PBIS Forum 16 Practice Brief:
PBIS in the Classroom

This document is intended to be a practical tool and resource for educators interested in implementing, sustaining, or enhancing PBIS in the classroom practices. The concepts, strategies, and resources included in this document were drawn from sessions and presentations focused on PBIS in the classroom at the 2015 and 2016 National PBIS Leadership Forums in Rosemont, Illinois. Specifically, core features and issues related to PBIS implementation in the classroom are explored including: critical elements of PBIS in the classroom, foundational practices, systems to support implementation, relevant outcomes, and frequently asked questions.

Critical Elements of PBIS in the Classroom

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a multi-tiered framework for supporting student behavior to improve educational outcomes for all students (Horner & Sugai, 2015). The PBIS framework organizes evidence-based practices within a continuum of support, which is typically operationalized with three tiers. Tier 1 of the PBIS framework focuses on supporting all students with high quality implementation of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices (e.g., explicitly teaching a small number of positively-stated expectations, recognizing students for meeting or exceeding expectations). In schools that effectively implement PBIS, 80% or more of students will respond to Tier 1 supports without additional intervention. Tier 2 of the PBIS framework focuses on targeted interventions for students whose behaviors are not responsive to Tier 1 supports. In schools that effectively implement PBIS, 10-15% of students may need Tier 2 level intervention in addition to Tier 1. For students whose behaviors do not respond to Tier 1 or Tier 2 targeted interventions, Tier 3 interventions are put in place. Tier 3 interventions are intensive and individualized. In schools that effectively implement PBIS, approximately 5% of students may require Tier 3 level of intervention.

The PBIS framework has significant implications for the classroom environment. PBIS in the classroom, or Positive Classroom Behavioral Supports (PCBS), refers to positive and proactive classroom management supports for all students. This includes effectively teaching an evidence-based core curriculum and establishing, teaching, and reinforcing positive behavioral expectations. To provide consistency for students across classrooms and contexts, PCBS is linked to the School-Wide framework (Simonsen & Freeman, 2015). When students do not respond to agreed upon classroom expectations, teachers respond to student behaviors in a way that maintains respect and a focus on instruction. In classrooms where PBIS is implemented effectively, the environment is predictable, consistent, and conducive to academic and behavioral success. The sections below describe critical elements of PBIS in the classroom including (1) core practices for implementation, (b) systems to support teachers with implementation, and (3) relevant outcomes.

Practices

To effectively and efficiently implement PBIS in the classroom, there are commonly agreed upon foundational practices that need to be put in place. These practices focus on establishing a safe and predictable classroom structure and positive teacher-student interactions. Ideally, PBIS practices in the classroom are aligned with school-wide PBIS systems. For example, if the school-wide expectations are respect, responsibility, and safety, the classroom expectations are also respect, responsibility, and safety. However, classroom expectations may be operationalized in a way to fit the unique context of the classroom. If school-wide PBIS is not in place, PBIS in the classroom can still be implemented by developing a class-wide system for teaching expectations, acknowledging student behavior, responding to rule violations, making classroom management decision based on classroom behavioral data, and using effective instructional

strategies with fidelity (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008). Foundational practices of PBIS in the classroom are described below.

Maximize structure

Design physical environment of the classroom. Implementing foundational practices of PBIS in the classroom begins with effectively designing the physical environment of the classroom (Hirn & Scott, 2016; Simonsen et al., 2008). Creating a structured physical environment includes organizing desks and tables according to the activity students will be participating in. For example, tables may be used for centers and group work, separated desks may be used for independent work, and a circle or U-shaped area may be used for whole class discussion. The physical layout of the classroom should also minimize crowding and distractions, and students should know where, when, and how to store personal possessions, get supplies, and turn in work. Additionally, teachers should designate student and staff areas of the classroom (Simonsen et al., 2008). The physical environment must allow for teacher/staff supervision of all areas (Hirn & Scott, 2016; Simonsen et al., 2008).

Establish classroom routines. In addition to considering the physical layout, teachers should develop predictable classroom routines for the classroom teacher and all students. This process starts with the teacher developing and posting a common schedule to guide activities during their period (e.g., warm up, teacher directed instruction, small group work, independent practice, wrap up) or day (e.g., warm up, whole group reading, and so on). In addition, teachers should develop a predictable pattern for how they would like students to move through common classroom routines, including transitions between activities, accessing help, what to do after work completion, lining up, and taking care of personal needs. Lastly, teachers should develop teacher routines for activities such as, planning and grading, communication with families and caretakers, as well as taking care of personal needs.

