

# Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

## Monograph on SWPBS Implementation in High Schools:

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### Current Practice and Future Directions

K. Brigid Flannery & George Sugai



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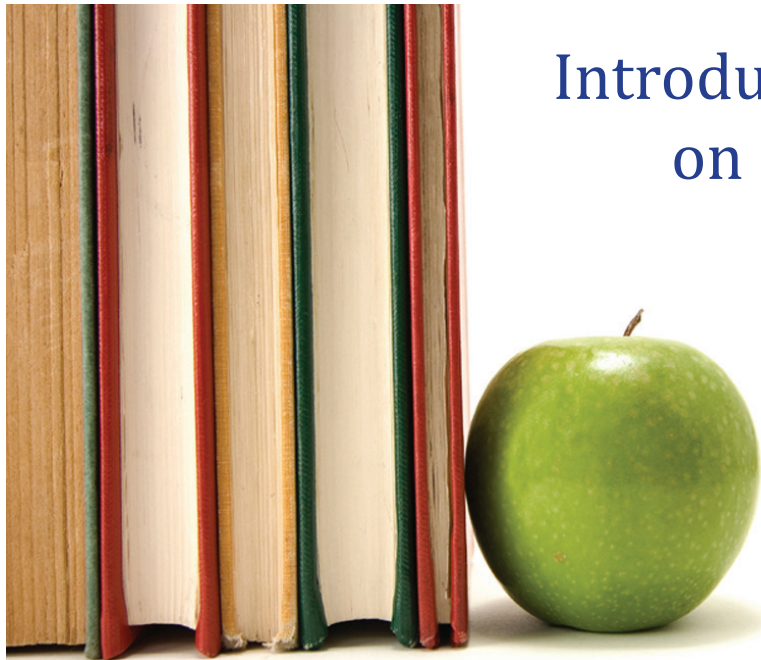
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# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Monograph on High School SWPBS Implementation

**Authors:**

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Since 1997 School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) has evolved and been implemented in more than 10,000 schools in more than 40 states. A majority of the documented implementation efforts has involved elementary and middle schools. Although more high schools are testing implementation of SWPBS, specific guidelines for implementation at the high school level are less well-defined and developed than at the elementary and middle school levels.

In May of 2004, a national high school forum was held by the Technical Assistance Center (TA Center) in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). At that meeting, teachers representing 29 high schools from 10 states met to share their experiences, challenges, and accomplishments implementing SWPBS, and to contribute to a monograph on current implementation practices at the high school level (Bohanon-Edmonson, Flannery, Eber, & Sugai, 2004). Chapter topics included (a) leadership teaming, (b) administrative support and role, (c) engaging staff, (d) data-based decision making, (e) teaching social behavior, (f) school-wide reinforcement systems, (g) targeted group interventions, (h) intensive comprehensive systems of support, and (i) implementation recommendations. A number of common themes emerged:

- Systems for communication and acknowledgement are needed to initiate and maintain staff and student involvement and accomplishments.
- Strong administrative leadership is needed to prompt, guide, and give priority to the SWPBS implementation effort.
- Teaching and monitoring positive behavioral expectations are considered essential practices for the implementation success.

Given these themes, four recommendations were made to the field:

- Support and reinforce efforts to implement SWPBS at all levels, but especially in large urban high schools.
- Develop more data-based demonstrations of SWPBS implementation.
- Conduct and disseminate empirical verifications of the efficacy and effectiveness of high school SWPBS implementation
- Examine the role and importance of student participation in SWPBS implementation.

Based on the success of the May 2004 forum, the TA Center conducted a second forum on high school SWPBS implementation in the summer of 2009 in Naperville, Illinois. The purpose of the forum was to bring together a small number of high schools that have been identified as successful implementers of SWPBS. This monograph provides a description and summary of the implementation efforts of SWPBS practices and systems in these high schools (9-12th grade) with an emphasis on shaping future demonstration and research projects, and giving high school implementers guidance on promising practices and systems.



## Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

The TA Center on PBIS was established by the Office of Special Education Programs, US Department of Education. The purpose of the TA Center is to provide schools capacity-building information and technical assistance for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective and proactive (positive and preventive) school-wide disciplinary practices. The TA Center provides

- Technical assistance to encourage large-scale implementation of PBIS.
- Organizational models, practice and systems demonstrations, knowledge and practice dissemination, and evaluation tools needed to implement PBIS with greater depth and fidelity across an extended array of contexts
- Extensions of lessons learned from PBIS implementation to the broader agenda of educational reform.

The TA Center is directed by George Sugai (University of Connecticut) and Robert Horner, (University of Oregon). The Center has 19 implementation partners across the United States, including the following:

Bob Algozzine, *University of North Carolina*  
Cindy Anderson & Rob Horner, *University of Oregon*  
Susan Barrett, *Sheppard-Pratt Health System*  
Lucille Eber, *Illinois PBIS Network*  
Glen Dunlap, Donald Kincaid, & Heather George, *University of South Florida*  
Michael Nelson, *University of Kentucky*  
Tim Lewis & Lori Newcomer, *University of Missouri*  
Robert Putnam, *The May Institute*  
Michele Rovins, *Federal Resource Center*  
Wayne Sailor, Amy McCart, Hoon Choi, & Laura Riffel, *University of Kansas*  
Brandi Simonsen & George Sugai, *University of Connecticut*



## The High School Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Forum

Because of the number of high schools asking for assistance in new or continued implementation of SWPBS and a lack of a definitive literature of research studies on implementation at the high school level, the planning team (Brigid Flannery, Rob Horner, Lucille Eber, Steve Romano, and George Sugai) was encouraged to collect and describe current implementation of best practice. The 2009 HS PBIS Forum was designed in a structured interactive format with nominated high schools recognized as successful implementation innovators of SWPBS. Two representatives from each high school were invited to attend the forum and to describe and discuss their implementation accomplishments and successes. Facilitators and recorders were identified to collect and organize information for monograph chapters, and lead authors were selected to write chapter drafts.

The purpose of the HS PBIS Forum was to discuss the implementation and sustainability of SWPBS. Specific objectives were to:

- Define the features of high schools that have successfully implemented SWPBS.
- Build brief descriptions that document empirically the fidelity and outcomes associated with high school implementation of SWPBS.
- Define the research, policy, and implementation agendas that are needed to take current lessons learned to the next action level.
- Publish an on-line monograph that (a) summarizes what we know about implementing SWPBS in high school, (b) documents examples of success, and (c) outlines a research, policy, and technical assistance agenda for the future.

To meet this purpose five content areas were identified for work group discussions and to serve as the basis for designating chapters:

- Administration Roles and Functions in PBIS High Schools
- Establishing and Maintaining Staff Participation in PBIS High Schools
- Connecting School-wide Positive Behavior Supports to the Academic Curriculum in PBIS High Schools
- Data-based Decision Making in PBIS High Schools
- Implementation of Secondary/Tertiary Supports in PBIS High Schools

### *Forum Participant Selection*

Through a series of conference calls and meetings, TA Center partners developed criteria for nominating potential high school participants:

- Implementation of primary tier SWPBS for at least one year as documented by scores from School-wide Evaluation Tool, (SET), Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ), and/or Team Implementation Checklist (TIC).
- Initial planning for implementation of secondary/tertiary tier practices and systems as documented in an active action plan.
- At least one year of student outcome measures as documented through the use of ODRs, graduation, grades, attendance, etc.
- Schedule of completed school-wide leadership team meetings that occurred at least quarterly for a year, based on an active action plan, and included at least one school administrator as documented through meeting minutes and calendar.
- Direct participation in training and technical assistance from the TA Center as



evidenced by training calendar and trainer confirmation.

- Adoption and use of unique practices, features, processes to implement SWPBS as documented by action plans and outcome data.

Based on these criteria, 17 schools were nominated by the partners. After review of the applicants, 13 high schools were selected from nine states, and each high school was asked to (a) identify two team members who could participate in a chapter workgroup at the HS PBIS Forum in June and (b) assist in writing a chapter about implementation of PBIS at the high school level. TA Center partners served as workgroup facilitators and recorders and lead

authors for the development of each chapter.

General information about the schools is provided in Table 1. Prior to attending, the schools were asked to identify their preferred workgroup and to respond to a series of questions regarding their PBIS implementation process, examples from their high school, and the impact on students and staff in their school. These summaries from their responses were used to inform forum facilitators and participating school staff about who was attending, what experiences they were bringing to the forum and their specific work groups. These detailed summaries about each school are available in the Appendix.



**Table 1: Participating Schools**

School	Years Implement (#)	Enrollment	FRL	Ethnicity	Urban/Rural	District size	Representatives
<b>Newark HS</b> DE	2005-2009 (4)	1,700	27%	33% AA 8% LA 54% W 5% AS	Urban/ Suburb: large	31 schools 18,495 students Ss with IEPs 3,163 ELL: 1,348	Valerie Morano Eileen Baker
<b>Timber Creek HS</b> FL	2002-2009 (7)	4,000	24%	10% AA 30% LA 53% W 4% A	Suburb: large	238 schools 175,245 students Ss with IEPs: 25,699 ELL: 33,991	Colleen Hemann Lisa Coffey
<b>North County HS</b> MD	2003-2009 (6)	2,000	25%	72% W 22% AA 3% L 2% AS	Suburb: large	122 schools 73,066 students Ss with IEPs: 8,931 ELL: N/A	Adam Sheinhorn
<b>Triton HS</b> NC	2007-2009 (2)	1,300	48%	56% W 35% AA 6% LA 1% AS, NA/A	Rural	27 schools 17,924 students Ss with IEPs: 2,598 ELL: 1,270	Steve Matthews David Tillman
<b>Mountain View HS</b> CO	2005-2009 (4)	1,200	30%	79% W 17% LA 2% AA 2% NA/A	City: Small	30 schools 15,310 students Ss with IEPs: N/A ELL: N/A	Cindy Wiley Kevin Aten Dan O'Connell



School	Years Implement (#)	Enrollment	FRL	Ethnicity	Urban/Rural	District size	Representatives
<b>Addison Trail HS</b> <b>IL</b>	2007-2009 (2)	1,900	24%	50%W 40% LA 5% AS 2% AA 1% NA/A	Suburb: large	2 schools 4,082 students Ss with IEPs: 586 ELL: 222	Jean Barbanent – District Coach
<b>Lebanon HS</b> <b>MO</b>	2004-2009 (5)	1,550	47%	97% W 3% all other	Town: remote	8 schools 4,719 students Ss with IEPs: 567 ELL: N/A	Rick Talbott Jessica Williams
<b>West Charlotte HS</b> <b>NC</b>	2004-2009 (5)	1,978	72%	89% AA 6% LA 3% AS 1%W .6% NA/A	City: Large	160 schools 128,789 students Ss with IEPs: 14,502 ELL: 17,042	Edwin Wilson Loretta Massey
<b>South Lake HS</b> <b>VA</b>	2005-2009 (4)	1,650	34%	45%W 21%AA 17%LA 12% AS	City: small	207 schools 163,952 students Ss with IEPs: 23,621 ELL: 33,292	Teresa Fennessy Marly Fullerton
<b>Fruita Monument HS</b> <b>CO</b>	2007-2009 (2)	1,300	11.5%	88%W 9%LA 3% AS/ NA/A/AA	Rural: fringe	42 schools 21,173 students Ss with IEP: N/A ELL: N/A	Jody Mimmack Sherry Schriener



School	Years Implement (#)	Enrollment	FRL	Ethnicity	Urban/Rural	District size	Representatives
<b>Foreman HS IL</b>	2005-2009 (4)	1,975	52%	70% LA 17% AA 10%W 1% AS .6% NA/A	City: large	633 schools 413,694 students Ss with IEPs: 55,688 ELL: 67,955	Darlene Sobel Larry Irvin
<b>Somersworth HS NH</b>	2007-2009 (2)	615	17%	91%W 3% AA 3% LA 3% AS	Suburb: small	4 schools 1,797 students Ss with IEP: 339 ELL: 41	Devin McNelly JoAnne Malloy Maria Agorastou

**Key for Table 1**

AA - African American	Ss – Students
LA - Latino	ELL – English Language Learners
W - White	IEP – Individual Education Program
AS -Asian	
NA – Native American	
A – Alaskan	



## *Forum Description*

The HS PBIS Forum began with an opening session during which the purpose, expectations, and format of the HS PBIS Forum were described. Next, each school shared general demographic information about their school, where they were in the implementation process, and one to two descriptors that made them unique. Over the next day and a half, the participants worked in breakout groups that were based on key areas of implementation of SWPBS. Each group had six to eight participants representing different high school and TA Center partners.

The purpose of these workgroups was the development of a chapter on their content topic. As mentioned previously, five chapter topics were developed:

- Integration of Academics and Behavioral Support
- Role and Support of Administration
- Data for Decision Making
- Orientation, Participation and Professional Development for Staff
- Implementation of Secondary/Tertiary Supports.

Each workgroup focused on gathering information for their chapter including, but not limited to, targeted outcomes, data collected, practices and systems, questions, and problems or challenges. Last, each workgroup developed a list of recommendations for future efforts related to (a) research, (b) implementation, (c) professional development, and (d) evaluation.

## **Monograph**

**T**his five chapter monograph was developed as a result of the discussions from the HS PBIS Forum workgroups. Each chapter provides strategies and ideas discussed in the workgroups as well as longer case studies of these examples in the participating schools. A brief summary of each chapter is described below.

### *Chapter 2: Administration Roles and Functions in PBIS High Schools.*

In this chapter, the critical role of administrative participation and support of the SWPBS process is highlighted. Unique to high schools is the administrative structure of multiple administrators and departments or division heads. As lead administrator, the principal is responsible for the direction and performance of the school as a whole, the administrative team, and innovations being implemented in that school. Shared strategies and ideas for the roles of administrative leadership in building accurate and sustained implementation and meaningful and effective professional development were highlighted. A major conclusion was the central role that building leaders, like principals and their assistants, hold in the overall implementation of SWPBS. Suggestions included active involvement in action planning and implementation, model desired practices, and acknowledge staff efforts and contributions.

