culturally-responsive practices that are adapted and aligned with students’ needs and responsiveness-to-intervention (Bradley et al., 2002, 2007; Fairbanks et al., 2007; Sugai & Horner, 2002, 2009). The MTSS approach is reflected in PBIS through seven key implementation principles.

1. **Emphasize cultural relevance and equity.** Educators consider cultural relevance when making instructional and intervention decisions. PBIS schools strive to collect and monitor culturally valid data, implement culturally relevant evidence-based practices, and invest in culturally knowledgeable systems to promote culturally equitable student outcomes.

2. **Universally screen.** In PBIS schools, educators screen students for social, emotional, behavioral, and/or academic risk and strengths. Educators may administer standardized or locally
developed screening procedures on a monthly, quarterly, or semesterly basis to identify students who might require additional supports to benefit from core academic instruction and school-wide positive behavior support practices.

3. **Monitor progress.** Educators monitor fidelity and outcome data to assess implementation outcomes and identify necessary adjustments in implementation. For example, educators may administer daily, weekly, or monthly curriculum-based academic and/or social behavior measures to assess student benefit and responsiveness to a lesson or intervention (e.g., quiz, rating scale, probe).

4. **Implement evidence-based and culturally responsive practices with fidelity.** Schools implementing PBIS select, implement, monitor, adjust, and enhance the implementation of evidence-based and culturally responsive practices. Thus, in addition to monitoring student responsiveness to interventions, PBIS schools formally examine the accuracy and fluency of the intervention implementation.

5. **Organize a continuum of practices.** PBIS schools invest in the smallest number of evidence-based and culturally responsive practices that can be integrated into a continuum or tiered system. This continuum is based on the three-tiered public health prevention logic in which (a) Tier 1 provides universal support for all students and staff across all settings, (b) Tier 2 delivers more targeted support for students whose behaviors are unresponsive to Tier 1 practices, and (c) Tier 3 specifies intensive support for students whose behaviors are unresponsive to Tier 1 and 2 practices.

6. **Use data-based decision making.** In PBIS schools, educators use data to make instructional and intervention decisions, including whether (a) goals and outcomes are relevant, equitable, and challenging; (b) practices are evidence-based, culturally relevant, aligned with goals and outcomes, and implemented with fidelity; (c) students are responding to practices or require additional support to be successful; and (d) systems are in place to maximize implementation fidelity and relevance.

7. **Engage in team-based problem-solving.** In PBIS schools, representative leadership teams review data, identify implementation challenges or elevated needs, precisely document the identified challenges, and develop an action plan to improve implementation and outcomes. Thus, leadership team members have the capacity and opportunity to guide the implementation of the PBIS framework.

**Critical Features of PBIS**

Schools implementing PBIS center their work in equity, identify locally meaningful outcomes, collect and use data to drive decisions, implement evidence-based and culturally relevant practices, and invest in systems to support sustained high-fidelity, equitable implementation. Together, these four critical features (outcomes, data, practices, and systems), centered in equity, operationally define the PBIS framework.

**Outcomes**

School leadership teams determine the outcomes they plan to achieve through the implementation of PBIS (e.g., decreased rates of office referrals or suspensions, increased percentage of students meeting or exceeding benchmarks on state-wide tests, decreased disproportionately in disciplinary consequences) based on available school data and identified need. PBIS schools strive to ensure outcomes are relevant to all (equitable), written objectively (observable), and based on data (measurable). Then, schools (a) use data to monitor progress toward outcomes, (b) install and implement practices that align with selected outcomes, and (c) invest in systems to support educators in implementing practices with fidelity to maximize the likelihood of achieving outcomes for all students.
Data

As a prevention framework, PBIS emphasizes the importance of data in establishing outcomes; selecting, monitoring, and adjusting practice implementation; ensuring equitable access and benefit; and monitoring systems fidelity and capacity to support sustainability and scalability. Thus, PBIS schools collect relevant data, use data to drive decisions, focus on implementation fidelity, and communicate data.

Collect Relevant Student Data

In PBIS schools, educators collect data on (a) students’ social, emotional, behavioral, academic, and other relevant outcomes and (b) implementation fidelity of key practices and systems. For example, schools may collect data to screen using a universal social, emotional, or behavioral screener (see Lane et al., 2020), or schools may use an informal process to review extant data (e.g., attendance, behavioral referrals, grades, nurse visits, credits earned in secondary schools) and/or teacher nominations to identify students who may benefit from additional support. Schools may also use similar formal or informal data sources to monitor progress throughout the year. In addition to identifying and collecting relevant data, it is critical that schools invest in routines that enable them to use data to inform decisions effectively.

Focus on Implementation Fidelity

Fidelity is an essential system requirement of PBIS. Implementation fidelity refers to the accuracy and fluency with which educators implement PBIS practices and systems. School leadership teams may assess fidelity in several ways. First, PBIS school leadership teams develop action plans to guide implementation, and they may use action plans to self-monitor features of their plan (e.g., what activities were completed, by whom, by when, using what resources). Second, leadership teams may use standardized tools, such as the Team Implementation Checklist (Sugai et al., 2014), to self-assess their progress toward implementation. In addition, leadership teams may gather the perspectives of all staff members using the Self-Assessment Survey (Sugai et al., 2009). Third, school leadership teams should also monitor fidelity using a validated fidelity tool, like the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (Algozzine et al., 2014) or Benchmarks of Quality (Kincaid et al., 2010). Taken together, information from these fidelity tools provides school leadership team members with actionable information to modify and enhance their implementation of the PBIS framework.

