

Using Information in State or District Level Implementation of School-wide PBIS

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Introduction

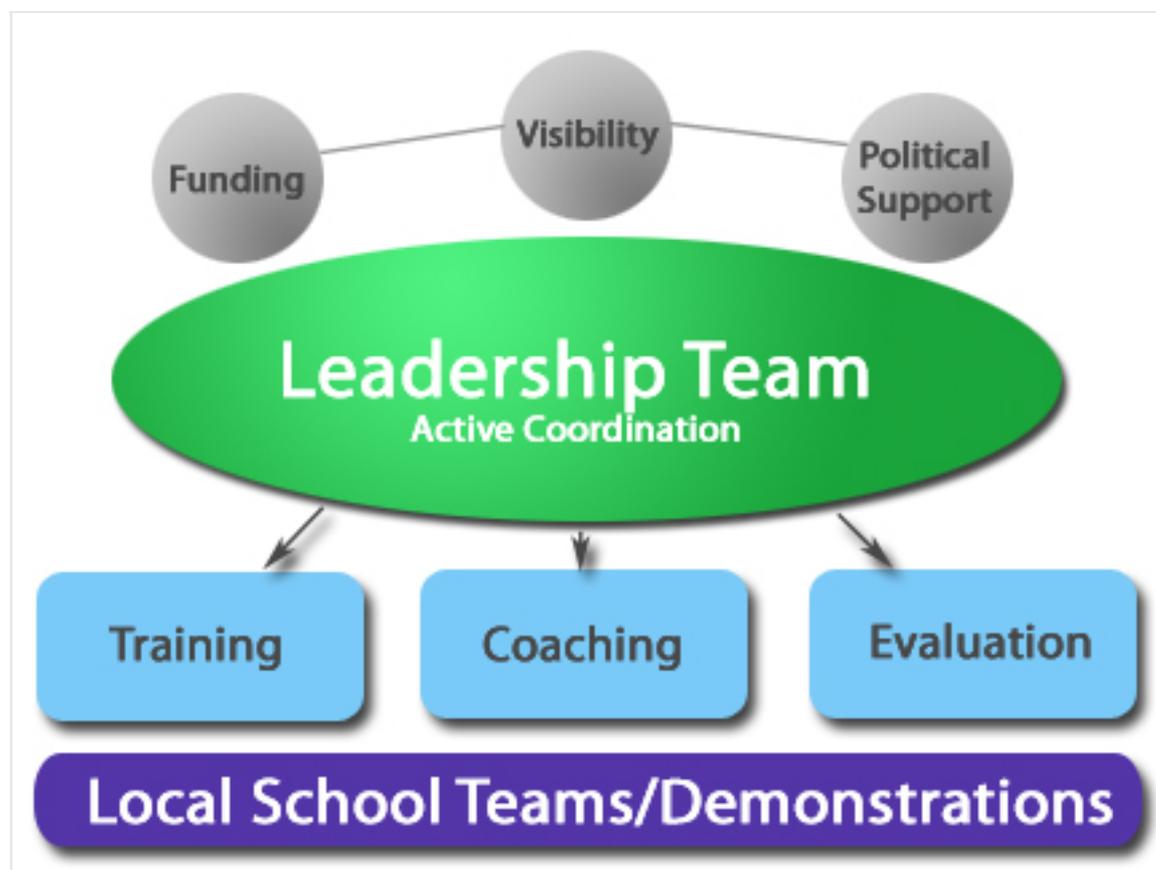
School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a systems approach to discipline that emphasizes (a) prevention of problem behaviors by providing proactive instruction of desired behavioral expectations, active reinforcement of appropriate behavior, and monitoring and correction of problem behavior; (b) on-going collection and use of data for decision-making; and (c) application of more intensive and individualized support for students who do not respond to prevention efforts (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002). School-wide PBIS is currently implemented with local adaptations in over 1,500 schools in 23 states. Schools implementing School-wide PBIS with fidelity report 20-60% reductions in office discipline referrals (Chapman & Hofweber, 2000; Colvin & Fernandez, 2000; Horner & Sugai, 2000; Horner et al., in press; Lohrman-O'Rourke et al., 2000; Nakasato, 2000; Nersesian, Todd, Lehmann, & Watson, 2000; Sadler, 2000; Taylor-Greene & Kartub, 2000), improved student satisfaction (Lewis-Palmer, Horner, Sugai, Eber, & Phillips, 2002), improved faculty/staff satisfaction (Taylor-Greene et al., 1997), and improved administrator perceptions of school safety (Schneider, Walker & Sprague, 2000). Preliminary results also indicate that effective behavioral systems melded with effective instruction are likely to result in improved academic gains (Horner et al., in press; Kellam, Mayer, Rebock, Hawkins, & Wesley, 1998).