### *Chapter 3: Establishing and Maintaining Staff Participation in PBIS High Schools.*

In this chapter, practices and systems are described for establishing and maintaining a leadership team, enhancing staff understanding as well as contribution and engagement in the ongoing implementation of SWPBS, and maximizing student involvement. An underlying theme is that staff participation





is achievable, but with specific and formal actions, for example, (a) focusing on success for all students, not just a few, (b) using data for decision making, and (c) keeping student outcomes (e.g., graduation, achievement, social competence) as tantamount. Specific strategies included actively involving students, formalizing a continuous professional development and training plan, and taking advantage of the department organizational structure to implement SWPBS practices.

#### *Chapter 4: Connecting School-wide Positive Behavior Supports to the Academic Curriculum in PBIS High Schools.*

Although the emphasis and organization of high schools is on content mastery, a major theme of this chapter is that social behavior support is an important and necessary pre-requisite to maximize academic outcomes. Successful high school implementation of PBIS acknowledges the systems and structures that challenge the connection of academic and social curriculum (e.g., content-focused, size, emphasis on student's responsibility for learning). In this chapter, the authors provide a description of essential features of SWPBS systems necessary to promote academic achievement at the high school level. A major conclusion was that the features which characterize effective PBIS implementation at the elementary and middle school levels were the same for high schools. However, the authors also acknowledged the increased importance of (a) positive teacher-student relationships, (b) designing classroom environments that promote prosocial behavior to reduce problem behavior that usually results in removal and (c) implementation at the freshman or 9th grade level when establishing the expectations of the high school culture was critical.

#### *Chapter 5: Data-Based Decision Making in High Schools.*

This chapter describes SWPBS data management systems and the use of these in decision making at the high school level. This chapter focuses around four key questions (a) Is there a need to adopt SWPBS in our school? (b) Are we implementing SWPBS with fidelity? (c) Is student behavior improving and how do we sustain and continuously improve behavior support? A number of important themes emerged when addressing each of these questions: (a) a consistent and trained staff member is responsible for data management



(input, analysis, summarization, and reporting), (b) decisions are made with data and by a team with leadership authority, (c) data reports are easy to read and shared at least monthly with all faculty and staff members for collaborative decision making, (d) every effort is made to identify students who require more intensive behavior support than available in primary tier practices and systems, and (e) various sources of both academic and behavioral data are used make decisions.

### *Chapter 6: Secondary and Tertiary Tier Supports in High School.*

In this chapter, the critical features of secondary and tertiary tier interventions as implemented in a small group of high schools are described. The emphasis is on information about and examples of systems for development of teams to support implementation, necessary communication systems, administrative roles and responsibilities, and systems of data for decision making. A major conclusion is that the need for secondary and tertiary tier systems should not be underestimated in high schools. However, successful implementation is linked to (a) a strong and formal commitment from school and district personnel and leadership, (b) the use of data for decision making, (c) careful and prioritized allocation of resources, and (d) careful selection of evidence-based practices.

## Summary

The format and procedures of the HS PBIS Forum proved to be an effective means of engaging participants in discussions and soliciting descriptions of their experiences and accomplishments in the implementation of SWPBS at the high school level. In addition, participants indicated appreciation for the opportunity to learn from each other and to converse on solutions to their implementation challenges. When one looks across the chapters of this monograph, a number of common themes emerge:

- SWPBS implementation in high schools is doable. However, what we learned is that implementation features may need to be adjusted to accommodate the high school context (e.g., organizational differences, variations in purpose, development considerations, competing initiatives and priorities)
- SWPBS implementation in high schools does vary in comparison to elementary and middle schools; however, the conceptual principles that ground SWPBS can be sustained and are important to guiding the process. High school SWPBS implementation can be facilitated by attending to (a) educationally important outcomes for students, (b) data for decision making, (c) evidence-based practices, and (d) active and formal support systems for implementation integrity.
- SWPBS practices should be linked to outcomes that are important to the high school mission. High schools are different from elementary and middle schools because of their emphasis on postsecondary outcomes, dropout prevention, diploma achievement, career planning, etc.



- SWPBS practices and procedures can be culturally/contextually appropriate. Like elementary and middle school students, the unique and diverse needs of students, families, and staff can be appreciated and highlighted in SWPBS implementation in high schools.
- Like at the elementary and middle school levels, implementation of effective SWPBS practices requires formal and active supports. Simply asking staff to adopt a new practice is ineffective, and system supports, like coaching, active administrator support, team-based implementation and decision making, are important considerations for implementation fidelity and sustained use.
- Local, meaningful, and contextualized academic and behavioral data should be collected and reviewed regularly and frequently to inform decision making, including, but not limited to credit accrual, office discipline referrals, in-school detention, out-of-school suspensions, absenteeism, tardiness, truancy, failed courses, substance use, etc.
- A priority should be given to the selection and adoption of evidence-based practices, and establishing the supports that are needed to ensure effective implementation integrity and sustained use.
- SWPBS should establish procedurally-based systems that are responsive to change and sufficiently durable to become automatic in implementation and representative of agreed upon policy.
- SWPBS implementation is characterized by teaching and learning environments that are safe, predictable, redirecting, preventively responsive, and positive.
- Sustainable implementation of SWPBS is a formal, phased and continuous multi-year professional development endeavor,

and not intermittent, passive, staff development in-service events.

- Professional development and implementation of action planning should involve all stakeholders, especially (a) students who, without active participation, may not develop motivation to engage in SWPBS activities and (b) school leadership who must model and actively lead the implementation effort.

### *Conclusion*

The purpose of this monograph is to describe the outcomes from the 2nd HS PBIS Forum on SWPBS implementation. Although the number of high schools who are implementing SWPBS is relatively small compared to elementary and middle schools, the results from the five working groups and the dedicated and knowledgeable representatives from nominated high schools clearly suggest that SWPBS implementation has promise for improving the social culture and outcomes of all students.

Although the empirical database for SWPBS implementation is still emerging, we are confident in recommending that the general practices, guiding principles, and larger systems supports be considered in high schools to improve social culture, support academic



outcomes, and prepare youth for work, family, and education. In addition, the general findings and themes from the HS PBIS Forum have implications for a number of important stakeholders.

- Practitioners should (a) invest in evidence-based, proactive strategies that support the formal development of social skills in high schools, (b) consider the impact of positive and negative school culture on their instructional effectiveness, (c) link classroom behavior management to school-wide discipline systems, (d) use data for on-going decision making, and (e) build local capacity for formalizing a prevention-based curriculum of practices and systems at the high school level.



- Parents and family members should advocate for schools to move toward positive and preventive practices and systems at the high school level, and expect schools to use information and data to guide decisions that affect the academic and social behavior success of their students.
- Policy decision makers should establish functional policy statements that give priority to accurate and sustained data-based decision making, use of evidence-based practices, and the establishment of local expert capacity to train, coach, and evaluate the use of these practices.
- Researchers should engage in experimental research studies to increase the specificity of what we can say about what works, where and under what conditions it works, how it can be adapted to different contexts, how it can be implemented with integrity and with maximum outcomes, and what it takes to increase sustained use and durable outcomes.
- Professional developers in pre-service and in-service must incorporate evidence-based practices and systems for SWPBS considering the contextual features of high schools that require adaptations from what is done in elementary and middle schools.

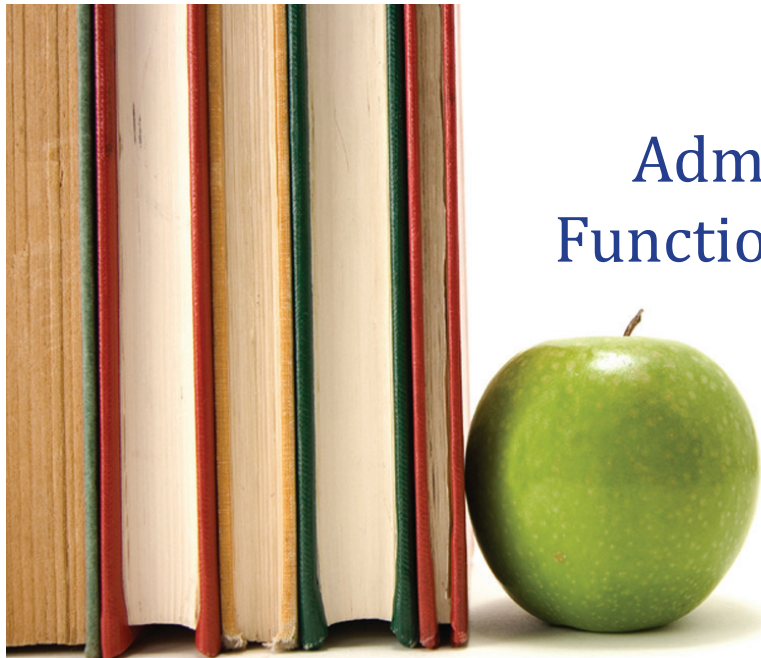


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## Chapter 2: Administration Roles and Functions in PBIS High Schools

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**H**igh schools are complex settings comprised of unique structures and challenges that can impact the implementation variables and strategies inherent in School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS). Typically larger in size and enrollment than elementary and middle schools, the organizational structure in high schools centers on subject matter departments and therefore tend to be more content-focused than student-focused. During the course of a day, a teacher in any department may see 150 or more students. The organizational structure and high volume of students does little to foster a sense of shared responsibility for individual students or the school environment as a whole. In addition to the departmental orientation, the hierarchical management structure employed in high schools adds another layer of complexity not found at the elementary level.

The primary role of the principal in an elementary school is instructional leader, with a focus on pedagogy and student achievement. In contrast, at the high school level, teachers are trained as experts in their content areas, and the principal functions more frequently in a management capacity as leader of an administrative team designed to address the daily functioning and business of the school. Specific responsibilities (e.g., curriculum, discipline, athletics) are delegated to one or more assistant principals, deans, or department chairs. Each member of the administrative team assumes authority, management and monitoring over a specific area and reports related issues, concerns and progress back to the principal and the rest of the team. Just as the departmental organization found in high schools can lead to fragmentation or a limited view of conditions, the delegation of administrative responsibilities across management areas can result in inconsistent standards and expectations preventing the development of a shared vision of the school community as a whole.

Clearly, the challenge of aligning multiple components and integrating initiatives is greater at the middle and high school levels than at the elementary level due to the structural differences. These challenges also represent a more expansive reform effort than at the elementary level due to management and organizational differences. Success in leading any reform effort often hinges on the ability of the administrator to create a shared vision within the school community and facilitate organizational structures that engage the staff in the adoption and implementation of the initiative (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Evidence also exists that suggests active involvement by the administrator is a key factor for successful implementation and sustainability of SWPBS in high schools (Bohanan et al., 2006; Flannery, Sugai & Anderson, 2009; Kincaid, Childs, Blasé & Wallace, 2007).

During the HS PBIS Forum, building principals and district administrators from schools located across the country assembled and contributed to a two-day session to explore and document the role they play in SWPBS implementation, and to share the actions which they perceived significantly contributed to appropriate, effective and sustained implementation. Forum participants contributing to the development



of this chapter included high school principals, assistant principals, district superintendents and district-level PBIS coordinators. This chapter provides a summary of the actions outlined by the forum participants as constructive efforts taken by principals and the members of their administrative teams to establish sustained implementation of SWPBS in their schools as well as a discussion of some of the challenges encountered. The chapter is organized around three major themes (a) leadership, (b) building support, and (c) targeted professional development, which were the areas of emphasis that emerged during the discussions. Readers who are interested in specific implementation procedures are encouraged to review the SWPBS Implementers' Blueprint and Self-Assessment (Sugai et al., 2005) available on [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).



## Leadership

Leadership occurs at many different levels in school settings and the administrative structure can vary based on the size of a school. A review of statistics posted on the New York and Missouri Departments of Education websites reflects the degree of difference that exists in schools across the nation. A large urban high school in the borough of Brooklyn in New York City, with nearly 4,000 students enrolled, has an administrative team comprised of one principal, two deans of students, twelve assistant principals and a student services coordinator. In contrast, a high school located in a rural area of Missouri with an enrollment of 131 students reports an administrative staff of one principal. In fact, the administrative team in the urban school is responsible for a student body that is larger than the entire population of the small town in which the Missouri high school is located. Of course, the vast majority of schools fall somewhere between these two extremes, however the differences illustrate the importance of context in any discussion about administrative structures and effective leadership.

The importance of strong leadership is revealed through examples of actions taken by the administrative team (e.g., principal, dean, assistant principal) and the SWPBS Leadership Team (e.g., chair, administrator and representative faculty and staff). In most high school administrative hierarchies, the principal of the school holds the position of presiding rank. As lead administrator, the principal is responsible for the direction and performance of (a) the school as a whole, (b) the administrative team, and (c) new innovations and initiatives. The following sections address the leadership role of the administrator across each of these functions.



### *Leading the School.*

High schools, for the most part, are deeply rooted in their past. As one forum participant expressed, “Those [teachers] who like and thrive in the current system are the ones who survived the system [as students].” For those educators, the existing structures and traditions found in many high schools align with their experience and view of how schools should work. In general, the traditions of departmentalization, course scheduling and student movement exist for the convenience of adults and result in an environment that is teacher-centered and content-driven. Students must adapt to the prevailing system.

The forum participants all expressed a need to shift to a focus on the learner and what is in the best interest of the student, rather than on what is convenient. In a learner-centered approach, effective teaching is defined as facilitating student learning and promoting positive learning outcomes. The challenge for the principal as leader of the school is to establish a vision that is learner-centered and includes an emphasis on the development of a school culture in which educators are as committed to improving the social environment as they are to their area of expertise and academic instruction. The principal must actively work to inspire and promote this shared vision. To accomplish this, he or she must be able to articulate the vision and communicate it in such a way that it galvanizes and motivates the organization.

The difficulty associated with leading a school through change efforts was communicated through several choruses of “change is hard” expressed by forum participants. Black & Gregersen (2002) contend that even with a well articulated vision, change is difficult because existing systems have worked well in the past for the individuals who make up the organization. The experience of individuals within the school (those we previously

identified as thriving survivors of the system) is that the traditional approaches (or the status quo) led to successful outcomes for them in the past. Yet their individual reality, based on past experience, does not match the changes or challenges in the current context (e.g., greater demand for accountability, diversity in student populations, socioeconomic gaps and achievement gaps). Black & Gregerson suggest that even when a vision has been clearly articulated, individuals within an organization fail to move in the new direction because people (a) tend to stick with what they are good at, (b) continue behaviors that have “worked” in the past, (c) persist in behaviors they feel competent in and resist adopting new behaviors in which they do not feel competent, and (d) must see a clear path to achieve the vision.