Use Data to Drive Decisions

PBIS implementation relies on data-driven decision making (see Chapter 8) to improve the processes of selecting, implementing, and evaluating practices; monitoring student progress and responsiveness; assessing implementation fidelity; and integrating other related practices and initiatives (e.g., incorporating evidence-based social skills program within a PBIS framework). An important consideration is establishing the capacity for efficient and effective data management (Algozzine et al., 2010; Irvin et al., 2004, 2006; Simonsen & Sugai, 2007). The development and use of PBIS data management systems emphasize (a) specification of the smallest number of most important questions; (b) measurable, mutually exclusive, and comprehensive definition of data to be collected; (c) tools for easy input, analysis, output, and display of data; (d) schedule for regular data review and decision making; (e) formal teaming organization and process for data utilization and decision making; and (f) more specialized data supports for Tier 2 and 3 practices and systems. PBISApps (www.pbisapps.org) is one example of a data management system that allows schools to enter, monitor, and evaluate their fidelity and outcome data. This free application provides easy access to entering fidelity data and conducting school climate surveys. For a small licensing fee, schools can also use the School Wide Information System (within PBISApps) to enter and manage office
discipline referrals (Tier 1), check-in/check-out point card data (Tier 2), and individualized student data (Tier 3).

As a critical component of an efficient and effective data management system, school leadership teams build effective routines to review data regularly, use data to identify and define problems of practice, develop data-informed action plans, and monitor implementation fidelity and outcomes of the plan. One potentially effective approach is Team Initiated Problem Solving (TIPS; Horner et al., 2015), which provides school leadership teams with a structure for effective team meetings and a data-driven problem-solving process (see Chapter 8).

Communicate Data
Educators need relevant, timely, and meaningful information for ongoing problem-solving and to improve the decision making of PBIS implementation, evaluation, progress monitoring, continuous improvement, and sustainability (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). While it is important for a school team to have an evaluation plan with timelines identified for collecting, reviewing, and disseminating data, it is equally important that a communication plan is established to maintain stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders such as the individuals supporting the implementation practices (e.g., administrators, teachers) as well as the recipients of those practices (e.g., students, family) need to be informed of the impact these practices are making to gain and sustain buy-in.

There are many methods of communication that can build the visibility necessary to sustain implementation, such as sharing announcements at faculty meetings, posting information in the staff lounge, weekly e-mail updates, newsletters, and presentations, and distributing resources on a school website. Using and regularly sharing data assists a team in building and sustaining active involvement across all identified stakeholders while creating an effective, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for all students.

Practices
PBIS emphasizes the careful selection and integration of evidence-based practices into a continuum of effective behavior support. Practices are the interventions, instructional activities, programs, curricula, and other resources provided to support students (Horner et al., 2009). Within a PBIS framework, educators prioritize selecting and implementing practices that have the following important characteristics to enhance outcomes for all students (Sugai et al., 2010).

Evidence-Based
Once school leadership team members select a potential practice, they evaluate relevant information to determine whether a practice will deliver the intended outcome. They give priority to empirically derived quantitative evidence to determine the strength of the relationship between the practice and the intended outcome. They may also consider other sources of evidence, including quasi-experimental research, descriptive studies, qualitative examinations, implementer testimonials and case studies, etc. In addition to examining the available evidence, school teams should develop a plan to collect local data to monitor the effectiveness of the practice in order to achieve the desired outcome.

Culturally Relevant
Practices are designed for specific purposes and tested under controlled conditions. PBIS teams examine the extent to which the practice aligns with the characteristics of their classrooms and schools, including students (e.g., developmental levels, language, disabilities, prior learning history), settings (e.g., classroom vs. non-classroom, elementary vs. high school, large group vs. small group), school staff (e.g., experience, language, prior learning history, specializations), community (e.g., urban vs. rural, language, SES, culture), and family (e.g., SES, race/ethnicity, learning history; Fallon et al., 2012; Sugai et al., 2012;
Vincent et al., 2011). School leadership teams may use the Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide (Leverson et al., 2019) to consider and improve the cultural responsiveness of their school’s practices.

Adaptable
The degree and ease with which a practice can be adapted are important for maximizing its relevance and effectiveness: (a) relevance with respect to the factors described above (student, settings, school staff, community, and family) and (b) effectiveness with respect to maintaining and/or increasing the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes. For example, the core features of specific praise (describing the behavior, providing positive feedback) can be implemented with whole groups, small groups, or individual students; said in simple or complex language; delivered publicly, privately, or in writing; provided during in-person, hybrid, or remote learning modes; and delivered in isolation or paired with a variety of other acknowledgment approaches (e.g., token systems). Thus, the practice “specific praise” is highly adaptable and can be relevant and effective with a variety of learners in a variety of contexts.