Establish, teach, and monitor positively stated expectations

Establish a small number of positively stated expectations. Select a small number (3-5) of positively-stated expectations. A classroom matrix is used to define positively stated expectations within classroom routines. For example, the column titles of the matrix can list common routines (e.g., asking for assistance, group work, or literacy circles) and the row titles can list the classroom expectations (e.g., Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe). Three to five positively stated expected behaviors for specific routines and classroom expectations are filled in for each box of the matrix (Simonsen, Myers, Everett, Sugai, Spencer, & LaBreck, 2012). Engaging lessons and with multiple opportunities to respond and activities should be used to explicitly teach what the expectations look like and sound like (Hirn & Scott, 2016).

Teach classroom expectations within classroom routines. After classroom routines and expectations are defined, teachers explicitly teach each expectation within the natural context of the routine (e.g., a lesson on respectful independent seat work takes place during that routine). Each lesson follows the model-lead-test approach and provides students with clear examples and non-examples of expected behaviors (Simonsen et al., 2012). Then, they should provide on-going support for expected behavior within classroom routines by providing teacher prompts (e.g., pre-corrections and visual prompts) to remind students of expected behaviors before routines. Posters of the expectations can be visibly displayed in multiple areas of the classroom (Simonsen et al., 2008). Once direct instruction is provided, teachers will monitor students' behavior within all routines through active supervision by moving, scanning, and interacting with students (Colvin, Sugai, Good, & Lee, 1997). Teachers will collect and use data on student behavior to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction, look for patterns, determine if students are following the rules, and where further instruction is needed (Simonsen et al., 2008).

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Actively engage students

Designing the physical environment of the classroom and establishing behavior expectations and routines creates predictability and consistency for students. Engaging students during academic instruction is also used to reduce problem behaviors and improve academic instruction. Strategies to engage students include providing high quality direct and explicit academic instruction with content matched to student needs, providing frequent feedback to students, using instruction time productively, connecting teaching to students lives, and giving students frequent opportunities to respond. Giving students frequent opportunities to respond is linked to higher rates of student engagement (Hirn & Scott, 2016). To increase students' opportunities to respond to instruction, classroom teachers can vary the way in which students respond (e.g., group responses, individual responses, raise hand or use signal to indicate agreement, demonstrations, draw student names from jar; Hirn & Scott, 2016; Simonsen et al., 2015).

Continuum of strategies to acknowledge appropriate behavior

Once classroom expectations and routines are directly taught, the established expectations need to be reinforced to increase the likelihood that students will consistently demonstrate the expected behaviors. Acknowledgement of student behavior should be contingent, specific, and age appropriate. For example, when a student uses the agreed upon participation strategy, the teacher can acknowledge the student by saying "Thank you for raising your hand." In addition to verbal acknowledgement, acknowledging student behavior may also incorporate a school-wide reinforcement system or an established classroom-level reinforcement system (e.g., tally sheets on desks or white board or group points; Simonsen et al., 2015). It is recommended that classroom teachers acknowledge positive student behavior at least three to six more often than they acknowledge student problem (i.e., 5:1 ratio; Hirn & Scott, 2016). Teachers can use self-management strategies to set goals, monitor, evaluate, and reinforce their own behavior to increase specific praise. For example, teachers can use a golf counter or tally marks on a white board or sticky note to record positive behavior acknowledgement frequency (Freeman & Simonsen, 2016).

Continuum of strategies to respond to problem behavior

Responding to problem behavior is also essential to implementing PBIS in the classroom. Similar to classroom expectations, consequences for classroom rule violations should be aligned with school-wide consequences, respectful, age appropriate, clearly defined and taught, and enforced consistently. Responses to problem behavior should be brief, specific to the problem behavior, and delivered with a calm and neutral voice. In addition, teachers should maintain an instructional focus when responding to problem behavior. That is, teachers may think about how they correct an academic error, and use a similar procedure to correct to behavioral errors. In their response, they should signal the error, remind the student of the appropriate behavior, and provide an opportunity to practice the behavior correctly and receive reinforcement (e.g., after a talk-out, teacher says "Remember to raise your hand if you'd like to ask a question." Student raises hand, teacher calls on student, and says "Thanks for raising your hand, what is your question?"). In addition to an error correction, teachers may consider the following strategies to respond to problem behavior: planned ignoring, differential strategies, response cost, and time out from class activities (Simonsen et al., 2015).

Please see the document "Supporting and Responding to Student Behavior" on pbis.org for further information about positive classroom behavior support practices. For additional resources, see table 1.