The implication of their findings is that as a leader, the principal must not only paint an inspiring vision of what is possible, but also provide a promising path to move them there. Therefore, in regards to SWPBS, effective leadership requires that the principal articulate the need for change, the vision for the future and the capacity of SWPBS to help realize the end goal. An important aspect of leading the school in this direction is to provide a concrete course of action, or pathway to the vision. A very tangible way for the principal to accomplish this is to take an active and visible role in the development, support and communication of the SWPBS action plan. Another function of the principal related to leadership is the aspect of fostering faculty and staff “buy in” for SWPBS, a topic that will be covered later in this chapter.



### *Leading the administrative team.*

Forum participants consistently heralded active leadership and participation by the principal as a critical factor for effective implementation and sustainability, an assertion that is supported by survey results reported by Flannery and her colleagues (2009). In a review of organizational factors that facilitate change, George, White and Schlaffer (2007), extend the definition of active leadership to include building alignment of philosophical principles and consistency across members of the administrative team. For example, several of the high schools included in the HS PBIS Forum session indicated that an assistant principal met with and functioned as part of the SWPBS leadership team and served as the liaison to the administrative team.

Yet, all of the schools involved in the HS PBIS Forum had administrative teams consisting of multiple assistant principals and deans. Forum participants indicated it is not sufficient for only one member of the administrative team to represent the total involvement for the administrative staff. To effectively manage the school environment, the entire administrative team must be knowledgeable and active in promoting the key concepts and features of SWPBS and integrate them into other systems that fall under their respective management responsibility (e.g., discipline, attendance, curriculum, athletics, extra-curricular activities).

Effective and efficient management by the administrative team is the result of a systemic approach that integrates the areas of responsibility (e.g., curriculum, facilities, extra-curricular activities) into a coherent body of theory and practice. Efficiency and effectiveness exist when each area of management has predictable structures and processes that complement the SWPBS implementation effort. Efficient systems include clear working structures (explanations

of who, where, and when), processes (how communication, problem solving, decision making and accountability will occur) and best practice (evidence-based approaches).

As leader of the administrative team, the principal ensures that SWPBS is embedded in all facets of school operations including personnel decisions and distribution, budget, staffing patterns, and staff development. Frequently, it is necessary to reallocate resources to promote the implementation of SWPBS. As resources are reallocated, it is important for the administrative team to communicate to staff the reasons behind the reallocation and how it is related to SWPBS objectives. One principal asserted, “Be prepared for people to be unhappy with some of the reallocation [of resources], and be able to show how it is aligned with the goals of the action plan”. Planning must expand to incorporate areas not typically considered in school-wide initiatives. For example, one administrator reported unanticipated changes in clerical procedures (e.g., payroll and substitute procurement to accommodate compensation for extra work time and training needs), additional printing costs for newsletters, and additional support from food and building services for school-wide events which led to additional costs that had not been included in initial budgets. Because changes in one system can impact related systems, the entire administrative team must be engaged in the implementation of SWPBS.



### *Leading the initiative.*

From a systems perspective, the layers of management often found in high schools not only impede consistency across departments, but often distance the principal from implementation efforts. Critical leadership strategies related to the adoption and implementation of any initiative include clear and consistent support in planning, organizing, problem solving, clarifying, informing, monitoring, motivating, managing conflict, team building, networking and rewarding (George et al., 2007). These functions are typically carried out by the SWPBS leadership team (PBIS team), the work group composed of stakeholders organized to develop, implement, manage and assess a comprehensive system of SWPBS. To effectively lead the initiative, the principal must build the capacity of the PBIS team. Capacity building, in terms of the PBIS team, involves putting into place the means necessary to allow the team to assess, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate SWPBS. Capacity building can include the delegation of authority, allocation of operational funds, access to resources, and the development of data systems, communication systems and working structures to work effectively. Capacity building also includes the role the principal plays in developing and advancing emerging leaders. Forum participants emphasized the importance of establishing an efficient and accurate system to collect and report data and indicated it was necessary to model and train the PBIS team on how to use the data for problem identification and clarification.

Emerging evidence and commentary of the forum participants indicate capacity building occurs when the principal is accessible, supportive and works closely with the PBIS team. The following are examples of capacity building to support implementation in high school settings.



### *Case Study: Addison Trails High School (ATHS)*

ATHS is in the DuPage High School District in Addison, Illinois. Located in a community that has experienced significant change in resources and population demographics, ATHS has a student population of 50% minority and 24% receiving free and reduced lunch. ATHS began implementation of SWPBS because of concerns regarding inconsistency with behavior interventions, a negative building climate among staff due to student behavior, concerns in the community regarding discipline and safety and rising discipline and attendance concerns.

ATHS district-level administration defined their role in SWPBS as (a) promoting teacher-buy-in and (b) providing technical assistance. Recognizing the challenges of implementing a school-wide initiative in a large urban setting, district-level administration worked collaboratively with building administrators to provide the necessary levels of support needed to move to successful implementation. To facilitate communication and collaboration, the district moved from a hierarchical, vertical management style to a flattened management



style. The adoption of the more horizontal flow of a flattened management structure eliminated layers of management, provided channels of direct communication and actively involved the PBIS team in the decision-making process. The intent was to provide open access to district resources and support for teams without the need to work through “middle management” or procedural barriers and formalities.

In the flattened structure, an assistant superintendent worked directly with and alongside building level staff (i.e., principal and PBIS team) to provide support in the form of training and allocation of resources and staff. The principal and PBIS team members had direct access to district level personnel, which allowed for a more immediate response to concerns and a constant flow of ideas. At the building level, the same horizontal organization allowed the PBIS team direct access to the principal. Across the administrative structure, the concept of a chain of command was eliminated resulting in improved communication and cooperation, creative problem solving and faster decision making. The administrators report that the improved level of accessibility and collaboration solidified the district and building team relationship and the flattened approach has fostered ownership at each level. Working closely with the PBIS team, both district and building administrators are able to model and shape the leadership skills (e.g., problem solving, managing conflict, team building) of the administrative team, which in turn builds the capacity of the PBIS team.



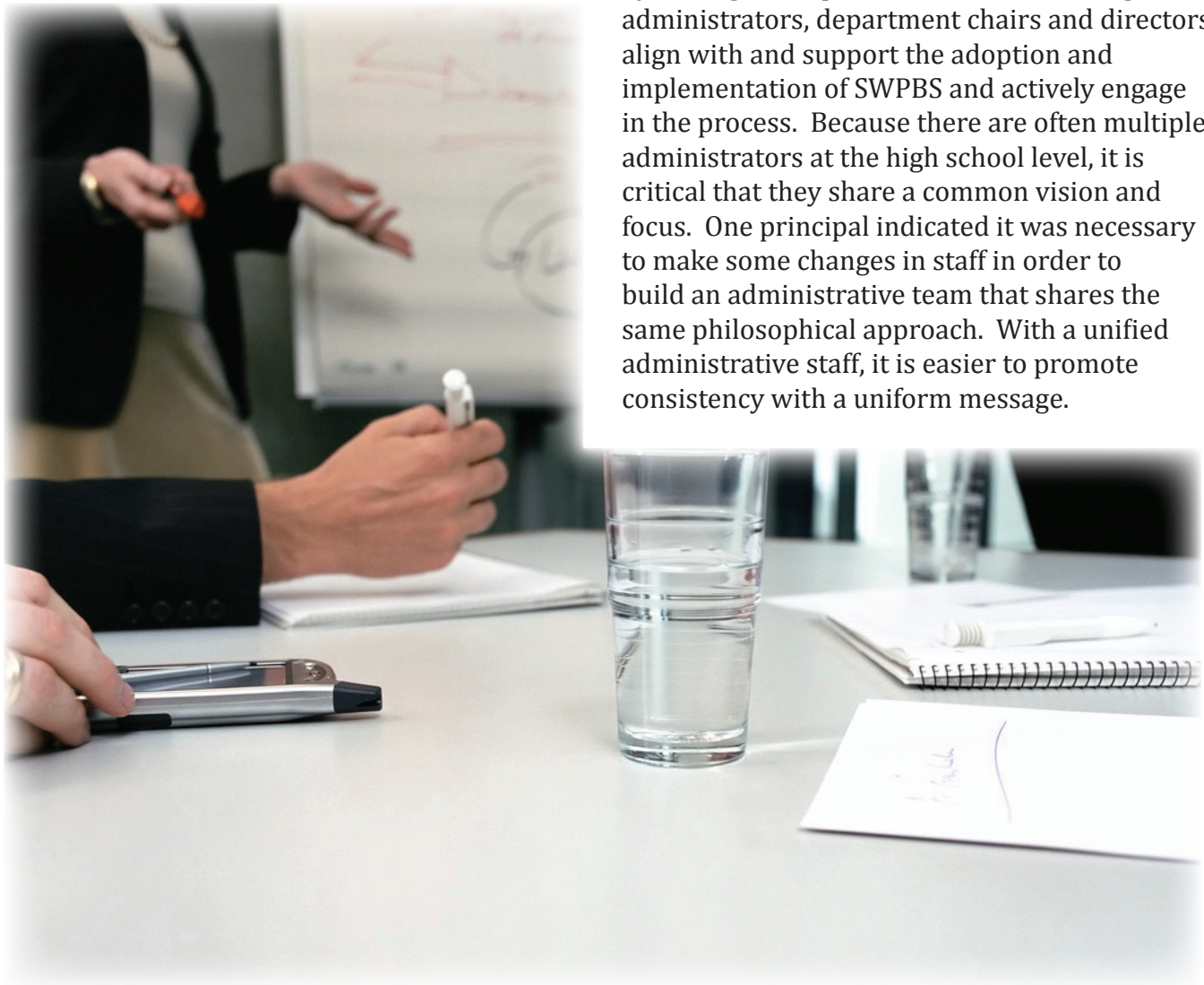
#### *Case Study: Mountain View High School (MVHS)*

Administrators at MVHS in Loveland, Colorado, initially investigated SWPBS as a framework to improve the social climate and decrease the frequency of disciplinary incidences at the school. Spurred by the availability of training and support provided by the Colorado Department of Education Behavior Support Initiative, MVHS spent a full year in preparation, during which time the administration examined feasibility, planned for implementation and established baseline behavioral data using the School-wide Information System (SWIS), a web-based information system designed by research faculty and staff at the University of Oregon (see [www.swis.org](http://www.swis.org)). During the first year of implementation, the Thompson School District provided support to MVHS in the form of a district PBIS coach, as well as access to resources and materials.

Adoption and sustained implementation of SWPBS has occurred in large part due to the active leadership and support provided by the administrative team. Seen as integral members of the PBIS team, the principal and assistant principal focused their attention on the development of an effective PBIS team. To create a strong team, members were recruited from capable, like-minded leaders within the school community that were respected by the rest of the teaching staff. Based on a philosophy of “empowerment without abandonment,” the administration actively worked to remove impeding barriers and provide the materials,



support and authority necessary for the team to accomplish goals. Perhaps most important were the measures taken to create an environment that allowed the team to work efficiently. The principal described having personal conversations with individuals or groups who were openly or passively opposed to implementation efforts. Stating, “You need to protect your risk takers and be willing to take the hits for the team and work on the sideline to foster support,” the administrator emphasized that direct intervention by the principal may be necessary to set the stage for success.



### *Summary from all participating schools:*

The conversation among the forum participants focused on actions they took to set the stage for success. Across the six schools represented, common themes and recommendations emerged. The following points represent a summary of the leadership strategies employed by the principals in the high schools.

#### **Clearly define expectations.**

Once the decision is made to implement SWPBS, the principal must set the stage with a clear expectation that everyone will participate and actively work to get everyone on the same page. Start with the administrative team by setting the expectation that all building administrators, department chairs and directors align with and support the adoption and implementation of SWPBS and actively engage in the process. Because there are often multiple administrators at the high school level, it is critical that they share a common vision and focus. One principal indicated it was necessary to make some changes in staff in order to build an administrative team that shares the same philosophical approach. With a unified administrative staff, it is easier to promote consistency with a uniform message.



### **Establish a strong PBIS leadership team.**

Development of a strong PBIS team was emphasized by all the principals. A PBIS team that is comprised of trusted and respected members of the school community will have more authority and success in communicating the significance of SWPBS and the need for change. A strong team is comprised of people with a shared vision, common values, and who recognize the importance of the adoption and sustained implementation of SWPBS. A strong team requires active recruitment of highly regarded and motivated staff members who are committed to the functioning of the school and who are willing to invest in the work, and then invest in the team through consistent interaction to develop the leadership skills that emerge in team members. Responsibility and authority needs to be delegated and credit given to the team for success. The team should not include individuals who do not have a strong professional commitment, who are resistant or not aligned with the philosophical underpinnings of SWPBS, nor those who are simply fulfilling an obligation to be a member of a school committee, which diminishes the strength of the committee and can lead to low morale and more work for the more effective members of the team.

Lebanon High School (LHS) in Lebanon, Missouri, characterizes their school climate as a “positive culture,” based in large part to the strength of the PBIS team. Comprised of both staff and students who take responsibility for implementation and communication of information to the rest of the school community, the strength of the team has evolved over six years. The team has assumed a level of ownership with the realization that SWPBS is not a “top-down” mandate, which then generalized to the school staff as a whole.

### **Provide strong, visible support for the leadership team.**

Once teachers and staff have stepped into the leadership role, the principal must publicly support decisions made by the team. To achieve credibility among the faculty and staff, the status and validity of the PBIS team is elevated through frequent, public acknowledgement, recognition, contingent praise and endorsement of actions. The principal should outline for the faculty and staff as often as possible the progress of the PBIS team and codify team decisions and procedures into policy. In essence, the principal must work to ensure the school staff does not see the PBIS team as just another committee, but rather an important problem-solving and decision making-body charged with implementing effective practices and procedures to produce better outcomes for students.

### **Create structures that allow the Leadership Team to be efficient.**

The principal should schedule a common plan time for PBIS team members and release them from all other committees and duties to allow adequate time for them to meet and complete related tasks. Reallocate FTE to allow one person to coordinate and manage SWPBS activities. Enlist at least one support staff member for assistance with paperwork, distribution of information, routine tasks and special projects. LHS provided an extra plan time for their internal coach to allow adequate time to carry out the coaching responsibilities.