Feasible
Successful implementation of evidence-based practice is linked to the ease with which the practice can be (a) obtained (availability, cost, etc.), (b) installed where it will be used, (c) implemented with accuracy and fluency by typical implementers, (d) adapted based on local characteristics, (d) implemented in a sustained manner with accuracy, (e) supported by developers and trainers of the practice, and (f) evaluated so that progress can be determined. Thus, team members consider existing resources and supports when considering the feasibility of practices for their contexts.

Inclusive
An essential feature of an integrated continuum of support is that practices are considered from an inclusive perspective in which selection of more specialized supports is cumulative-intensive supports are added to supplement, rather than replace, existing supports. For example, students whose behavior is not responsive to the school-wide teaching of social skill expectations may participate in additional small group social skills practice and extra performance feedback but would continue to participate in whole-school instruction, practice, recognition, and booster activities.

Relevant
Rather than prioritizing packages or programs, schools focus on practices that appropriate and that highlight core features of establishing a positive and preventative approach to school-wide behavior support. Specifically, in Tier 1, educators establish a common approach to discipline; develop predictable routines for common settings (e.g., classroom, cafeteria, hallway); select, define, and explicitly teach a small number of positively stated expectations within those routines; prompt, model, and monitor expected behavior; actively engage students in learning and other school activities, develop a school-wide approach to acknowledge student behavior; implement a consistent, equitable, and instructionally-focused approach to respond to behavioral errors; and use data to monitor and adjust implementation.

In Tier 2, educators are more targeted with the implementation of these core features based on common student needs. For example, educators may use a check-in/check-out (CICO) approach to increase the frequency with which students receive reminders, feedback, and acknowledgment for behavior throughout the day (Crone et al., 2010). In addition, educators may use smaller groups to teach critical social, emotional, and behavioral skills for students who need targeted instruction (Crone et al., 2015). Finally, in Tier 3, educators individualize and intensify supports by conducting a functional-behavioral assessment, developing an individualized positive behavior support plan, and coordinating more complex supports with a wraparound or person-centered approach (https://nwi.pdx.edu/wraparound-basics/). Within each tier, implementation of core practice features is team-driven, data-driven, and supported by systems.
To move evidence-based practices from research to practice settings, implementers need supports that enable effective, efficient, and relevant implementation. The PBIS framework formalizes implementation by adopting system-level working structures, developed from the science of implementation and technical assistance (Fixsen et al., 2005, 2013; McIntosh et al., 2009, 2010; Simonsen et al., 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2006; Sugai et al., 2000, 2008, 2010). These structures, or system features, are critical to effective, sustained, and scaled PBIS implementation.

Critical Features

The PBIS Implementation Blueprint (Center on PBIS, 2015) defines critical systems features for state, district, and school-level implementation. Chapter 20 describes key systems features, sometimes described as implementation drivers (Fixsen et al., 2005), at the district level. This section highlights relevant systems features for school-wide implementation, including school leadership teams, training, coaching, evaluation, local implementation demonstrations, and coordination with district-level organizational supports.

Establish School Leadership Teams

A key system structure of SWPBIS is coordinated implementation through a team approach (Mathews et al., 2014). School leadership team members are representative of the implementation community (e.g., students, families, grade-level or departmental teachers, school administrators, specialists, paraprofessionals, non-classified staff; Sugai et al., 2012; 2010). To ensure the PBIS team prioritizes equity and considers cultural and contextual relevance, it is critical to include multiple family members and active student voices that represent the broader school community. In addition, active administrator participation is important to ensure leadership teams have the authority to make decisions, including those that require resources (e.g., professional development time, administrative support for data management).

The school leadership team organizes implementation at the school-wide (Tier 1) level to support all students. Overall, teams are intended to ensure student success with PBIS as well as support the educators in implementing the PBIS practices reliably. Depending on the size of the school, specific needs, and resources available, these teams are typically comprised of five to seven members (Goodman & George, 2020). Contextual fit is critical, so the function of the team, the types of data reviewed, and the resources available determine the number of PBIS teams formed in a school. For example, schools may have both a school-wide leadership team that coordinates Tier 1 PBIS and additional student support team(s) that coordinate targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) supports. However, some schools with limited personnel may have only one PBIS team that includes all the tiers of support. Other schools may be fluent in the PBIS process, including data-based decision-making and have found one team to be more efficient in problem-solving both school-wide and individual student data as described in Chapter 8. Regardless of team structure within a district or school level, key individuals with the knowledge, experience and skills needed to implement planned PBIS activities share unique responsibilities (as described in Chapter 20; McIntosh et al., 2020) and are essential in (a) organizing school-wide supports; (b) identifying, prioritizing, delivering, and monitoring intervention effectiveness; and (c) providing ongoing communication to all relevant stakeholders (e.g., administrators, educators, students, families, community members).

Provide District-Supported Training

The school leadership team members participate in training and receive ongoing support from district-level PBIS trainers and coordinators. To install school-level behavioral capacity and
ownership of PBIS implementation, district teams provide professional development supports directly to school leadership teams (Lewis et al., 2010). If the district has not developed sufficient training capacity, school teams may participate in training alongside a district team. In this case, both school and district teams may engage state-level trainers or outside experts to build district and school capacity simultaneously. Team training occurs regularly during the first 2 to 3 years of PBIS adoption and initial implementation. During this time, trainers focus on helping school leadership teams (a) establish effective teaming routines, (b) invest in data systems, and (c) develop and implement plans addressing the improvement of whole-school social culture (universal Tier 1). Subsequently, trainers support school teams during their initial implementation and help them prioritize systems that will enable them to sustain implementation after training.