Table 1
Resources for Critical Elements of PBIS in the Classroom

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Resource/Source	Link
Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support: Effective Classroom Practices	http://pbismissouri.org/educators/effective-class-practice/
PBIS OSEP Technical Assistance Center: PBIS in the Classroom	http://www.pbis.org/school/pbis-in-the-classroom
Midwest PBIS Network: Classroom Management	http://www.midwestpbis.org/materials/classroom-management
Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project: A multi-Tiered Support System: Classroom	http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/resources_classroom.cfm

Systems to support teacher implementation

Support for teachers' implementing PBIS in the classroom is typically provided in collaboration with a PBIS coach or another staff member with expertise in PBIS implementation. Processes for supporting teachers' implementation of PBIS in the classroom often include (1) assessment of current practices and routines, (2) feedback and consultation, (3) professional development/training in implementation of new strategies or adjustment to existing practices, (4) action planning, (5) and measurement of the fidelity and outcomes of PCBS implementation.

Explicit professional development

To develop systems to support implementation of PCBS, schools and districts must ensure PCBS is a priority, provide dedicated district and school resources, and consider alignment and integration of PCBS with other district-wide priorities and initiatives. To start, professional development must include explicit instruction (e.g., model, lead, and test) of practices. To support professional development, teachers need application and practice opportunities, with consistent support that is readily available upon request (Freeman, Simonsen, & Lewis, 2016).

Coaching and performance feedback

Coaching and performance feedback that prompt teachers to use targeted strategies and provide data-based feedback are essential to support teacher implementation of PCBS. A building or behavior coach, mentor, or peer can provide support (e.g., coaching and performance feedback) for implementation of PCBS (Freeman et al., 2016). A systematic coaching approach applies the three-tiered logic for capacity building of PCBS. The PCBS coaching approach ranges from Tier One supports, such as common professional development, self-assessments etc., to Tier Two supports such as professional learning communities, to individualized Tier Three supports such as coaching with performance feedback. Additionally, teachers, coaches, or "data-collection buddies" will use self-assessments, classroom observations, or both to evaluate current teacher performance, and to identify teachers in needs of further support and evaluate teacher progress (Yanek, Flammini, Koomler, and Woodes, 2016).

The MTSS PBS Classroom Coaching Guide (Adkins et al., 2015) was developed as a tool for teachers, school-based teams, and coaches to improve classroom environments. The PBS Coaching Model includes instruction in effective coaching skills and activities in data-based problem-solving (i.e., the four-step problem solving model), interpersonal communication (e.g., collaborative teaching, effective communication, etc.), and content knowledge (e.g., systems change, positive behavior supports, etc.; Minch, MacSuga-Gage, & Abshier,

2016).

The MTSS PBS Classroom Coach Guide walks coaches and teachers through a four-step problem solving process to help provide support in instruction, curriculum, and environment. The four-step problem-solving model includes, (1) problem identification, (2) problem analysis, (3) intervention design, and (4) response to the intervention. The MTSS Classroom Coach Guide also includes tools for assessment and action planning (Minch, MacSuga-Gage, and Abshier, 2016).

Considerations for high school implementation

When supporting High School teachers in PCBS, practices include, booster sessions targeted at specific evidence-based classroom management components, and self-assessments completed by individual teachers or groups of teachers. High school teachers also need the ability to request and receive readily available support (Sprague, Luecking, Macias, & Anderson, 2016).

For additional resources to support teacher implementation see Table 2.

Table 2

Resources for Systems to Support Teacher Implementation.

Resource/Source	Link
PBIS OSEP Technical Assistance Center Blue Print for Professional Development	https://www.pbis.org/blueprint/pd-blueprint
Mid-Atlantic PBIS Network Resources and Materials for Positive Classroom Behavior Supports	http://www.midatlanticpbis.org
Mid-Atlantic PBIS Network Resources and Materials for Positive Classroom Behavior Supports	http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/resources_classroom.cfm

* Information provided by Freeman, Simonsen, & Lewis; Minch, MacSuga-Gage, & Abshier; Sprague, Luecking, Macias, & Anderson; Yanek, Flammini, Koomler, & Woodes, 2016 Leadership Forum

Data-based decision making

Data are necessary to drive implementation, instruction, and decision making (Simonsen & Sugai, 2007). Using data to carefully develop clear and relevant precision statements (i.e., who, what, where, when, and why) ensures educators have a complete understanding of all problems/issues. Data must be well documented and arranged to present changes over time (Swain-Bradway, Putnam, & Frerks, 2016). The cycle of Data-based Decision Making (DBDM) includes the following questions and steps, (1) are the core features being implemented as intended?, (2) are all individuals achieving desired outcomes?, (3) use data to define the problem, and (4) develop plan to enhance core features (Swain-Bradway et al., 2016).