### **Clarify decision and policy making procedures.**

Clearly define which decisions, policies and procedures can be made by the PBIS team with the principal present, and which need to go back to the administrative team for review and final decision. For decisions that are referred





to the administrative team, respond to the PBIS team in a prompt manner.

**Make relevant, comprehensive, accurate and timely data available to the team.**

Review the data with the team at least monthly to (a) identify problems, (b) link problem solving and solutions to data, (c) prioritize goals, (d) evaluate implementation efforts, and (e) evaluate effectiveness. All of the forum participants indicated they needed to become more efficient and effective at the data-collection process. Five of the six participating schools use SWIS for data entry and analysis.

Several participants indicated a need for training to increase the skills of team members in the efficient and effective use of data. Administrators emphasized the need for accurate and consistent data by communicating with staff that problem solving begins with using the data to define the problem. For example, to emphasize the importance of efficient and accurate reporting, the administration of Somersworth High School (SHS), located in Somersworth, New Hampshire, conducted frequent teacher trainings on behavior definitions, how to accurately complete a behavior referral form, and what behaviors constitute an office referral. This course of action resulted in a reduction of inappropriate office referrals and greater accuracy in available data used by the PBIS team for problem solving and progress monitoring. For efficiency and consistency, SHS also designated a staff member to be responsible for all data entry and retrieval.

**Attend the PBIS team meetings.**

Regular attendance by the principal highlights the significance of the team and validates the importance of the work. Attendance allows direct and efficient communication and provides the opportunity to problem solve with the PBIS team, which in turn leads

to greater efficiency in the decision-making process. Regular attendance also creates the opportunities for the principal to reinforce team efforts, to listen for barriers to implementation, and actively work to remove those barriers.

Principals at the HS PBIS Forum recognize they hold a unique position in their schools that affords them a broader perspective on issues and concerns than most of their staff. Because of that broader perspective, they are central to the effort to establish the vision and related goals, to build support, to align resources, and to engage key players to move implementation of SWPBS forward. Overall, the principals indicate they were involved in every aspect of implementation and contributed by providing the resources, problem solving and ongoing support necessary to build the capacity of and support the PBIS teams.



## Building Support

**B**uilding support for the adoption and implementation of SWPBS was the second major theme that emerged as a critical function of the administrator. Common wisdom maintains fidelity, and consistency of implementation improves if 80% of staff indicate approval of the systems and strategies presented. Achieving an 80% approval rating was equated to getting “buy-in” or “everyone on board.” In essence, buy-in was expressed as an agreement by the faculty and staff with the core values and critical features of SWPBS and the intention to actively implement and support the practices outlined by the PBIS team.

A primary task of the administrator is to promote buy-in and active participation in SWPBS across the majority of the faculty and staff. Many administrators, however, indicated this can be one of the most difficult tasks during the initial phases of implementation. As outlined previously, even when a clear vision exists, people do not readily get on board and move easily in a new direction. To create buy-in, it is necessary for stakeholders to (a) see the need for change, (b) value the outcomes of the proposed changes, (c) have the requisite skills, resources and tools to be successful, and (d) be reinforced for their efforts. The administrator can facilitate movement with efforts in each of these areas.

### **Establish the need for change.**

The administrator should function as the driving force to establish SWPBS as a priority for the school. A first step is to articulate a vision of what is possible contrasted with a clear and objective review of current conditions. Emphasize the contrast by enhancing the conceptual distance between the current status and the goals behind implementation. Present visual images (graphs based on data) so that the contrast between current conditions and

desired outcomes is clearly illustrated and understood. When establishing the need for change, focus on the core features of what is different in SWPBS that will lead to the desired outcomes (e.g., data-based decisions, clear working structures, consistency across settings). Movement in this direction may require that the principal openly questions existing practices and procedures that are not aligned the goals of SWPBS and are not evidence-based and student-centered.

### **Address valued outcomes.**

In addition to outlining the improved outcomes for students, focus on the outcomes related to an improved school climate and teaching environment (e.g., a decrease in disruptive behavior, an increase in positive student-adult interaction, more time to teach).

### **Provide the skills, resources and tools to be successful.**

It is difficult for people to move willingly in a new direction if they do not feel they have a level of competence or the resources needed to be successful. An administrator can address this by acknowledging that SWPBS may represent a new approach for many, and that time and resources will be allocated to support staff in the process. This is discussed more thoroughly as targeted professional development later in this chapter.

### **Reinforce efforts.**

Reinforce individual staff behavior to promote cooperation and collaboration and publicly acknowledge faculty and staff effort, contributions and successes. Such recognition not only reinforces the behavior, it serves as an antecedent to encourage others to participate. In addition to public recognition during meetings and formal gatherings, seek out contributing individuals to offer specific praise and appreciation for their efforts.



### *Strategies to Building Support*

According to the forum participants, one of the most effective ways to create support for SWPBS is for the administrator to be highly visible as a strong proponent. The following are summaries of strategies to maintain a high profile and galvanize support that were shared by the forum participants.

#### **Be knowledgeable about SWPBS.**

Know the empirical evidence that supports the effectiveness of SWPBS and be able to articulate the key concepts and practices. As one principal stated, “If you’re going to have conversations with teachers about change and expectations, you better be well-grounded in what you’re discussing.”

#### **Conduct formal and informal overviews and meetings.**

Facilitate structured dialogues to uncover concerns, assumptions and levels of comfort and discomfort regarding SWPBS.

Acknowledge in meetings that changes will occur and will impact people in different ways, but that the outcomes will be better for the school as a whole and in the best interest of students. The administration at South Lakes High School (SLSH) in Reston, Virginia, embraced the philosophy that change requires ownership and found it necessary to provide multiple opportunities for all staff to participate in the dialogue. For that purpose, the principal regularly surveyed faculty and students and hosted an annual PBIS Faculty Forum which faculty attended during their planning periods. This practice created an opportunity to discuss in a small group with the principal and PBIS team members what is working and voice any concerns regarding SWPBS.

#### **Engage staff in the conversation.**

Throughout the discussion, the participants stressed the benefit of a “planning year” to conduct a needs assessment and provide opportunities for staff to process information and build consensus around the vision and goals of SWPBS. The goal of staff engagement is to develop a “critical mass” of teachers and staff who will support implementation and sustain the prescribed practices. This is in alignment with the general recommendation of achieving 80% faculty support before implementing SWPBS (e.g., Team Implementation Checklist). In addition to faculty-wide meetings, principals met with department chairs and other stakeholders to listen, respond to concerns and obtain feedback. The information gathered during the planning year helped the PBIS team develop proactive responses to identified problems. The conversations also became an important vehicle to address challenging topics and underlying assumptions. For example, one principal indicated that discussions related to school-wide behavior and discipline frameworks allowed for further discussion and interest in cultural diversity, a discussion that had been attempted previously but never evolved.

#### **Create a safe working environment.**

Set expectations and norms of conduct for faculty meetings to guarantee civil and respectful discourse and promote collaboration and cooperation. It is important, particularly in the initial implementation efforts, for the principal to attend and monitor the direction and tenor of all meetings. Effective facilitation of meetings includes monitoring group emotions; it can help to break tension during a discussion by calling attention to the fact that it exists and working with the group to rectify the problem. Model and emphasize talking with and not at colleagues.





implementation steps and evaluation processes can alleviate some of the stress caused by change. To create and promote a comprehensive and integrated plan, develop and review a master calendar of all school-wide initiatives, including SWPBS with the staff on a regular basis as well as a predictable process to assess implementation efforts and progress. Clarity on the plan and how SWPBS fits into the overall functioning of the school can help create a sense of stability, direction and confidence in the process.

### **Be transparent in the use of data.**

It was acknowledged that faculties often have a mistrust of data and how they are used. To counter this impression, participants recommend transparency in the use of all data. Data were shared monthly at faculty meetings, with discussions around the implications of the data, including links between consistent implementation to data results (improved or not). AT SLHS, data analysis is taken even farther with the establishment of a nine member research committee to work with the principal to analyze data annually. The team receives release time during the school day to review data and make recommendations. Devoting time and resources to allow broad representation on the research team and the focus on data has emphasized the importance of data and has reinforced the idea PBIS is a school-wide initiative which involves the faculty assessing the progress and merits of SWPBS.

### **Create efficient working structures.**

Change can be unsettling, and the challenges that will occur as adjustments are made may create tension. In addition, current systems and structures may impose barriers in unforeseen ways and reveal problems for which there are no immediate answers, which can also add to unease. Clear articulation of the goals,

### **Start small and establish concrete goals.**

Given the size and complexity of high schools, large reform efforts and wide-scale implementation can easily overwhelm and discourage staff. Acknowledge that implementation may lead to disruption of the status quo and cause some unease. Move carefully and deliberately to narrow the focus with small, obtainable goals. For example, LHS limits action plans to only two goals at any given time, thereby preventing their resources and faculty from being overwhelmed by the process. As procedures are put into place, ensure that they are related to the established goals and that faculty understand the link between the procedures and the goal.

In general, the administrators maintain a highly visible profile throughout the SWPBS implementation process, a clear sense of direction, and a plan on how to get there. They invest time and resources to develop a shared understanding of current and desired conditions and what would be required to meet the desired goals. They create and maintain opportunities to promote direct, clear and honest conversation between the administration and staff, and provide support to capitalize on enthusiasm and success and reduce frustration. The high level of active



engagement on the part of the administrative teams has been a critical factor in promoting support of SWPBS across the faculties of the participants' schools.

### *Building External Support*

Forum participants expanded the conversation to include the role of the administrator in building support external to the school staff. Building support for SWPBS at the district level, in the community and in related organizations helps to establish the value of SWPBS across other contexts. For several of the forum participants' schools, successful implementation was dependent on external services, supports and relationships. For example, to build support at the district level, the administrators work collaboratively with district leaders to access resources for staff development, personnel, financial support and technology. The principals presented the following strategies to strengthen collaborative relationships with district offices and other agencies.

#### **Share building level data with Central Office.**

Districts monitor data in a way that may not demonstrate significant trends seen at the building level. Provide Central Office with reports that link building data trends with action plan items and implementation efforts.

#### **Focus district data analysis on progress monitoring.**

It was interesting to note that just as the participants indicated teachers are suspicious of how data are used, there was a similar shared perception across forum participants that district-level administration uses data to punish. Actively engage with district-level administration to focus on data as a tool for progress monitoring, instructional decision making, and to determine needs at the building level. Use this information to the benefit of the

school to underscore requests for resources.

#### **Link data with district improvement goals.**

Linkage can facilitate discussion regarding budget allocations, staff assignments, professional development and other forms of district-level support.

#### **Include teacher union leadership early in the discussion.**

Structure opportunities for on-going conversation and feedback to allow the representative agencies to see SWPBS as a response to the needs and concerns of the professional organization. Engage district leaders in conversation to help them understand why flexibility or changes in contractual agreements are needed to support full-scale implementation. Include items such as scheduled meeting time and extra duties related to SWPBS implementation as contract negotiation issues.

#### **Release organized factual reports to the community.**

In addition to reporting to the community about school events, report progress in school climate based on SWPBS goals to the Board of Education and through newsletters and local media coverage.



### **Solicit parent and community support.**

Survey parents during conference time and PTSA meetings to assess their concerns and awareness of PBIS efforts. Actively target parents of at-risk students for outreach efforts.

### **Survey students.**

Engage students in the process by conducting surveys on a regular basis, creating a student advisory group or student focus groups. Meeting with the student groups on a regular basis encourages student participation and also keeps efforts student-centered. One example is the 'Chain Reaction Club' at SHS, a student leadership team created to provide information to the PBIS team. Based on the input of the students, the school has addressed issues such as bullying and diversity.



### **Targeted Professional Development**

Finally, forum participants stressed the importance of ongoing and targeted staff development to promote consistent and sustained implementation. Targeted professional development is a purposeful endeavor based on a clear statement of purpose and goals designed to improve skills needed for implementation of features of SWPBS. The administrator can bring clarity and focus to the process by articulating the specific purpose and the desired and measurable outcomes that are expected as a result of a comprehensive professional development plan.

Gusky (2000) describes professional development as an intentional, ongoing, systemic process. It is intentional when it is based on a clear statement of purpose and there is a process to determine how the goals will be assessed. It is ongoing when it is seen as a job-embedded process with multiple learning opportunities beyond special events that occur at scheduled intervals throughout the year. Finally, it is systemic when the individual craft skills and organizational changes are addressed simultaneously and support one another.

Targeted professional development emphasizes both individual and organizational change. The goal is for the administrator to (a) demonstrate that skill development at the individual level is a critical component of organizational improvement and (b) focus the attention on the shared purpose. Targeted professional development focuses on incremental changes that are linked to a clear vision and allows everyone to view each step in terms of a unified goal.

Administrators should make a clear plan that includes professional development goals to improve student performance, improve teacher effectiveness, set high standards for teacher performance, and promote continuous



staff learning. Establish a comprehensive professional development plan that includes a needs assessment process. Determine what skills and competencies are needed to improve student performance and successfully implement SWPBS, then identify the actual skill/competency level of the staff. Assessment can be done through observation, peer review, portfolios, activity logs, self-assessment, parent and student surveys or teacher focus groups. Staff development should focus on identified gaps. Measurable goals and objectives (changes in behavior) to be achieved as a result of participating in the professional development activities also should be identified.

The greatest challenge in the delivery of staff development expressed by forum participants was the scarcity of time. With the many competing initiatives occurring in high schools, principals felt there were not adequate resources or time available to provide the training and follow-up necessary. Several forum participants indicated they carved time out of the regular school day by designating a portion of planning time (e.g., one day per week) to be used for professional development. Other ways to create time for professional development include adding professional development days to the school calendar or professional development hours to the school day. Some schools add professional staff (e.g., permanent subs) to allow staff release time to engage in peer observation, coaching or professional study. Some high schools alter the weekly school schedule to extend instructional time four days per week to allow for early dismissal on one day, while others have used block scheduling with a provision of a shared planning period for members of an instructional team or academic department.