**Support School-Based Coaching**

To build the link between training and implementation, coaching support accompanies school leadership team training. School leadership teams identify two or more members of the team to act as school-based coaches. In selecting coaches, the leadership team should consider individuals who have opportunities to engage in coaching, have established an effective relationship with administrators and school staff, have good communication and problem-solving skills, and have an interest and background in social behavior content. By sharing the coaching role, members of the school leadership team build local capacity. Because two or more members develop coaching expertise, the team is better able to sustain their implementation efforts if one coach shifts roles or leaves the school. When schools initially install PBIS, the district PBIS team also provides training and support to school-based coaches and maintains active relationships by conducting regular district-wide coaching meetings.

Coaching is not a stand-alone job. Instead, school-based coaching is a set of functions typically performed within the context of other school-based roles (e.g., school psychologist, specialist). Coaching functions include (a) providing reminders about team responsibilities (e.g., regular meeting, data review), (b) connecting with district trainers when questions or issues arise, (c) facilitating communications between school and district teams, (d) assisting school administrators in coordinating team activities, and (e) encouraging and reinforcing progress and accomplishments.

Thus, with district support and school-based coaching, school leadership teams develop data-based action plans that guide selection and facilitate the implementation of PBIS systems and practices. In addition, school leadership teams consider how to integrate all evidence-based and culturally relevant social, emotional, and behavioral initiatives, programs, and interventions within the PBIS framework. Because of the close association between academic and behavioral success, PBIS leadership teams work closely with academic teams. Alternately, PBIS and academic leadership teams may merge within an integrated-MTSS leadership team (www.mtss.org).

**Support Local Implementation Demonstrations**

District leadership teams support and recognize schools that demonstrate successful student outcomes and implementation fidelity as local demonstrations for other schools. These schools have data across multiple years documenting improved student outcomes, high implementation accuracy and fluency at school and classroom levels, school leadership teaming, administrative participation, and school-based behavioral expertise. Similarly, school leadership teams may recognize exemplary classroom implementation to celebrate and share successes with other educators.

Exemplar schools and classrooms also demonstrate the capacity to adapt to new conditions over time. This capacity, called “continuous regeneration,” refers to the school’s ability to (a) adjust a practice to enhance outcomes, (b) streamline support components when successful outcomes are achieved and sustainability is targeted, (c) eliminate and/or combine practices that have similar outcome objectives, (d) use local data to determine if new issues or needs require attention, and (e)
enhance supports if implementation accuracy and/or fluency are not satisfactory (Sugai et al., 2010). For example, during the global pandemic in 2020, exemplary schools leveraged established systems to pivot practices into the new contexts of remote or hybrid learning modes. Educators taught expectations in the context of remote platforms (Center on PBIS, March 2020); implemented targeted interventions, like check-in/check-out, remotely (Center on PBIS, May 2020); and partnered with families to support student behavior at home (Center on PBIS & Center for Parent Information and Resources, March 2020).

Provide District Organizational Supports

School leadership teams benefit when districts invest in executive teaming functions or organizational supports, such as stakeholder engagement, funding and alignment, policy, and workforce capacity, which promote sustained implementation at the school level. Stakeholder engagement refers to the extent to which district leadership and other key stakeholder groups (e.g., parents, community mental health, local business associations) are engaging in bi-directional communication to shape the PBIS implementation effort at the district and school levels. Superintendents, assistant and associate superintendents, division and department heads, school board members, parent support groups, and city government officials should have regular opportunities to receive information and provide feedback on implementation efforts and outcomes and for comment. These informational and advisement opportunities occur formally through reports during meetings, regularly distributed newsletters and news flashes, the invitation to leadership meetings and school events, and informally through occasional communications and meetings. Having an informed and involved leadership provides additional support for the efforts of district and school PBIS implementation teams.

When schools or districts initiate PBIS, they often secure funding from multiple, short-term sources, such as grants (Horner et al., 2014). However, in order to support sustained and high-quality PBIS implementation within and across schools, successful districts invest in funding sources that are stable line items in district and school budgets and likely to be recurring and refunded over a 3 to 5-year interval. This commitment brings a high return on investment: for every $1 spent on PBIS, Swain-Bradway et al. (2017) estimated that schools save approximately $105 by preventing suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts. Further, districts can braid funding streams and/or align initiatives with common objectives to increase their capacity to support all students’ social, emotional, behavioral, and academic performance and continuous improvement and growth.

Policy supports emphasize institutionalizing effective and relevant practices, programs, and systems, which in turn enhance decision making when personnel make transitions, consider new initiatives and priorities, and introduce new practices. In addition, successful and sustained PBIS implementation at the school level is dependent on the presence of expert behavioral capacity at the district level. This capacity is shared across individuals to minimize the impact of staff turnover and transition and is located across disciplines, departments, and programs to avoid “silo-ing” expertise, personnel, and practices. Beyond district expertise, schools develop workforce capacity by (a) engaging in training and coaching activities and (b) incorporating PBIS into their hiring practices, such that all educators have the skills to effectively support all students.