Classroom assessments and tool are useful in proving coaches and teachers with data to inform decision make to support teachers' implementation. For examples of tools provided at the 2016 National PBIS Leadership Forum, see Table 3.

Table 3

Examples of PBIS in the Classroom Measures

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Measure	Core Features Measured	Intended Use	Psychometric Properties	Source
Classroom Ecology Checklist	1) Classroom structure (2) Behavior expectations (3) Instructional management (4) Interacting positively (5) Responding to appropriate behavior (6) Responding to inappropriate behavior	Teacher self-assessment; Observation	Chronbach's Alpha Reliability = .86	Reinke, W. M., Herman, K. C., & Stormont, M. (2012). Classroom-level positive behavior supports in schools implementing SW-PBIS: Identifying areas for enhancement. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 15*(1), 39-50. Contact the first author at reinkew@missouri.edu
Classroom Management: Self-Assessment Revised	(1) Classroom management practices (2) Positive and negative student contacts (3) Action planning	Teacher self-assessment	NA	Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., & Sugai, G. (2006). *Classroom management: Self-assessment revised.* Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, University of Connecticut. Retrieved from https://www.pbis.org/resource/174/classroom-management-self-assessment-revised-version-april-7-2006
Classroom Practices Self-Assessment	(1) Classroom management (2) Instructional management (3) Teaching Routines	Teacher self-assessment	NA	Borgmeier, C. *Classroom Practices Self-Assessment.* Retrieved from http://pbisnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Chris-Borgmeier-PBIS-in-the-Classroom-Packet.pdf
Comprehensive Classroom Management Plan	(1) Preventative classroom management (2) First-line interventions (3) Intensive, individualized interventions	Teacher self-assessment; Collaboration with coach, support staff, colleague	NA	Sayeski, K. L., & Brown, M. R. (2011). Developing a classroom management plan using a tiered approach. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 44*(1), 8-17. Retrieved from http://nyspbis.org/Regional%20Forum1314/Research%20Articles/Developing%20a%20Classroom%20Management%20Plan%20Using%20a%20Tiered%20Approach.pdf
School/ Classroom Observation and Evaluation (SCOA)	1) Instruction (2) Positive and negative feedback (3) Student engagement	Observation using Application ("App")	NA	Application and user manual available at http://louisville.edu/education/abri/assessment
Multi-Option Observation System for Experimental Studies	(1) Student behavior (2) Teacher use of general and specific praise (3) Teacher use of explicit and harsh reprimands (4) Teacher use	Observation using Software	NA	Tapp, J. (2004). MOOSES (Multi-Option Observation System for Experimental Studies). Retrieved from https://mooses.vueinnovations.com

(MOOSES)	of opportunities to respond			
MO SW-PBIS Teacher Self-Assessment of the Effective Classroom Practices	(1) Classroom management practices (2) Academic instruction	Teacher self-assessment	NA	Self-assessment retrieved from http://pbismissouri.org/educators/ effective-class-practice/
MO SW-PBIS Classroom Observation Tools	(1) Instruction practices, (2) Classroom expectations, (3) Procedures to teach and reinforce expectations, (4) Instructional strategies in academic and Social behavior.	Walk through, Brief observation, Observation	NA	Classroom Walk Through retrieved from http://pbismissouri.org/educators/ effective-class-practice/
Measuring Discrete Skills or Strategies	(1) Skills and strategies training scripts, (2) Coaching resources/materials, (3) Self-assessment, (4) Self-management	Self-assessment, and self-monitoring with self-evaluation	NA	NorthEast Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Classroom Retrieved from http://neswpbs.org/?q=classrooms
Positive Classroom Behavioral Supports Guide Book	(1) Instruction of expectations and rules, (2) class-wide or group contingencies, (3) Specific praise, (4) Error correction (5) Opportunities to Respond, (6) Physical environment	Self-assessment, Observations of teacher and student behavior	NA	Mid-Atlantic PBIS Network Classroom Materials Retrieved from http://www.midatlanticpbis.org/ma terials-1/classroom
PBIS Tier 1 Self-Evaluation	(1) Instruction and review of expectation, (2) Posted rules, (3) Prompts, (4) Specific Praise, (5) Acknowledge behavior, (6) Error Correction, (7) Attendance, (8) Continuum of strategies for responding to inappropriate behavior	Self-assessment	NA	Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project: A Multi-Tiered Support System Retrieved from http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/resources _classroom.cfm