Implementing School-wide PBIS at the State or District Level

To date, PBIS has been implemented primarily at the school level. The goal has been to emphasize that behavior support in schools needs to focus not just on active design of individualized interventions, but on school-wide systems that emphasize prevention. As documentation of the value of investing in school-wide behavioral systems has improved, states and districts throughout the country have initiated planning to determine how School-wide PBIS can be implemented, not just within a few "demonstration schools," but across large numbers of schools within a state/district. The National Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has proposed a blueprint for large-scale implementation of school-wide PBIS. This blueprint recommends the following four components for successful implementation: (a) a Leadership Team to actively coordinate implementation efforts; (b) an organizational umbrella composed of adequate funding, broad visibility, and consistent political support; (c) a foundation for sustained and broad-scale implementation established through a cadre of individuals

who can provide coaching support for local implementation, a small group of individuals who can train teams on the practices and processes of school-wide PBIS, and a system for on-going evaluation; and (d) a small group of demonstration schools that documents the viability of the approach within the local fiscal, political and social climate of the state/district (Sugai, 2002). Figure 1 illustrates the integration of the core elements of this large-scale implementation blueprint.

Figure 1: Blueprint for broad implementation of school-wide PBIS.



Using Information to Guide Large-scale Implementation of School-wide PBIS

Gathering and using data for decision-making is emphasized at every level of school-wide PBIS implementation (i.e., individual student, classroom, school, district, state). The core ideas for gathering and using data upon which to base educational decisions remain as useful today as decades ago when they were first defined (Deno & Mirkin, 1978; Gilbert, 1978; Wolery, Bailey, & Sugai, 1988). To be maximally useful in the implementation of effective behavior support, data should be (a) an accurate reflection of behavior, (b) collected with consistency and precision, (c) straightforward and simple to collect, (d) easily summarized and reported on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc), and (e) reviewed regularly and systematically in response to specific evaluation questions to ensure meaningful action planning can be supported (Horner et al., in print). When a district or state begins organizing to implement school-wide PBIS, data should be gathered and used to address the following questions:

1. Is the Leadership Team providing the resources, vision, and systems needed for large-scale implementation?

The ultimate success of efforts to produce broad-scale systems change often lies with the on-going details

of implementation and the initial planning and organization of the effort. Before a Leadership Team initiates the training and technical assistance associated with school-wide PBIS, care should be taken to ensure that the Leadership Team is composed of appropriate members, has allocated sufficient professional time to allow effective coordination, and has built an action plan to deliver the full set of elements defined in Figure 1. The Leadership Team can use the [PBIS Leadership Team Self-Assessment and Planning Tool](#) to assess if key elements are in place and identify the action plans needed to attain those elements not yet in place. The PBIS Self-assessment tool provides a formal structure for documenting whether key elements are in place and a direct format for organizing an action plan to obtain missing elements.

A frequent error of Leadership Teams is to implement training and technical assistance efforts without first establishing a plan for broad-scale implementation and evaluation. Taking time to self-assess and to begin the coordination of organizational elements associated with success may delay the speed with which initial efforts are initiated; however these preliminary efforts will result in greater fidelity and durability of implementation.

2. Are schools implementing school-wide PBIS?

The Leadership Team should coordinate training for local teams of faculty/staff/administrators within target schools. A core concern for the Leadership Team will be not just whether training was provided and perceived as helpful, but also whether the training actually changed the way behavior support systems are organized in the schools. [The PBIS Planning and Implementation Self-Assessment Checklist](#) is a self-assessment document used every month (or at least every quarter) to assess whether the activities associated with implementation of school-wide PBIS systems have been completed. If activities have not been completed as scheduled, the team should define action steps and time lines for moving towards full implementation. The Self Assessment Checklist provides the local team with valuable and concrete tools (on-going prompts and action planning steps) that can be used to document an overall index of perceived implementation progress and can be reported to the Leadership Team. The time invested in collecting the Self Assessment Checklist information is no more than 30 minutes per assessment and results in a summary similar to that provided in Figure 2 from an actual (though renamed) elementary school. The team reported these Self Assessment Checklist data to the Leadership Team in September, October, and December of 2002 during a time period when training in school-wide PBIS practices was being provided. The results document progress across time and provide the Leadership Team with a simple strategy for assessing staff perception of implementation outcomes. The data are arrayed by each system component on the Self Assessment Checklist (commitment established; school team developed; school-wide self-assessment completed and action plan developed; prevention practices implemented; student behavioral information gathered, summarized and used for decision-making; function-based support available for

individual intervention plans). The percent of total points is gathered (1 point is allocated for an item being “in progress” and 2 points are allocated for an item “completed”) and summarized for a percent of total items implemented.