Considerations for Systems to Support Implementation

Systems enable educators to sustain and scale evidence-based and culturally relevant practices within a PBIS framework. Implementation is a dynamic, multi-stage process (Fixsen et al., 2005; McIntosh et al., 2010; Sugai et al., 2010). Though the implementation is not linear, school teams typically move through the following phases.

- Exploration: specification of the need and search for possible solutions;
- Installation: preparation of implementation personnel and setting;
Initial implementation: pilot or trial implementation with supports to determine if full implementation is indicated and possible; and,

Full implementation: accurate and fluent implementation with supports across the setting or context in which the need exists.

These phases are important for guiding decisions about coordination, resources, training, and other implementation focus areas.

The main message is that school implementers need systems (structures, routines, and tools) that maximize the impact of evidence-based practices. One-time, didactic professional development activities may be useful for initial awareness and knowledge; however, they are insufficient to achieve maximum practice uptake, sustained use, continuous regeneration, and student outcomes.

What Do We Know Based on Research?

These critical features of PBIS are grounded in an extensive literature base across the continuum of support (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3). This next section describes (a) the evidence base of PBIS within the multi-tiered framework and (b) specific factors that support schools in maximizing and sustaining outcomes that lead to effective inclusive practices.

What Is the Evidence-Base Supporting PBIS?

Spanning over two decades, substantial research has demonstrated the positive effects of PBIS implementation on critical student, staff, and school outcomes to improve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes when implemented with fidelity. These effects have ranged from larger systems (e.g., school-wide teaching of expectations, whole school positive reinforcement, district teaming practices) to classrooms (e.g., providing explicit instruction in classroom routines and expectations) to the individual student level (e.g., function-based support, continuous progress monitoring, social skills instruction).

Evidence Supporting Tier 1

Tier 1 (Universal) supports are systematically and proactively delivered to all students and emphasize defining prosocial skills and behavior expectations, teaching, and steadily acknowledging appropriate student behavior across classroom and school settings (Simonsen et al., 2012). Providing Tier 1 supports paves the way to invest in the prevention of future problem behavior and includes the following key practices: (a) identifying behavior expectations, (b) teaching behavior expectations, (c) monitoring student behavior, (d) reinforcing behavior expectations, and (e) correcting behavior errors (Goodman & George, 2020). When implemented with fidelity, Tier 1 PBIS effectively meets the needs of 80% or more of the students within a school and thereby allows time and resources to address students with more intensive support needs (George et al., 2009).

Researchers have demonstrated that when educators implement Tier 1 PBIS practices school-wide and with fidelity, student and teacher outcomes improve. This compelling body of research documents the effectiveness of PBIS in reducing reactive and exclusionary discipline practices, including (a) office discipline referrals (Bradshaw et al., 2010, 2012; Horner et al., 2009) and (b) suspensions (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Gage et al., 2018, 2019). In addition, students report fewer instances of (c) bullying behaviors and peer rejection (Ross & Horner, 2009; Waasdorp et al., 2012) and (d) drug and alcohol abuse (Bradshaw et al., 2012, 2015). Further, when PBIS is implemented with fidelity, students increase: (e) academic achievement (Algozzine et al., 2012;
Bradshaw et al., 2010; Freeman et al., 2016; Gage et al., 2017, 2019; Horner et al., 2009; McIntosh et al., 2011) and (f) attendance (Freeman et al., 2016). Effective implementation of SWPBIS has also led to improvements in (g) school organizational health (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Bradshaw, Koth et al., 2009; Flannery et al., 2014), (h) perceptions of school safety (Horner et al., 2009), (i) perception of teacher efficacy and reported well-being (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012; Ross et al., 2012), and (j) social-emotional skills of students (Bradshaw et al., 2012).

Evidence Supporting Tier 2

Educators implement tier 2 (targeted) practices to support students who have not been responsive to Tier 1 and/or demonstrate at-risk behaviors (e.g., frequent classroom disruptions). Tier 2 practices are delivered quickly with minimal resources to increase the fluency of demonstrating expected, pro-social behaviors. Providing Tier 2 PBIS supports involves the following key steps: identify students, implement targeted evidence-based and culturally relevant practices, and monitor progress (Goodman & George, 2020). Tier 2 practices typically include an increase in: (a) instruction and practice with self-regulation and social skills, (b) adult supervision, (c) opportunity for positive reinforcement, (d) pre-corrections, (e) focus on the possible function of problem behavior, and (f) access to academic supports (Center on PBIS, 2020). When implemented with fidelity, Tier 2 PBIS effectively meets the needs of 5–15% of students and requires additional teaching and practice opportunities to increase their likelihood of success (Crone et al., 2015; Fairbanks et al., 2007; Yong & Cheney, 2013).