Relevant outcomes

Implementing the foundational practices of PBIS in the classroom contributes to a variety of positive outcomes for students in classroom settings (Simonsen et al., 2008). For example, high quality academic instruction that includes matching content to student success level, providing students with frequent opportunities to respond, and giving students frequent, positive, and specific feedback on skill acquisition has contributed to increases in on-task behavior and decreases in disruptive behavior (Hirn & Scott, 2016). The extent to which teachers use the foundational practices also impacts perception of their skill and their emotional well-being. Teachers using higher rates of praise toward students also reported having higher levels of self-efficacy related to classroom management, whereas teachers using higher rates of reprimands report higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2012). Encouraging outcomes can also

be seen when foundational PBIS practices are applied to group contingency interventions in the classroom. For example, teachers using the CW-FIT group contingency intervention to teach and reinforce classroom expectations increased their use of praise and decreased their use of reprimands while seeing an increase of on task behavior, increase of engagement, and decrease of disruptive behaviors among students (Wills, Iwaszuk, Kamps, & Shumate, 2014).

Integrating academics & behavior in the classroom

Integrating social behavior and academic supports create efficient and effective systems to support all students. Integrating supports also ensures school teams allocate their resources efficiently without duplicating efforts. As stated above, strong classroom systems in behavior can lead to positive academic outcomes (Horner & Sugai, 2015), because the core features of PBCS optimize student social behavior and academic outcomes. For example, high rates of opportunities to respond and matching academic content to students need result in improved shared outcomes such as academic engagement (Goodman, 2016; Scott & Hirn, 2016).

To align academic and behavior systems school teams should, (1) identify shared values and desired academics and social behavior outcomes, (2) locate common structures (e.g., teams, data) that are possible to integrate, and (3) minimize or eliminate activities that do not result in desired outcomes (Goodman, 2016). It is possible to build and weave supports in social behavior and academics throughout the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support continuum. For examples Tier 2 supports can include academic support that address the function of students behavior (i.e., students struggling with reading who are reinforced by peer attention participate in Peer Assisted Learning Strategies for reading) while Tier 3 supports might include a full functional behavior assessment followed-up by a plan which simultaneously addresses students social behavior and academic performance (Goodman, 2016).

Frequently asked questions

Questions and challenges are based on the 2016 PBIS Leadership Forum *Roundtable Dialogue Question and Answer Session: Classroom PBIS: Discussion of Outcomes, Data, Practices, and Systems* (Simonsen & Freeman, 2016).

Q: How can schools help teachers implement PBCS?
A: We can help teacher implement effective classroom behavior supports by building positive structures in schools, school-wide recognition system, and using data evaluate and identify teachers' successes and to determine which teachers need more support. We should not assume teachers know what PBCS looks like. Ensuring teachers have access to professional development and training is crucial.

Q: How do we work with staff in addressing what was once "office managed behavior" and ensuring it does not interfere with instruction?
A: The priority is developing systems for to teachers to have the capacity to address behaviors in the classroom. Teachers can address inappropriate behaviors briefly and look to ensure they are taking the function of student behavior into account (i.e., if a student frequently talks out to obtain teacher attention, the teacher is careful to respond to the behavior with less attention). If it is a repeated misbehavior, re-teach, and reinforce the appropriate behavior.

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Q: Are we stifling teachers creativity and authenticity when we ask them to follow the school-wide systems in their classrooms?
A: You want students to experience consistency across classrooms within a school. Teaching the school-wide classroom expectations in your own classroom using the critical features of PCBS helps provide consistency. However, the expectations look different in different classrooms contexts and content areas so you will vary how you teach the expectations within different routines (e.g., safe during science lab and safe during think-pair-share activities in social studies).

Q: Should we remove classroom tools that are effective or teachers report as effective (i.e., color systems, classroom apps)?
A: Ideally, you want classroom reinforcement systems to match the schools system as well as other teachers within the school. You do not want to remove systems that are working without replacing them with tools and systems that are even more effective. You would start by creating consistency though linking the classroom systems to the school-wide system.

Q: How do you help teachers have buy-in?
A: The research shows us implementing evidence-based PCBS practices (e.g., teaching classroom routines, higher rates of opportunities to respond) help teachers increase the amount of instructional time in their classrooms and improves student academic engagement (Hirn & Scott, 2016).

References and resources

This document was adapted from the PBIS Forum 15 Practice Brief: PBIS in the Classroom (Olsen, Jake, 2015, University of North Carolina at Charlotte).

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