### *Examples of Professional Development*

Suggestions provided by forum participants related to staff development include:

#### **Use direct and explicit instruction with the staff.**

Model how to teach expectation and behavior. At LHS, the principal and the PBIS team modeled for the faculty how to use the lesson plans, showed what an 'expectations' poster looks like and demonstrated how to make a poster for the classroom. They warn against assuming teachers will perform these tasks unless they are specifically demonstrated.

#### **Schedule professional development during the contract day.**

Allocate staff development days for SWPBS training needs. If training must occur after the school day, consider offering CEU's or other benefits to compensate teachers for their time.

#### **Include a classroom component.**

Principals were unanimous in their belief that all staff should participate in on-going staff development focused on classroom management and proactive management strategies.

#### **Be an active participant in all professional development activities.**

Active involvement highlights the shared commitment and importance of SWPBS efforts and models for the staff that everyone can benefit by participating in the training activities.

#### **Coordinate with new teacher training.**

Embed PBIS training in district and building level new teacher orientation with a focus on the requisite knowledge and skills to implement SWPBS. At the building level, thoroughly in-service new teachers on related PBIS procedures.



## Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the strategies used by principals in high schools to support sustained implementation of SWPBS. Discussions with forum participants revealed challenges to implementation at the high school level not found in elementary settings, including differences in size, management, teacher and student behaviors, organizational structures and management styles. Three broad themes emerged as critical in terms of the role of the principal (a) leadership, (b) building support for sustained implementation, and (c) providing training for the PBIS leadership team and the staff as a whole.

The principals endorsed a very hands-on leadership style with an emphasis on clear expectations for the administrative team, the PBIS leadership team and staff. Empowerment of a strong PBIS leadership team and active

involvement by the principal in all facets of implementation were indicated as success factors. In addition, the principals stressed the importance of district-level support to access the necessary resources and training needed to support implementation efforts. Finally, the importance of professional development was discussed, with the lack of time for adequate delivery and follow-up identified as a significant barrier.

Perhaps the most important theme to emerge from the conversations was that active, visible involvement by the administrator is critical to the adoption and sustained implementation of SWPBS. While there are few empirical studies that evaluate SWPBS in high schools, the information shared by the participants of the HS PBIS Forum provide valuable insight into specific strategies to meet the challenge of the complex settings high schools present.





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## Chapter 3: Establishing and Maintaining Staff Participation in PBIS High Schools

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**T**he organization and operations of high schools present challenges in establishing and maintaining staff participation around school-wide initiatives, especially compared to elementary and middle schools. First, these challenges include organizational and staff expectations concerning discipline and teaching prosocial skills and the emphasis on academic performance. For example, high schools tend to be larger, complex organizations with a greater number of staff than elementary and middle schools. Teachers have significantly larger numbers of students for whom they are responsible for direct instruction, typically over 100 students compared to an elementary teacher who has 15-25 students. In addition, departmental structures tend to decentralize the administrative structure and require more time to gain buy-in within each department as well as each grade level (Newman et al., 2000; Bohanon et al., 2009).

Second, often as a result of their training and the traditional high school culture, high school staff members have different expectations concerning their responsibility for their students' social skill development. Teaching academic content knowledge to students who are ready to learn takes priority over teaching social skills. Many teachers feel that their students have sole responsibility for their own behavior, irrespective of whether they have the social skills to succeed in their setting. As a result, many high school staff members tend to have higher rates of exclusionary discipline practices than elementary school staff, in an effort to maintain instructional control (May et al., 2003).

Third, in most high schools, student academic data are shared and highly valued by both district and school-based administrative staff. Data on high schools' behavioral climate, dropout rates and other disciplinary outcomes often are not publicly shared, nor

are administrators and staff members held highly accountable or reinforced for lower rates of these outcomes. Finally, high school staff members' participation on leadership teams may be inconsistent due to after school commitments (e.g., athletics, school clubs) and lack of incentives.

Given the above factors, the development of the structures and systems for staff and student participation must be given priority and dedicated time and attention. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the challenges of, as well as, potential strategies for establishing and maintaining staff, student and administrative participation in the successful and sustained implementation of school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) in high schools. Staff participation requires (a) a school leadership team with the representation, responsibility, and authority to organize and coordinate behavior support interventions, and (b) agreement by the majority (>80%) of the staff to the development and implementation of a school-wide plan to improve the social culture of the school (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Without these components, implementation of SWPBS will not succeed or sustain (McIntosh, Sugai & Horner, 2009). In this chapter, the focus is on strategies for (a) establishing and maintaining a leadership team, (b) enhancing initial staff understanding of why to implement SWPBS, (c) maximizing initial staff contributions and staff engagement, (d) maximizing student involvement, and (e) sustaining staff participation. Examples of these practices are also presented.



## Establishing and Maintaining a Leadership Team

One feature that substantially impacts the success or failure of a high school SWPBS initiative is an effective SWPBS leadership team. Leadership teams provide direction, prompting, and reinforcement of the SWPBS initiative. A high school SWPBS leadership team should be representative of the school by including individuals from administration, departments, student body (i.e., a variety of leaders in student government, highly-respected students as well as non-engaged students), parents, support staff (e.g., security, clinical support staff, data entry staff, transition staff), and community (e.g., businesses, youth agencies). It is important to solicit volunteers for team members who have an experience with school-wide implementation efforts and are respected by their peers. These influential staff members and students will be more effective in conveying information, soliciting support, and promoting participation than individuals who lack the motivation and experience to contribute to a school-wide effort. The core team should range from 10-15 members depending on school size and enrollment, and utilize a subcommittee structure to ensure efficient distribution of effort and task completion. Redundancy in leadership (co-coaching) is preferred in order to anticipate staff turnover and ensure long term implementation consistency.

Given the size of high schools, the use of a variety of subcommittees can support the implementation of, for example, data-based decision making, teaching and acknowledging expectations, and staff, student, and family communication. The use of student subcommittees that report to the primary tier team is a systematic way to recognize student voice and increase participation.

The regular and consistent meeting of the school leadership team is important

in providing direction, prompting, and reinforcement to the entire staff. Often, time and expectations to participate in SWPBS activities are not built into staff's schedules and job descriptions. As a result, leadership teams can lack the structures to hold staff and students accountable for achieving designated tasks.

Secondly, ineffective and inefficient team meetings result in frustrating experiences for those staff and students who are interested in participating. Ineffective team meetings result from:

- team members having unclear and inconsistent vision and poorly defined member roles, norms and expectations
- the team leader lacking the skills to facilitate meetings in an efficient manner and to achieve valid and meaningful outcomes

These two factors contribute to potentially high team attrition rate, regular ongoing recruitment of new team members, lack of staff continuity, and slowdowns in implementation momentum across the year.

A number of factors contribute to a sustainable and effective leadership team: (a) consistent administrative participation, support and understanding, (b) active and continuous staff and student participation, and (c) effective and efficient meetings. At the high school level, one of the most significant factors involves scheduling of meetings to maximize attendance. Staff typically have schedules with different planning and instructional periods that inhibit cross departmental and programmatic meetings. Additionally, in contrast to elementary and middle schools, high school staff members have other responsibilities after school, such as athletic coaching, club meetings, and community relations. Therefore, meeting times of the SWPBS team should be



set up before school or arrangements made to free these staff during the school day to achieve maximum participation. Finally, school leadership should explore possible incentives for participation, for example, continuing education credits, reduced teaching loads, and instructional assistants.

It is vital that the leadership team have timely accessibility to their school's own data to assist in securing buy-in and designing the plan. The team should use data-based decision making to review the overall effectiveness of the plan and to inform modifications in the plan. An electronic data collection system, such as the School-wide Information System (May et al., 2009) should be utilized by the leadership team to review data at least monthly, and to share data summaries with subcommittees and the full faculty. Data should include, for example, discipline information, academic performance, dropout rates and attendance. These data can be informative to school teams in their development of effective systems of support by identifying common problematic behaviors and where, how often, and when they are occurring, and who is involved (*See Chapter 5: Data-Based Decision Making in High Schools*).

Another critical measure of SWPBS is integrity of the implementation. Integrity is related to the accuracy and consistency with which an intervention or practice is implemented over time. A number of tools have been developed to measure implementation integrity, such as the Benchmarks of Quality (Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007). Other tools, like the Team Implementation Checklist (Sugai, Horner, & Lewis-Palmer, 2001), are important to assess team status and progress on implementation of core SWPBS features, and to guide team members in action planning.

### Enhancing Initial Staff Understanding of SWPBS

Staff participation is a critical component of successful SWPBS implementation, and the orientation of high school staff to SWPBS can be important in increasing this participation. The initial step in this process, and one of the most important factors, is gaining of administrative support (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Administrative staff need to actively support the implementation process including being visible, modeling the behavior, sharing the data, acknowledging the staff participation, participating in SWPBS meetings, recognizing SWPBS as an organizational structure, and securing and maintaining funding.

One strategy to gain support from high school administrative staff is to incorporate into an initial overview of SWPBS effectiveness data from other high schools that have successfully implemented SWPBS. These data could include the reduction of disciplinary events and time needed to manage these events, as well as behavioral climate data, academic outcomes, attendance, and graduation rates. Another strategy is to capitalize on district-wide self-improvement plans that highlight the development of a positive behavioral climate and emphasize maximizing success for all



students, especially, reducing dropout rates.

A successful strategy that many high schools have used to introduce SWPBS to high school staff is to present a data-based, objective picture of the school by sharing information with staff on behavioral climate, office disciplinary referrals, suspensions, dropout rates, and tardies, as well as academic performance. In particular, it is critical to build a data-based picture of both the academic and behavioral performance of the overall school student enrollment. Administrators, staff members, and students will develop an understanding of their successes and challenges in improving the outcomes of all students. Climate surveys are useful tools that can be administered to students, instructional staff, administrators, security personnel, and other staff to identify and prioritize their concerns. These data should be presented in a graphical format that focuses on those issues that the stakeholders have identified as the most important issues. Staff and student focus groups also are helpful in identifying issues and concerns. Again, the goal of the initial introduction is to develop awareness of the importance of a positive behavioral climate in improving the achievement of all students in school, not just those perceived to be interested and ready for learning.

Orienting the staff members to the SWPBS concepts should include being sensitive to the context in which the concepts are delivered. Many schools have found success in briefly introducing SWPBS via video in a large group setting and then breaking into small groups to explain how SWPBS will work in their school. The incorporation of humorous video examples can demonstrate the concepts and make the trainings interesting and more engaging. Sometimes beginning a pilot SWPBS initiative with a certain group of students (e.g., ninth graders or during a summer program) has helped demonstrate implementation and

effectiveness of the approach. Included in these presentations is the message that a SWPBS initiative at the high school level will usually take at least one year to get off the ground.



### *Case Study: Fruita Monument High School (FMHS)*

An example of a successful high school introduction of SWPBS was the approach followed at the Fruita Monument High School. FMHS's principal came to the school after successfully implementing SWPBS at a middle school. The principal never used or mentioned SWPBS as a program she previously used. The implementation kick-off consisted of a fall back-to-school in-service with a data-based review of what FMHS looked like. A Gallery Walk of school demographics and discipline data - by month, location, time of day, gender, and class - was presented. Other data included aggregated test scores, mobility, and free and reduced lunch information. Groups rotated around the room, noting on poster paper next to each data presentation their impressions and reflections. The administrative team then summarized the most important issues.

A team was formed to address the identified issues. First, the team reviewed all of the high school's existing committees for overlap in function and purpose. As a result of this process, several committees were merged or disbanded. For example, the Student Acknowledgement committee and the School Climate committee were merged to be the SWPBS committee.





## Maximizing Initial Staff Contributions and Staff Engagement

As reported in the last section, an appropriate introduction will begin to build momentum towards buy-in, which is required for effective SWPBS implementation. The goal of the effort is to have the staff see SWPBS as not just another initiative, but an umbrella under which many previously implemented activities/initiatives fit. Gaining staff buy-in can be accomplished in several ways:

- Obtain information and data
  - Staff and student conduct needs assessments (dropout data, tardies, climate surveys) to determine the top three problems from different constituents (students, teachers, security)
  - Staff and student-implemented focus groups to identify problems (e.g., “Lunch and Learn” groups)
  - Interviews and data analysis to obtain a description of current discipline practices
- Communicate information
  - Administrative leaders start small and plan all staff orientations strategically by sharing needs assessment data and being mindful of the contextual/cultural issues of the school
  - Existing organizational structures (e.g., departmental meetings and communications, student club and sports teams) are used to communicate information and solicit feedback
- Implementation information
  - Demonstrations (e.g., videos, guest presentations) are used to model effective implementation examples

- Examples of teaching high school prosocial skills should be modeled and practiced in contextually effective ways (e.g., humor)
- Information should be provided on the amount of effort involved by instructional staff in implementing SWPBS
- Include students
  - Students should be used to actively problem solve how to improve the behavioral climate of the school and be involved through the SWPBS process

Once the core principles of SWPBS and the rationale for its implementation in the high school have been presented, the next step is to maximize staff participation by securing buy-in from at least 80% of the staff. Then, the leadership team can develop and conduct professional development and training activities that include (a) rationale for a preventive approach, (b) applications of SWPBS practices in contextually and developmental ways, (c) using data for decision making, (d) development of definitions and procedures for common problem behaviors (e.g., tardies, truancy, cell phone use, PDAs, noncompliance), and (f)



strategies for increasing positive social feedback and interactions.

The following example illustrates how a high school in Colorado established and increased staff participation. Initially, a team of six staff members attended a presentation in Denver by Dr. George Sugai of the National Technical Assistance Center for PBIS to learn the rationale and steps involved in implementing SWPBS. Over the next six months, the team held bi-monthly meetings with the assistance of a district coach to develop a teaching matrix and a slogan – Respect and Responsibility (R&R). SWPBS was introduced to the staff at the February in-service through a power point presentation. The staff was broken into groups based on the nine key locations in their school, and each group was given a piece of poster paper and the task to write 3-5 positively stated

expectations for their location for Respect and Responsibility. After the activity, each group walked around to all nine matrices and made comments (gallery walk). The team spent the rest of the school year refining the kick-off for the school. The staff was never told what they had to do; however, they were involved throughout the process, and were able to identify key issues for their school. Even with a large staff of 125, this process insured that everyone had a voice in identifying issues, selecting solutions, and developing implementation strategies.