Research has demonstrated that when Tier 2 practices are anchored in the universal Tier 1 practices (e.g., school-wide expectations), they can be readily modified to meet individual student needs with efficiency (McDaniel et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2011). Using data from a randomized controlled effectiveness trial, Bradshaw et al. (2015) found the effects of SWPBIS on student outcomes tend to be greatest among at-risk and high-risk children. Specific empirical studies have supported a variety of Tier 2 practices with Check-in/Check-out (CICO; Crone et al., 2010) as being one of the most widely implemented Tier 2 interventions derived from single-case research documenting functional relations between the implementation of CICO and reduced problem behavior (Campbell & Anderson, 2008; Hawken et al., 2014; Maggin et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2017; Simonsen et al., 2011; Wolfe et al., 2016). Similarly, when implemented with fidelity, First Step to Success demonstrated a functional relationship to reducing problem behavior (e.g., Golly et al., 1998; Walker et al., 2009; Sprague & Perkins, 2009) and Check and Connect has been shown to reduce student dropout (Anderson et al., 2004; Lehr et al., 2003; Sinclair et al., 1998). While this list is not exhaustive, other Tier 2 evidence-based practices include practices such as social skills instruction (e.g., Elliott & Gresham, 2013; Lane et al., 2003; Miller et al., 2011); Check, Connect, and Expect (Cheney et al., 2009); and self-management (Bruhn et al., 2015).

Evidence Supporting Tier 3

Tier 3 (Intensive) supports focus on the development of comprehensive, individualized, function-based student support plans to address intensive and challenging student unwanted behaviors (Strickland-Cohen & Horner, 2015). These interventions integrate an extensive history that is well articulated in ABA (e.g., Cooper et al., 2020; Dunlap, 2006; Horner & Sugai, 2015) and are designed to target the 3–5% of students with the highest support needs. Similar to the previous tiers described, both Tier 3 systems and practices depend on strong foundational Tier 1 and 2 systems, which can lessen the number of students actually requiring more intensive supports and interventions can be delivered efficiently and effectively to enhance a full continuum of supports (McIntosh et al., 2009). Key practices in Tier 3 include: (a) function-based assessments (Dunlap et al., 2010; O’Neill, et al., 2015), (b) wraparound...
systems of supports (Eber et al., 2011; Scott & Eber, 2003), including person-centered planning (Kincaid & Fox, 2002; Smith-Bird & Turnbull, 2005) with (c) consideration of the cultural and contextual fit (Center on PBIS, 2020) to design a behavior support plan.

The research supporting the effectiveness of functional behavioral assessment (FBA), the design of individualized behavioral interventions, and the active use of data in the implementation of behavior support is well documented in the literature (e.g., Carr et al., 1999) and research has demonstrated that interventions guided by FBAs and implemented with fidelity result directly in reducing problem behavior and improving desired outcomes (e.g., Burke et al., 2003; Crone et al., 2007; Ervin et al., 2000; Fairbanks et al., 2007; Ingram et al., 2005; Kern et al., 2004; Lucyshyn et al., 2007; Newcomer & Lewis, 2004; Preciado et al., 2009). Building upon the integration of the three tiers within a continuum of supports, Lewis (2009) demonstrated that implementing Tier 1 with fidelity improved academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for students needing Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.

**What Specific Factors Support Schools in Maximizing and Sustaining Outcomes?**

Schools invest a tremendous amount of time, personnel, and money in evidence-based practices in order to achieve intended outcomes. Thus, investing in supports to maximize and sustain these outcomes is in the best interest of schools. Sustainability is the durable implementation of a practice at a level of fidelity that continues to produce valued outcomes (McIntosh et al., 2009). In other words, to maintain positive outcomes, the goal is implementing PBIS (or any large-scale framework for reform or change) with a high degree of fidelity over time (McIntosh et al., 2018). This section explores critical factors that promote and maximize sustained positive outcomes: district-wide support, an active school leadership team that shares data with faculty, implementation fidelity, and classroom-level implementation (see Chapter 20).

**District-Wide Support**

McIntosh et al. (2013) identified factors related to the sustainability of school-wide PBIS implementation, including two district-level factors: district priority and capacity building. Expanding on this finding from a national sample of over 860 schools implementing PBIS, McIntosh et al. (2014) found that to support the sustained implementation of PBIS at the school level, districts (a) built PBIS into written policy, (b) included PBIS competencies into hiring criteria, and (c) developed district coaching capacity. Recent research has demonstrated that district variables are significant predictors of the implementation and sustainability of school practices (George et al., 2018; McIntosh et al., 2018) and specific coaching activities have been most related to sustained implementation (Bastable et al., 2020). High-quality PBIS implementation within and across schools is coordinated by a district leadership team, comprised of district-level coordinators, supervisors, and leaders of projects and programs related to supporting positive and preventive school cultures for all students (Bradshaw et al., 2012; George & Kincaid, 2008; George et al., 2018; Sugai et al., 2012). Further, leadership teams with identified roles and the authority to make decisions have been successful in securing political and fiscal support that aid sustainability critical for large scale-up of PBIS (Horner et al., 2014).

**Active School Leadership Team that Shares Data with Faculty**

In addition to district supports, McIntosh et al. (2014) found that school team actions, especially the frequency of communicating and sharing data school-wide, were statistically related to sustainability. The school team’s use of data included activities such as (a) school team/staff skill, (b) regular team
meetings, (c) data collection, (d) use of data for decision making, and (e) presenting data to the staff and community. Further explorations found that school teams that successfully sustained PBIS through administrator turnover engaged in practices at both the school and district levels. Specifically, sustaining schools (a) maintained their PBIS handbook, (b) documented support among stakeholders, (c) collected and shared data, and (d) oriented the new administrator.