Figure 2: Self Assessment Checklist data for one elementary school across a four-month period.

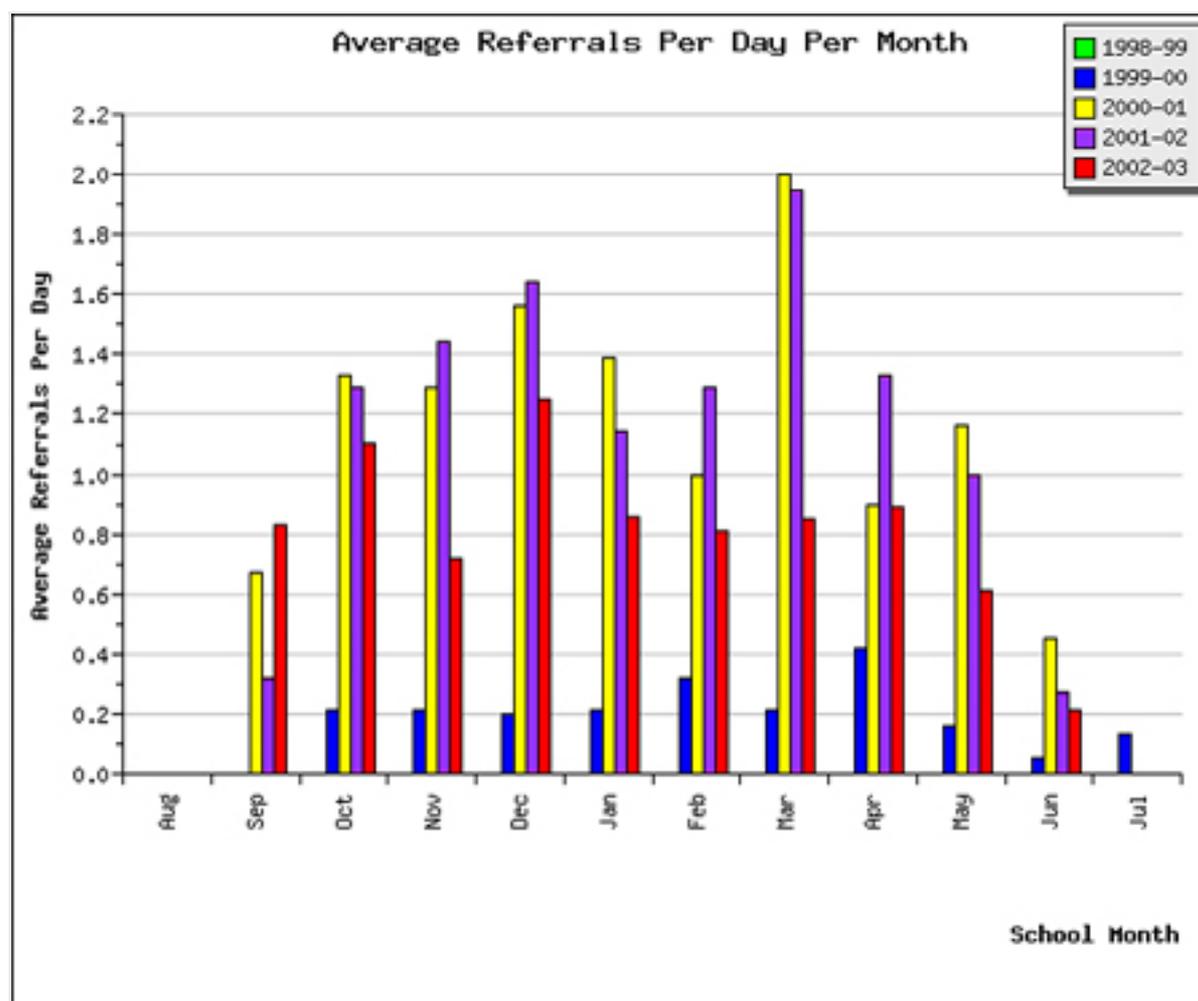
Leadership Teams also may wish to have a more formal evaluation of the extent to which teams are implementing school-wide PBIS practices and systems. When a more rigorous assessment is needed, the Leadership Team may choose to have external evaluators use the [School-wide Evaluation Tool \(SET\)](#) (Horner et al., in press; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 1999). The SET involves a 2-3 hour review of systems outcomes conducted in the school by an outside evaluator. The results provide an acceptable psychometric measuring the extent to which PBIS practices and systems are in place within a school.