## Maximizing Student Involvement

Active student representation and involvement as team and subcommittee members can assist in securing staff and student buy-in, implementation integrity, sustained implementation, shared workloads, and reinforcement involvement. It is important to include all students, including those who need additional supports to succeed. Student and staff subcommittees can assist in developing and implementing:

- Relevant expectations
- Lesson plans for teaching expectations
- Effective acknowledgements for students and staff members
- Adaptations for increasing cultural relevance and effectiveness based on the data

In order to encourage active student participation, it is important to allocate funding and time for the student team to meet for trainings and major action planning. Student and faculty incentives are important for establishing and sustaining student participation.

Sometimes students may not believe that teachers and the administration will include them as meaningful partners in decision making; however, this perception can be reversed by providing overt support and encouragement from the principal, other administrative staff, and leadership team members throughout the process. Student teams must have support from staff members who they respect and trust. Student feedback mechanisms should be safe, relevant, and efficient. Finally, recognition of student leadership should be regular and public, for example, in school assemblies and publications, and community activities.



### *Case Study: Somersworth High School (SHS)*

Somersworth High School provides an excellent example of how actively involving students enhanced staff participation and implementation outcomes. SHS initiated development of SWPBS in 2007-08 after an initial orientation in 2006-07. The school was one of the ten high schools selected to participate in APEX (Achievement Prevention in Dropout and Excellence), a dropout prevention project from the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire. The student leadership team was introduced as an essential part of the SWPBS initiative. SHS' principal and school-wide leadership team completed the Student Leadership Self Assessment Tool (Main Street Academix, 2008) to assist in planning active student involvement. In particular, they were encouraged to establish a team of students who were diverse with respect to grade levels, academic achievement, socio-economic status, race, and gender.

Approximately 40 students were selected and informed about the SWPBS initiative and how they could assist the school-wide leadership team in implementation and discipline reform. Students also had a meeting with members of the APEX team who were overseeing the SWPBS implementation and described their student leadership roles and functions. A guidance counselor facilitated the process by which the student leadership team was formed and its responsibilities were described.

The student leadership team then completed



the Collaborative Team Process Checklist to establish procedures and protocols on how the team would operate (e.g., agenda, after-meeting log, team roles, data sharing, and space). The student leadership team was asked to participate in a full-day leadership institute, which was organized in collaboration with Main Street Academix from the New England College that specializes in student leadership development. Students were trained in team building activities and in how to take, administer, and analyze the Safe Measures Survey (Main Street Academix, 2008), which assesses student and staff perceptions on school climate (e.g., safety, fairness, and discipline). The student and school leadership teams held joint meetings to organize the survey schedule and logistics.

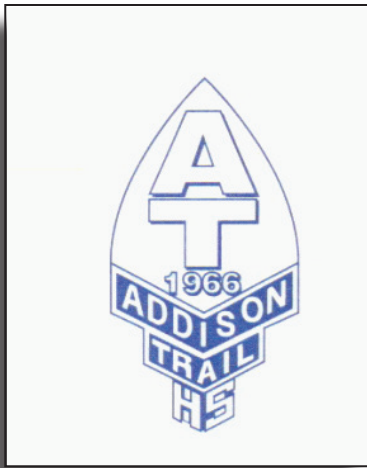
Survey data were presented at an all faculty meeting, and students facilitated roundtable discussions and dialogue about differences and similarities in perceptions on school climate between staff and students. Each roundtable was asked to pick the top three issues that needed immediate attention. At the end of the meeting, issues were posted around the room, and student and school-wide leadership team members used colored stickers to vote on their top three priorities. A mini brainstorming session was conducted about possible causes and solutions for identified issues, and a second meeting was arranged to start the action-planning process.

Students shared the results of the meeting with the entire student body through school-wide postings and classroom presentations in classrooms and at student club meetings. The student leadership team met with the school-wide team to debrief and plan next steps, which included activities to address some of the issues identified (e.g., lack of respect between students and staff).

The student leadership team also presented a skit at a school-wide assembly to show what respect does and doesn't look like. After the assembly, all teachers and students were asked to debrief by developing their own examples and descriptions of what respect does and doesn't look like (T-chart), and by identifying and operationally defining the critical elements of respectful relationships.

Based on these activities, the student and school-wide leadership team members met to start a joint action plan, which included items such as, (a) data sharing, (b) consistency in discipline issues and consequences, and (c) classroom management. The student leadership team has permanent representation at the school-wide leadership team meetings to share progress and updates. The student leadership team holds weekly meetings with regular agenda items and action planning updates. As part of the student activities, the student leadership team has presented at several state conferences.





### *Case Study: Addison Trail High School (ATHS)*

Another example of using student involvement to facilitate staff participation was the SWPBS implementation at Addison Trail High School located in Chicago's western suburbs. During the first year of SWPBS implementation, student names were requested from teachers to create a Student Advisory Group. About 100 students from grades 9-12 were brought together. Student leaders from athletics, student government, etc., and students who did not appear to be engaged in school were recruited. The event was called a Student Summit and opened with a short program explaining the SWPBS process experienced by staff members. Students were divided into groups of 10-12 students with a staff facilitator, and were asked to respond to a variety of questions and situations regarding school life. The students provided valuable feedback about the current implementation of SWPBS system as well as other insights into what school life felt like from the student perspective. Since the initial Student Summit, this large group meets once per semester to review progress and chart new plans. From these students, a smaller group was formed to meet monthly, maintain communication, and check progress toward shared goals.

## **Sustaining Staff Participation**

Once the SWPBS plan has been implemented, the maintenance of ongoing staff participation and buy-in is vital for achieving desired student school outcomes and ensuring implementation integrity and sustainability. Strategies for achieving this goal include:

- Regular, ongoing faculty updates during whole staff and departmental meetings
- Data sharing with the faculty on discipline practices using relevant information in a simple graphical format
- Email and other communication strategies for information sharing (e.g., emails, newsletters, mailbox notes)
- Personal stories sharing on the impact of SWPBS with students and staff members
- Recognition and acknowledgements for staff and team participation (e.g., teaching expectations, rewards) from administrative leaders and students (e.g., recognition slips)
- Teacher-friendly multi-modal materials (e.g., DVD lesson plans, positive behavior referrals, activity schedules)

All staff members, including support staff, need continual professional development in the basics of SWPBS implementation and systems change. Included in these trainings are the effective use of acknowledgements, instructional strategies and their relationship to problem behavior, self-management interventions, and de-escalation techniques. In addition, all staff members should have basic understanding of data collection, summarization, analysis, and reporting procedures, including an overview of the functions or purposes of problem behavior.

Professional development must be ongoing throughout the school year, and be supportive of the SWPBS team and the school-wide initiative.



Technical assistance providers should have ongoing relationships with schools and have scheduled visits with SWPBS teams to provide them (a) encouragement, (b) new information, (c) boosters on previous content, (d) recent research findings, (e) adaptive performance feedback, and (f) useful assessment tools.

It is important not to forget high school administrators in professional development opportunities. Topics that are important to school administrators include:

- SWPBS rationale and overview
- Data management and interpretation
- Prevention of behavioral problems
- Codes of conduct/discipline referral form
- Role of the administrator on the SWPBS team
- Data-based decision-making processes
- Meeting management and action planning
- Information sharing and communications
- Staff recognition and acknowledgement systems

Last, each team should have access to a SWPBS coach at the district level who guides the team's implementation efforts. This coach also should receive appropriate professional development supports to establish their fluency in the implementation of SWPBS in high schools. Coaches should be given opportunities to meet regularly with other high school coaches to address similar issues and provide suggestions and recommendations to each other.

### *Case Study: Middletown High School (MHS)*

The Middletown High School SWPBS process is a good example of how to sustain the SWPBS initiative in a high school. SWPBS was rolled out through the following training activities. On the first day of a staff in-service, and before any agenda or topic was discussed, a student centered DVD of the overview of PBIS, expectations, and incentive system was introduced. This strategy created an immediate culture of positive teamwork in which teachers and administrators were speaking the same language and sharing accountability for student behavior.

Staff members were divided into teams based on four behavioral expectations (Character, Attitude, Vision and Success). Each team was paired with a grade level and an expectation (i.e., the Success team was paired with the senior class). Throughout the school year, staff and students from the grade level worked together for common PBIS related goals (i.e., canned food drives, attendance, spirit, hallway decorating, etc.).

As part of the beginning year staff meeting, the staff teams rotated through four different professional development topics, one of which was an orientation to SWPBS. Each staff member received a one-hour overview of PBIS, and all logistics and components of the system were explained. Staff members also received PBIS resource bags that contained a PBIS brochure, PBIS acknowledgements, a PBIS staff newsletter, a review of the acknowledgement system, and a calendar of dates for PBIS events for the year. Free incentives provided by the community (e.g., restaurant gift certificates, office supplies) were also included to demonstrate staff support and appreciation. Time at the end of each professional development session was provided for any questions, concerns, or suggestions.



## Summary and Recommendations

The overall core principles of SWPBS have great relevance to high schools. However, high schools pose challenges to effective SWPBS implementation, such as scheduling, teacher caseloads, size of the school, and philosophical approaches to education and discipline. High schools that are more receptive to a SWPBS model and have more success in establishing staff participation, have leadership that emphasizes (a) an overall “success for all” approach for all students rather than just for those students who fit the school’s approach, (b) a data-based problem-solving approach, and (c) an outcome-based approach to improve graduation rates and reduce dropout rates. Administrative support is vital to a SWPBS team’s buy-in, roll out, and sustainability.

In implementing SWPBS, it is necessary to have student involvement and their active participation on the SWPBS team. SWPBS must be student-centered and developmentally and culturally appropriate. Empowering and supporting teachers to connect with students on a personal level is fundamental to effective SWPBS at the high school level.

Introducing SWPBS to high school staff requires an emphasis on understanding why a positive and preventative environment is crucial to ensuring success for all students. In addition, technical assistance and professional development providers must be prepared to invest at least 12 months to initiate the implementation of SWPBS in high schools.

Most of the current evaluative research (Horner, R., in press; Bradshaw, et al., in press; Bradshaw, et al., 2008) has been completed with elementary and middle schools. To enhance high school implementation of SWPBS, future research must demonstrate the effectiveness and utility of SWPBS in high schools. This kind

of support would increase the probability of participation and involvement by high school administrators and staff, especially if impact could be documented on (a) school climate, (b) disciplinary referrals, (c) tardies to class, (d) graduation rates, (e) school safety, (f) state testing scores, (g) attendance of students and staff, (h) teacher turnover, and (i) time spent in the classroom and academic engagement.

In addition, future research should incorporate group comparison designs, especially for schools that are implementing with and without integrity. Other research questions need to address strategies for improving implementation integrity, professional development practices, leadership teaming and participation, district-level support practices, sustainability and scaling up strategies, family and community involvement, and more intensive supports for students who require secondary and tertiary tier supports.

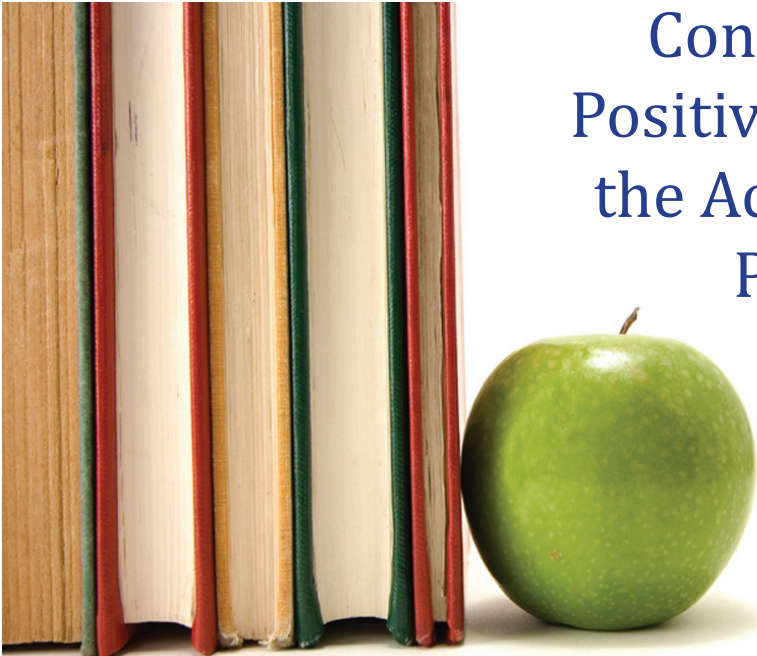


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# Chapter 4: Connecting School-wide Positive Behavior Supports to the Academic Curriculum in PBIS High Schools

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The majority of chapters in this monograph have focused on improving social behavior, reducing behavioral infractions and the necessary requisites to achieve improved school climate and social outcomes for students. While high schools are typically larger with more staff and students, the basic principles of effective instruction and effective behavioral supports are universal across all grade levels from K through 12. Clearly defining what is expected of students within and across school settings, teaching students to insure mastery of those expectations, and acknowledging incremental improvements along the way, are hallmarks of School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS). The basic logic of using data to guide decision making with respect to practice, selection for students along a continuum of intensity of need, and insuring adults in the building are fluent with all practices and procedures through systemic support, are also universal features of SWPBS across K-12. While the critical features are the same, unique challenges and existing organizational features of the high school will require adaptations.

Given the increase in size of most high schools and a shifting focus on student-managed learning and behavior, addressing problem behavior at the high school level is especially challenging for two reasons. First, problem behaviors often become more severe and chronic, as students grow older. In a survey of middle and high school teachers and administrators, 52% reported an increase in violence; in addition, they perceived that minor offenses such as verbal intimidation, threats, shoving and harassment were escalating at a far greater rate than the more serious violations of drugs, gang involvement, and weapons possession (Peterson, Beekley, Speaker, & Pietrzak, 1996). Second, there are more alternative options for students who present on-going challenging behavior, including

separate schools, long term suspension/expulsion, and students reaching a legal age allowing them to drop out of school all together. It is the latter challenge that is especially salient when examining the focus of this chapter, academics and SWPBS. While the acculturation of future citizens remains a central mission of education in the U.S., the primary focus is on academics. This is especially true at the high school level where advancing across grade levels, and ultimately graduating, is predicated on successfully passing courses across a variety of subjects earning a minimal amount of credits. Students who do not accrue sufficient credits, often times due to related social behavior challenges (e.g., truant, in-school suspensions), are the students who are typically placed in alternative settings or drop out. For example, less than half of students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders graduate from high school (Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005).