**Importance of Implementation Fidelity**

Schools are complex systems with many moving parts that impact outcomes. Intentional focus on implementation is critical to achieving desired outcomes (e.g., reducing time-intensive discipline incidents to gain instructional time and improved academic scores). According to Merriam-Webster (n.d.), *fidelity* is “strict observance of promises, loyalty, adherence to fact or detail, accuracy, and exactness.” Therefore, *implementing with fidelity* involves actively adhering to the specific components (i.e., critical elements) identified as essential practices within PBIS (George & Childs, 2012). Schools that implement with fidelity experience greater improvements in student outcomes than schools that have not met fidelity criteria (e.g., Simonsen et al., 2012). Further, the evidence base supporting PBIS implementation, described in the previous section, has documented the relationship between PBIS when implemented with fidelity and improved outcomes.

**Emphasis on Classroom-Level Implementation**

One of the key findings of large-scale research is the importance of classroom-level implementation. Specifically, implementation fidelity of classroom PBIS practices is related to (a) improved student outcomes (Childs et al., 2016) and (b) enhanced sustainability (Mathews et al., 2014). Therefore, supporting educators’ implementation of PBIS practices in the classroom is critical. The Office of Special Education Programs (2015) provided specific guidance for supporting and responding to student behavior in the classroom, including foundational practices (effective classroom design, predictable routines, positive expectations), prevention practices (active supervision, prompting, engaging instruction, specific praise, and other acknowledgment strategies), and response practices (specific error corrections and additional response strategies). By implementing these critical PBIS practices in the classroom, educators increase the likelihood that all students will succeed.

**Setting the Course for Effective Inclusion**

Although PBIS provides a framework that sets all students and educators up for success, an intentional focus on inclusive practice is critical. Preliminary evidence suggests that students with disabilities benefit when schools implement Tier 1 support to create effective, supportive, proactive, positive, and inclusive school cultures. Specifically, when schools implement Tier 1 PBIS, students with disabilities may be (a) more likely to engage in appropriate, prosocial behavior and emotional regulation; (b) less likely to demonstrate clinical symptoms, aggressive or challenging behavior, concentration problems; and (c) experience less reactive and exclusionary discipline, including office referrals, suspensions, physical restraint, and referrals to alternative schools (Benner et al., 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2012; Farkas et al., 2012; Gage et al., 2019; Grasley-Boy et al., 2019; Loman et al., 2018; Simonsen et al., 2010, 2020; Vincent et al., 2011). Unfortunately, special educators report that not all students with disabilities participate in and benefit from Tier 1 PBIS practices (Shuster et al., 2017). Thus, it is critical to consider key
lessons for practice and the need for further research to maximize the impact of PBIS on students with disabilities.

**Key Lessons for Practice**

Across decades of research, there have been many lessons learned to support practice. Among the most important lessons is the importance of leveraging the PBIS framework to develop inclusive environments that support all students, including students with disabilities. When educators differentiate Tier 1 support, coordinate supports within the continuum, and adopt a person-centered and strengths-based approach, they increase the likelihood that students with intensive needs will experience positive outcomes.

**differentiate Tier 1 Support**

Tier 1 support is for everyone. As described, core features of Tier 1 practices include creating effective environmental design, developing predictable routines, explicitly teaching positive expectations, prompting and monitoring expected behavior, actively engaging students in learning and other school activities, providing specific praise and other acknowledgment of student behavior, and responding to student behavioral errors in an equitable and instructionally-focused way. Effective educators implement and differentiate Tier 1 supports such that a majority of students benefit from Tier 1. Therefore, Tier 1 supports should match the intensity of student need within each setting, such that at least 80% of students are successful with Tier 1 support. For example, in alternative educational settings that serve students with intensive needs, educators may increase how often they explicitly teach, prompt, and reinforce expected behavior.

To differentiate Tier 1, educators consider students’ unique needs, focus on core features of each practice, and determine the best approach to modifying, adapting, or intensifying core features of that practice (Meyer et al., 2020). For example, in organizing the physical environment, it may be necessary to modify the layout to accommodate students with diverse visual or physical abilities. When prompting students to engage in expected behavior, educators may consider the frequency of prompting (e.g., before every transition vs. new transitions), specificity of prompting (e.g., indirect reminder vs. direct verbal instructions), or mode of prompting (e.g., verbal, gestural, picture, written) to ensure prompts work for all students. These simple strategies to differentiate implementation will increase all students’ access to and benefit from Tier 1.

**Coordinate Supports within the Continuum**

Although Tier 1 is for everyone, some students will need additional support, layered on top of differentiated Tier 1 support to be successful. For these students, it is critical that targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) supports are aligned with Tier 1. For example, all students may receive social skills instruction and acknowledgment linked to school-wide expectations. For students participating in check-in/check-out (CICO) as part of Tier 2, the increased prompts, targeted social skills instruction, and frequent feedback are linked to the school-wide expectations. Thus, students on CICO receive an increased “dose” of support, but educators align the supports with what all students receive in Tier 1.