3. Does implementation of school-wide PBIS affect student behavior?

Changes in school discipline systems will be of little importance unless the results translate into substantive change in student behavior and improvement in the ability of the school to build academic and social competence. Among the most common measures of improvement in student behavior is the rate of office discipline referrals in the school. Office discipline referral (ODR) levels can reflect teacher behavior or administrative systems as well as student behavior; therefore, ODR data must be carefully interpreted. The validity of ODR data as a basic index of behavior change in schools has gained credibility as more systematic approaches to ODR measurement have been adopted (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2003). Schools focusing on behavioral climate should gather and report information to administrators, behavior support teams and faculty on (a) the average number of ODRs per day per month, (b) the frequency of ODRs per type of problem behavior, (c) the frequency of ODRs per student and (d) the frequency of ODRs per location in the school. This information should be available continuously for the administrator and behavior support team, at least monthly for those managing change in behavior support systems, and quarterly for the whole faculty.

Detailed information about ODRs, coupled with on-going counts of disciplinary consequences (e.g., suspensions and expulsions) allows a faculty and staff to monitor whether their behavior support efforts are effective. Recent web-based data summary and reporting systems (e.g., [SWIS.org](#)) make these data inexpensive and accessible to all schools. Preliminary evaluation results suggest that regular access to ODR, suspension, and expulsion data is among the most efficient ways for faculty teams to build school-wide commitment for, and organize effective implementation of, school-wide PBIS (Ingram, Horner & Todd, 2002). An example of one chart used for data-based decisions in schools is provided in Figure 3. The average number of ODRs per school day per month may be compared across months to identify both levels and trends that can guide the decision-making within the school.

Figure 3: Average number of office referrals per school day per month.



4. Are schools implementing school-wide PBIS perceived as safer?

Student perception of school safety is associated with violence in schools (Gottfredson, Gottfredson & Skroban, 1996). When students perceive their school to be a dangerous place, they are more likely they are to engage in problem behaviors (e.g. weapons violations) that they view as necessary for their personal safety. The Oregon School Safety Survey is an instrument developed to obtain an efficient and reliable index of perceived school safety (Sprague, Colvin & Irvin, 1995). Leadership Teams investing in broad implementation of school-wide PBIS will benefit from documentation of the absolute and relative level of perceived school safety. The [Oregon School Safety Survey](#) provides a summary of “risk factors” and “protective factors” that can be useful in determining training and support needs related to school safety and violence prevention.

5. Does implementation of school-wide PBIS allow schools to develop better support for students with the most extreme needs?

A final question of relevance for Leadership Teams is the extent to which schools are improving support for students with the most extreme behavior support needs. Preliminary results suggest that when schools implement primary level prevention efforts they (a) identify fewer students as needing intensive behavior plans, and (b) are more successful in their support of these students (Lewis, Newcomer, & Powers, 2003; Lewis-Palmer et al., 2002). The Individual Student Systems Evaluation Tool (I-SSET) is an instrument for

assessing the extent to which the core systems needed for effective individual student behavioral interventions are in place. The I-SSET produces a total score and sub-scale scores that the Leadership Team can use to determine the extent to which a school has key systems in place.

Summary

School-wide PBIS is being implemented in an increasing number of schools throughout the nation. As states, regional agencies, and school districts begin designing more extensive implementation plans, care should be taken to identify the key information sources used to guide and evaluate large-scale implementation efforts. This article suggests one set of questions that Leadership Teams may use for evaluation and data sources that have proven effective in implementation efforts (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Evaluating school-wide PBIS efforts.

Evaluation Question	Instrument	Data Source
Is the Leadership Team providing the resources, vision, and systems needed for large-scale implementation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBS Leadership Team Self-Assessment and Planning Tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District/State Leadership Team
Are schools implementing school-wide PBS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBS Planning and Implementation Self-Assessment Checklist • School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Leadership Team • Coaches/Trainers
Does implementation of school-wide PBS affect student behavior?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office discipline referral (ODR) levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students
Are schools implementing school-wide PBS perceived as safer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oregon School Safety Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, Parents, Teachers, Administrators, Related Service Providers, Other School Personnel, and Community Members
Does implementation of school-wide PBS allow schools to develop better support for students with the most extreme needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Student Systems Evaluation Tool (I-SSET) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Leadership Team • Coaches/Trainers

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Summary of School-wide PBIS Tools

PBIS Leadership Team Self-Assessment and Planning Tool

Blueprint Self-Assessment for Implementing School-wide PBIS

PBIS Planning and Implementation Self-Assessment Checklist

Oregon School Safety Survey (OSSS)

School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET)

The School-wide Information System (see www.swis.org)

Click [here](#) for additional tools and resources related to School-wide PBIS

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