Similarly, a student may have Tier 3 support documented in a function-based, individualized positive behavior support plan (BSP). Their BSP may include strategies for prompting, teaching, and reinforcing a replacement behavior (e.g., ask for a break in lieu of hitting to escape an aversive situation) and preventing contextually inappropriate behavior (e.g., hitting). Rather than teaching that skill in isolation, educators teach the replacement behavior in the context of school-wide expectations (e.g., asking for a break is an example of being safe) and provide function-based
reinforcement (e.g., brief break) alongside school-wide recognition (e.g., specific praise ticket for appropriately requesting a break). Thus, all students receive and have an opportunity to benefit from Tier 1 and experience a connected continuum of support.

In addition to connecting tiers of support, a key component of developing an effective continuum is fluid, team-driven, and data-informed movement between tiers. Thus, teams regularly review data to identify students who (a) are being successful with their current level of support, (b) need additional layers of support to be successful, or (c) have met targeted or individualized goals for Tier 2 or 3 support, respectively, and are ready to have those supports faded. Thus, educators do not “place” students in a tier of intervention; educators provide support to promote students’ fluency, maintenance, and ultimately generalized and independent use of social, emotional, behavioral, and/or academic skills such that most students can be successful with Tier 1 support.

**Adopt a Strengths-Based, Person-Centered Approach**

In contrast to traditional “wait to fail” models of special education, a multi-tiered approach facilitates a proactive approach to matching supports to student needs in an effort to ensure all students experience success. To ensure this approach is inclusive and equitable, school leadership teams adopt a strengths-based and person-centered approach (Shogren et al., 2017a, 2017b). As the name suggests, strengths-based approaches focus on students’ skills and areas for growth and enhancement, as opposed to deficits and remediation. Person-centered approaches engage students and their family members as active partners and leaders in designing the goals, selecting the methods, and contextualizing support. Consistent with these approaches, school leadership teams (a) prioritize strong family and student voice, (b) emphasize inclusivity and equity, and (c) use data to guide team-based decisions that build on student strengths in ways that students, families, and educators see as contextually appropriate and culturally relevant.

**Additional Research is Needed**

Although preliminary research supports the potential for PBIS to establish inclusive environments that support all students, including students with disabilities, additional research is needed in three key areas. First, research documenting the effects of Tier 1 PBIS for students is preliminary and based on either small-scale studies (e.g., Loman et al., 2018), larger research projects that focus on all students (e.g., Bradshaw et al., 2012), or existing state or national datasets (e.g., Grasley-Boy et al., 2019). A rigorous study of the effects of high-fidelity implementation and differentiation of Tier 1 supports for students with disabilities is needed to better understand the potential for PBIS to create inclusive environments and document outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. Second, in addition to documenting the effects of differentiated Tier 1 support, some students will require additional layers of targeted (Tier 2) and/or intensive (Tier 3) support. Although evidence supports specific Tier 2 and Tier 3 practices, additional research is needed to understand the effects of a full continuum of support within the PBIS framework for all students, including students with disabilities. Third, though carefully controlled and rigorous studies are critical, it is also important for researchers to document the supports needed (e.g., amount of training and coaching), feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of schools and districts implementing advanced tiers with sufficient fidelity to support students with or at-risk for disabilities in inclusive schools.

**Final Thoughts**

Effective inclusive schools provide a full range of academic and behavioral supports for all students. Traditional reactive management practices are not effective with many students and can lead to a
variety of negative outcomes. Instead, PBIS organizes social, emotional, and behavioral supports into an effective and efficient prevention continuum that gives all students and staff access to evidence-based and culturally relevant practices across all settings. Employing a multi-tiered approach, PBIS implementation emphasizes cultural relevance and equity, universal screening, progress monitoring, evidence-based and culturally responsive practices, a continuum of practices, data-based decision making, and team-based problem solving and action planning. School leadership teams center their work in equity and identify meaningful outcomes, collect relevant data, prioritize implementation fidelity, and use data to drive implementation decisions. Further, school teams give priority to PBIS practices that are evidence-based, culturally relevant, adaptable, feasible, inclusive, and have clearly articulated core features.

PBIS systems enhance the impact of evidence-based behavioral practices by considering implementation as dynamic and multi-staged. School leadership teams emphasize core systems features, including a representative school leadership team, district-supported training, school-based coaching, local implementation demonstrations, and coordinated organizational functions (i.e., stakeholder engagement, funding and alignment, policy, and workforce capacity) at the district level. The empirical support for PBIS implementation is increasing, especially in relation to schools that implement it with high fidelity and experience important achievement and social behavior outcomes. Rigorous, randomized trials of the PBIS framework have demonstrated significant, sustained effects of PBIS on a range of student behavioral, mental health, and educational outcomes. In addition, the PBIS framework appears to be a useful means for considering a number of educational issues (e.g., bullying behavior, equity in discipline, school climate, school violence). Although further research is necessary to demonstrate the full potential of PBIS to create inclusive environments that support all students, including students with disabilities, preliminary evidence supports the potential for PBIS to improve supports and decrease reactive and exclusionary discipline for students with disabilities.

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Brandi Simonsen and Heather Peshak George


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