While the emphasis and organization of high schools is on content mastery to prepare students for the job market or post-secondary education, the importance of social behavior supports is a necessary pre-requisite to achieve academic outcomes. Well-crafted lesson plans will have minimal impact on student learning if the classroom is chaotic,



students are disruptive, and/or otherwise not engaged with the instructor. Adding to this challenge are large classes with a wide array of student skill deficits and needs multiplied across several class periods in a typical school day. Further adding to the challenge is the organizational structure of most high schools following a traditional curricular focus (e.g., math departments, English departments) that often provides few opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration among content instructors and specialists to address student problems.

Three other organizational/systemic structures further add to the challenge of insuring all students are academically and socially successful. First is the emphasis on the high school student's responsibility for learning and self-management regardless of grade level or individual need. Second, the curricular organization found in most high schools emphasizes the content over individual student need. As students make their way across the school day, no one educator is responsible for that student and his/her success. Finally, when students do struggle academically or display problem behavior, the typical high school system is designed to address the challenge outside of the general education classroom. Learning support specialists will pull students from class in attempts to remediate academic issues, and principals – or in most cases assistant principals – address disciplinary infractions with little to no connection back to the originating classroom in terms of supports to prevent future occurrences. The combination of the above challenges, paired with the alternative placement options, often leads to an organizational structure that provides little to no incentive or on-going support for classroom teachers to alter instruction, build preventative supports, or alter schedules to accommodate small groups or individual students.

It is the nature of the challenges presented within high schools – high academic expectations coupled with potentially significant behavior challenges leading to removal from the classroom that unfortunately leads too often to students dropping out of school – that provides the rationale for examining the important relationship between SWPBS and academic outcomes. Students will not meet high academic expectations without good instruction. Good instruction cannot occur in the absence of effective classroom management. From simple management strategies such as classroom rules and routines, to more targeted and tailored changes guided by individual classroom assessments, learning cannot occur until the environment is structured to maximize the likelihood. It is important to note that effective classroom management will focus on increasing pro-social behavior and not the attempted elimination through punishment or student removal – strategies too often found in high school classrooms.

An additional essential element of effective classroom instruction and management is the connection the teacher makes with his/her students. Often described as 'climate' or 'teacher-student relationships,' effective educators continue to underscore the importance of these connections in keeping students engaged and motivated to continue to achieve in school and beyond. Unfortunately, simply delivering good instruction and/or designing classrooms with effective management strategies in mind will not guarantee student success. It is the interconnectedness of all three that lead to student success. The challenge at the high school is how to build systems to insure teachers are able to teach and manage effectively and engage students within a system designed around curriculum and student removal from the learning environment when



problem behavior occurs; both run counter to achieving implementation. The structure of SWPBS is viewed as one potential solution to allow high schools to deliver effective instruction to all students by (a) building in behavioral supports to increase the likelihood students remain in the classroom, and (b) focusing on appropriate behavior to allow educators to provide high rates of positive feedback thereby fostering positive teacher-student relationships.

In June of 2009, the OSEP Technical Assistance Center (TA Center) on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports invited instructional and administrative leaders of high schools who were nominated by TA Center partners to convene and share their successes and struggles in an effort to help shape a national agenda on SWPBS needs at the high school level. The group was further sub-divided into workgroups and charged with discussing specific challenges including the focus of this chapter, the relationship between academics and SWPBS. The purpose of this chapter is to (a) underscore the recommendation of the workgroup on the importance of intertwining SWPBS and academics to build a continuum of supports that lead to improved social and academic outcomes and (b) to underscore how the basic logic of SWPBS can foster critical features related to effective instruction. Following a further discussion of the importance of SWPBS within high schools, including the positive and negative intended and unintended outcomes of the current system, a set of recommendations developed by the workgroup will be outlined. Examples from contributing school districts are then offered to further illustrate and expand on the set of recommendations. Finally, implications for practice and future research are discussed.

## **The Importance of Academics and SWPBS at the High School Level**

In the era of No Child Left Behind, the importance of school accountability for all students' academic success is underscored on a daily basis and amplified when outcome data are publically disseminated. As discussed above, high schools have always had achievement as their core mission. With the added public scrutiny, issues of achievement gaps among sub-groups of students, large percentages of students, or schools within a district not meeting minimum standards in core curriculum, as well as large percentages of students dropping out due to poor academic performance (especially in the area of literacy) has put even more pressure on high schools to succeed. Unfortunately, a common response is to eschew any social behavior supports, such as explicitly teaching social behavior, under the auspices of maximizing minutes of instruction that will hopefully lead to better test scores. However, an examination of scores and why schools fail to make "adequate yearly progress" often points to high-risk sub-groups failing as well as students on the margin.

The continued logic of focusing solely on curriculum will ultimately fail without considering the social context in which learning occurs. Across the workgroup who put together this report, a common essential element all members stated as necessary to reach academic goals was a positive teacher-student relationship. A positive teacher-student relationship is viewed as an essential element to provide the nexus between effective instruction and positive classroom management. In essence, if the student views instruction or feedback as disingenuous, it will not motivate them to excel. Unfortunately, most high school discipline systems remove students who engage in problem behavior further disconnecting the teacher and the student. Additionally, as



stated earlier, high schools typically organize themselves around curriculum, not students.

The problem solving logic of SWPBS provides a promising mechanism to build environments that increase the likelihood students will learn and demonstrate appropriate social behaviors thereby allowing multiple opportunities for positive feedback. Further, the emphasis on building necessary supports for staff to alter previously ineffective responses to academic and social challenges is especially relevant among a teaching staff which may have an abundance of content knowledge, but little expertise around pedagogy and social behavior supports. The combination of effective instruction, positive classroom management along with performance feedback, all essential



elements of SWPBS, will assist in building fluency among staff thereby increasing the opportunities to connect with students.

SWPBS work to date at the elementary and middle school level has demonstrated that educators can implement universal strategies that create environments to increase the likelihood of academic successes. For example, SWPBS has resulted in an increase in instruction time based on the reduction of student removals due to problem behaviors (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans, & Leaf, 2008; Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005). SWPBS has also demonstrated an increase in positive staff to student interactions (De Pry & Sugai, 2002; Lewis, Powers, Kelk, & Newcomer, 2002) and an overall increase in creating positive school climate (Horner, Sugai, Smolkowski, Todd, Nakasato, & Esperanza, 2009; Luiselli, Putnam, & Sunderland, 2002). Moving up the continuum, SWPBS has demonstrated that small group and individual supports also lead to improved academic and academic-related (e.g., attendance, work completion) outcomes (Lewis & Mitchell, 2008). Other essential features of SWPBS, such as establishing a school leadership team with cross-representation, the emphasis on instruction of social behaviors, and the use of data to identify problem areas within the building and at-risk students also allow high schools to move toward more efficient systems of differentiated instruction based on student(s) need.

Work to date at the elementary and middle school level on essential features allows high schools to adopt/adapt efficient features. In addition, emerging work at the high school level also underscores the essential features that are common across K-12 settings while demonstrating the adaptations necessary within high schools (e.g., Bohanon, Fenning, Carney, Minnis, Anderson-Harriss, Moroz, Hicks, Kasper, Culos, Sailor, & Piggott, 2006).



## Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Curricular Focus within High Schools

While the stated and implied purpose of high schools – to prepare students for post-secondary education or the work force – will and should remain the central focus, the organization and systems built to date to achieve the outcome both foster and at times impede. In this section we provide a brief overview of those features with an eye toward adapting SWPBS to build on strengths and using the problem-solving logic of SWPBS to address weaknesses.

While challenges have been noted, the high school organization and focus also bring several strong points to educating large numbers of students. Given the explicit focus of high schools on achievement toward graduation and post-secondary life, the departmental or curricular organization allows high schools to maximize content expertise. Unlike elementary school teachers who are typically required to teach across all content areas, by teaming with colleagues within a content focus, educators can tap the collective knowledge and build sequences of coursework leading to high achievement. An additional strength of high schools related to academic outcomes is the multiple resources typically housed on site such as counselors, school psychologists, multiple administrators, department chairs, and learning specialists. Unlike most elementary schools, high schools typically also have well developed centralized data collection systems with personnel who have time allocated to entry and analysis of data to inform decision-making. While the emphasis on academic accountability as discussed previously may lead to shortcomings in school environments, it has forced high school educators to rethink how they meet struggling-learner needs within existing structures and resources.

While the above strengths lead to good

outcomes for typically developing an above average student, they can also create challenges when large percentages of the student body are not succeeding. The emphasis on content and standardized curriculum across multiple sections of the same course creates challenges for differentiation of instruction when students are not mastering the content. The administrative structures that typically remove students from learning environments in which they are struggling inadvertently reinforce teachers for not altering classroom environments and sending students outside of the classroom to address problems. Likewise, the preparation of high school level teachers often underscores content mastery over pedagogy, effective instruction that changes based on student response, and basic classroom management. In sum, high schools need a systemic process like SWPBS which can be embedded within current structures while simultaneously altering inefficient systems and creating necessary supports to increase the likelihood of student success.



## Essential Features of SWPBS Systems at the High School Level to Promote Academic Achievement

In light of the above-identified challenges and strengths, the workgroup was charged with identifying strategies within their SWPBS efforts that lead to improved academic and social behavior outcomes. Working from the premise that strong social behavior supports will build environments that increase the likelihood students remain academically engaged, the group focused on essential features of SWPBS that have demonstrated, or show promise, in increasing correlated academic outcomes. Specifically, the group identified data to guide decision making relative to the implementation of key practices and the necessary systems to support staff implementation. The group was also asked to identify remaining challenges with respect to on-going research, applied practice, professional development and evaluation. Four major features were identified as critical to promoting academic success:

- Improving student-teacher relationships and connections
- Reduction in problem behaviors that result in an increase in time in instruction
- Focus on incoming freshman to create a positive start in high school
- Scheduling of coursework and credit make-up for at-risk students

### *Teacher-Student Relationships*

Across the group's discussion of promoting academic outcomes, positive teacher-student relationships emerged as an essential component that must be in place. As discussed previously, the positive teacher-student relationship was viewed as both a strategy to promote academic and behavior success by serving as the connection point between

effective instruction and management, and ultimately an outcome as a reflection of larger school climate changes as they work toward a more proactive positive discipline system. The emphasis is on adults within the school building forming connections to students such that students feel a sense of community where adults care and are concerned about their academic and social development, and students are comfortable asking for help. Observed outcomes when positive teacher-student relationships exist include reductions in problem behaviors and a willingness on the teachers' and students' part to invest more to reach outcomes. Strategies for assessing the level of positive relationships include scanning office discipline referrals by teacher for large numbers of disrespect-related offenses, Principal classroom walk-throughs and observations, school climate surveys and teaching peer observations. The following are specific practices the group has used to promote positive teacher-student relationships:

- Include student input in setting classroom expectations
- Create "schools within a school" within large high schools to promote more opportunities for interactions and staff responsibility for student learning
- Establish a Freshman Academy to allow more teacher-student contact at the start of their high school experience
- Increase adult presence in the hallways and before/after school to increase interactions
- Increase teacher acknowledgement of student demonstrations of school-wide expectations (4:1 positive to correction ratio) with earned access to student reinforcers
- Provide daily focus on school-wide expectations
- Send postcards home to acknowledge





student mastery of social-behavior expectations

- Provide clubs /extra-curricular teacher sponsors
- Develop mentoring programs
- Include students on SWPBS team to provide student perspective

The workgroup also readily identified that implementation of any of the above strategies requires equal attention and support for the school staff. The following were system supports used among the participating schools:

- Use positive and pro-active classroom management strategies such as promoting smooth transitions
- Give teachers prepared lesson plans to teach school-wide expectations plus templates to teach classroom expectations (e.g., focus on replacement behavior, positively stated, practice strategies)
- Establish distinctions between classroom-managed minor problem behavior, along with strategies for classroom teachers to

use, and offenses that warrant an office referral

- Pair master teachers/SWPBS team members with struggling teachers to provide mentoring
- Provide on-going professional development on instructional, classroom and environmental management
- Allow teachers to visit and observe their peers for effective strategies
- Administrators and SWPBS team model best practices across the school day and in meetings or trainings
- Provide instructional coaching following training
- Recognize staff for growth and outcomes
- Involve/engage ALL staff in the process

While the workgroup identified supports that lead to improved relationships, they also quickly identified several remaining challenges with respect to implementing and maintaining these and other strategies:



- Limited time to make relationship-building a part of the school day
- Lack of skills on how to repair relationships between teachers and students that have soured
- Lack of skills on how to engage families and communities in the process
- Need for a re-admittance process that creates an opportunity for relationship repair or building (e.g., post suspension)
- Strategies needed to evaluate integrity of implementation and short and long term impact on students



### *Reduction of Student Removal from Instruction*

Along with improving teacher-student relationships, a critical outcome of SWPBS efforts should build rules, routines, instruction and positive feedback to increase the likelihood all students remain in class and engaged in instruction, thereby leading to improved academic outcomes. There should be equal emphasis on effective behavioral supports and effective instruction. Expected improved outcomes, as well as markers to increase supports, include reduced office discipline referrals – including minor offenses that remove students from instruction – improved grades, work completion, achievement, attendance, tardies and suspensions/expulsions. The following were features the workgroup identified as key at the high school level:

- Short lesson plans with instructions for teachers that occur over the entire school year
- The inclusion of academic related behaviors in social skill instruction (e.g., note taking, managing books and materials, seeking assistance)
- Age appropriate recognition strategies for student mastery of targeted skills (e.g., gold cards earned that receive discounts at school store or free entry into sporting events; reserved parking spot, or a parking pass; breakfast recognition ceremonies that invite community members to attend; Classroom of the Week)
- A re-entry plan when students have been removed from instruction for extended periods and/or when disrespect of the teacher evident
- Differentiated instruction to increase academic engagement and decrease problem behavior including the use of tutors and homework drop in support across the school day



- Consequences for problem behavior that do not result in a loss of instruction time (e.g., before / after school, lunch detention)

Developed system supports to implement the above and maximize time in instruction include:

- Practice opportunities with performance feedback for the staff on teaching social skills
- Monitor data and attend to problem spots early
- Re-work codes of conduct and “discipline” policies to reflect pro-active, instructional problem solving focus
- Develop easy simple forms for teachers to complete to refer students who may be at-risk
- Post visuals across the school listing expectations for students and staff
- Enforcement of staff expectations by the administrator (e.g., giving out positive feedback, supervision during transitions, teaching the social skill lessons)

While the workgroup identified several supports that build on the key features of SWPBS with its emphasis on problem behavior reduction and increased academic engaged time, they also identified several remaining challenges:

- Guidance from the field on ‘block’ versus ‘traditional’ schedules and the impact, if any, on problem behavior and improved achievement
- Need for a range of appropriate accommodation strategies that fit within a high school credit model
- Guidance on class-within-a-class or push-in models within academic classes
- Immediate applied challenges include efficient strategies to identify non-responders and build a function-based

continuum of supports, and how to insure all staff have basic behavior and instructional management skills

### *Freshman Focus/ Good High School Start*

With respect to student movement into a high school environment that is largely content/ credit driven with an expectation that students take the majority of the responsibility for their behavior and learning, the workgroup stressed the importance of making strong connections with students and providing them with the pre-requisite skills to succeed in such an environment through pro-active induction activities. Unfortunately high schools, albeit in the interest of protecting the integrity of the credit system, create policies that place students, sometimes immediately at the start of their high school career, in a catch up game. For example, attendance policies that automatically prevent earned credit if “x” number of days are missed. In addition to examining existing policies that may disenfranchise students early in their high school experience, other data sources should be reviewed to examine need and/or success with engaging students early – including attendance and grades – on an ongoing basis, not at the end of terms or the school year, to allow early intervention. The workgroup also recommended meeting with middle school staff to discuss at-risk students



and examining 8th grade achievement scores to identify possible struggling learners. Through a combination of primary tier preventative practices and use of data to target high-risk students, the workgroup identified the following practices to promote a good start to high school:

- Establish a Freshman Academy where students are provided skills to succeed and are carefully monitored
- Provide freshman advisories and seminars
- Implement quarterly report card reviews involving students, parents and community members to celebrate success and create action plans when students are under-performing
- Implement freshmen only study halls with academic assistance
- Conduct on-site visits for 8th graders including a review of the high school's SWPBS expectations
- Pair junior and senior students with freshman to serve as mentors
- Physically house freshman students within a limited area of the building to provide better supervision
- Ensure freshman instruction is matched to 8th grade assessment, not based on general standard.
- Include remedial supports for struggling students early

System supports to ensure implementation with integrity and monitor progress include:

- Allow freshman teams to meet weekly to review data and problem solve
- Build a common plan time for freshman teachers to meet across curriculum areas to discuss struggling students or problem areas
- Hold a series of meetings pre/post student

transition to high school with the middle school to problem solve

- Build in plan time with core teachers and specialists to problem solve

Each of the workgroup schools represented exemplary programs that use the logic of SWPBS to problem solve and build systemic practices such as those listed above. Always working toward doing even better, the following were offered as remaining needs in this area:

- Review the impact of SWPBS on students prior to high school and how to modify prior supports to reflect the more independent nature of high schools
- Examine the optimal student configurations prior to and throughout high school that will allow students to connect with instruction and remain in school
- Conduct an immediate examination of policies, such as attendance, related to earning credit and their unintended consequences on disenfranchising students
- Develop and evaluate applied strategies to transition students into more student-directed learning which is common at the high school level prior to and upon entering high school



### *Credits and Scheduling*

The last feature the workgroup discussed related to academics at the high school level and the possible value-add of SWPBS was the challenge of course scheduling and making up credits. Across the discussion, this was the area the workgroup participants felt they had the least control over and limited success to date applying the problem-solving logic of SWPBS. In essence, credit requirements are fixed at the state level and offer schools very few degrees of freedom. The primary issue expressed by the group was students falling behind on earned credits, due to behavior, attendance, or any of a myriad of reasons, to the point where they opt to drop out as the task of making up credit seems insurmountable. While the workgroup participants were in agreement that core requirements to earn credit should remain, they also identified pro-active ways to assist students who fall behind in credits above and beyond the traditional semester course:

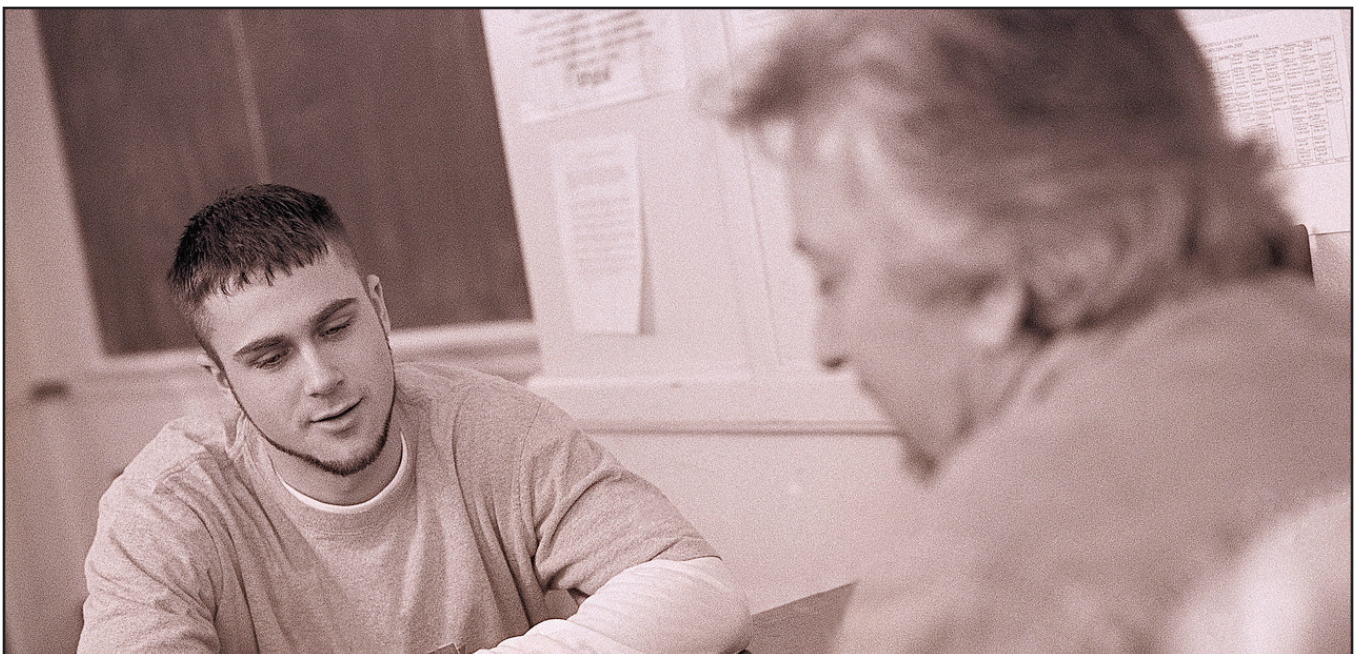
- Offer Credit Recovery courses at school or through county extension during summers, nights and weekends
- Provide on-line coursework that can be

completed during or outside the school day

System components emphasized by the workgroup included:

- Develop frequent progress reviews by teachers and counselors to let student know early where they are and what they need to complete to earn credit
- Ensure struggling students are aware of other options such as online courses

The list of remaining needs in this area is long, with the overall focus on clear systems to identify students early and viable alternatives to the traditional semester-long course that can result in an equal number of credits. In essence, the group advocated a Response to Intervention process that identifies students early, differentiates instruction to provide additional supports beyond the universal curriculum, and carefully monitors progress. Unfortunately, none of the schools had implemented such a complete process to date and largely have continued to try and supplement the current structure to increase the likelihood of credit completion.



## School Examples of Identified Essential Features

Each of the participating schools was invited to join in the forum based on its successes, as well as its struggles, with SWPBS to date. All of the schools were required to have at minimum primary tier SWPBS in place and data to show improved social behavior outcomes. In addition, workgroup participants had also begun SWPBS work with a focus on improving student academic outcomes. The following abbreviated vignettes provide further expansion of the bulleted key practices and systems previously outlined across the participating schools that were noted by the group as key to improving academic outcomes. The case examples are offered to provide the reader with more detail as well as set the occasion for discussion to move from each of the schools' specific practice to the general case that may apply to all high schools.



### *School within a School: Mountain View High School*

Utilizing SWPBS strategies and Mountain View High School (MVHS) POWER (Pride-Ownership-Work-Effort-Respect), students and staff work together in an environment of positive expectations for behavior, citizenship, and academics. Academic focus is on rigor, relevance of curricular material, and relationships among students, staff, and the extended MVHS community. Built in 2000,

MVHS was designed for 21st century learning. Central to its physical and academic structure are four small learning communities (academic centers), each containing from 250 to 300 students. Each academic center contains classrooms and a center office, which houses an administrator, a counselor, a center secretary, and interdisciplinary faculty and staff who are assigned to the center. Students in grades 10 through 12 are assigned to academic centers according to their interest/career pathways. Ninth grade students are assigned to the Freshman Academy Center. Following their freshman year, these students are assigned to the other academic centers by interest/career pathways. The school design, focusing on academic learning centers, helps students to prepare for their futures whether they intend to go directly into the work force, enroll in a vocational/ technical training program, attend a community or junior college, or go to a four-year college or university. All students take classes with students from other academic centers and in all parts of the school building. The academic center is their home base and where their lockers are located.

Through the combination of implementing smaller learning communities, building environments through SWPBS that increase academic engaged time, and promoting frequent and richer teacher-student interactions, MVHS has improved from a school on watch (No Child Left Behind) to the only high school in the Thompson School District to show typical academic growth, as measured by the Colorado State Assessment Program (CSAP). MVHS is rated as a 'high and stable' ranked high school for student achievement on the Colorado school report card. The school experienced improved school climate and student behavior following SWPBS implementation. Office discipline referrals (ODRs) decreased by approximately 30% from May 2005 to May 2008. The number of ODRs increased in 2008-09. Causes for this



upslope are not yet apparent because discipline data for the 2008-09 school year has not been disaggregated. Out-of-school suspensions decreased by 38% from 2005-06 to 2008-09. The number of expulsions has been variable, and there is no obvious trend. The above results cannot be attributed solely to institution of a SWPBS framework for discipline within the school since multiple initiatives for increased academic learning and improved social behavior were simultaneously in effect.



#### *Staff Ownership for Student Success: North County High School*

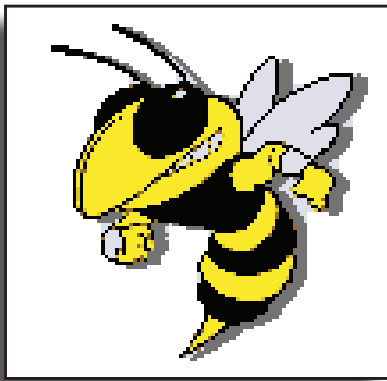
At North County High School (NCHS), success was readily evident when the staff took ownership over what was taking place. While buy-in – defined as getting a critical number of faculty and staff to follow through with stated procedures – may be accomplished with any initiative, until faculty and staff take ownership, success will be limited. Evidence of ownership took place within NCHS when a few teachers stood up at a faculty meeting and encouraged their colleagues to ‘own their hallway.’

Tardiness has been an issue as well as students being in the halls during class time. This often leads to further behavior problems and decreased academic engaged time. After the teachers stood up and addressed the faculty about checking students in the hallway, their colleagues began to follow suit. To get

teachers to own the challenge and improve student outcomes, the teachers recommended increasing positive interactions with students by asking two simple questions: (a) Are you walking with a purpose? and (b) Do you have a hall pass? If the students answered positively to these questions, the teachers were instructed to give them a Knights Note and thank them. Students are able to use Knights Notes as currency to purchase a drink, cookie, or muffin. This opportunity led to increased positive teacher-student interactions which led to increased motivation in students to follow expectations.

With increased student motivation came an increase in the willingness of teachers to use the Knights Notes, thereby increasing our overall level of positive teacher-student interactions. If students didn’t have a hall pass, the teachers were instructed to escort them back to their class, all the time maintaining a positive attitude and avoiding antagonizing the student. Following successful implementation in one hallway among one group of teachers, other hallways were included in the process through the leadership of the teachers within that hallway, not through a mandate. Through the combination of explicit instruction and support for teachers, time to allow the process to work, and clear improvements in student behavior ownership was developed. Ongoing ownership, or implementation with fidelity, was tracked through the delivery of Knights Notes to students within the hallway and other targeted settings. A running tally was kept of how many notes were being distributed by each staff member. At each faculty meeting, successes were celebrated by giving the total number distributed each month. The teacher ownership of a single behavior challenge led to a de facto increase in positive teacher-student interactions as evidenced by the increase in Knights Notes and teacher presence in the hallways.





### *Engaging Students in the SWPBS Process: Newark High School*

Newark High School (NHS) first implemented SWPBS in 2004. At the start, the SWPBS team worked hard to create its reward system, which utilized RAP (Respect, Achievement, and Personal Responsibility) as the school-wide acronym. RAP cards were distributed and linked to a variety of outcomes. However, it soon became apparent the adults were making all of the decisions about how this program should run while essentially excluding the people toward whom it was geared: the students. A RAP Club was formed to include students in the process and assist with student-directed learning and student managed behavior. Initially, there was very little student interest. Members of the SWPBS team visited all English classrooms to recruit student membership. Students were required to apply to become a member of the club, in which they were asked to write a statement of why they wanted to join as well as secure a teacher recommendation to support their application.

While only five students joined in the first year, the RAP Club met monthly with members of the SWPBS team focusing on how to get these kids involved in SWPBS efforts. Simply asking the students what they saw as issues in the school, what events/rewards they would like to see, and how they would like to contribute to this effort began to make small differences. Through numerous discussions, the students decided

that they wanted to assist with SWPBS events/rewards. Starting on a small scale, the students created and decorated the SWPBS raffle box. RAP Club members pulled winners' names out of the box at our Holiday Raffle and took student passes and checked them off as they entered events.

During the second year, RAP Club started to expand and develop a clear purpose. Students who expressed interest in joining were often kids who applied to find some way to get involved at NHS and make a difference. In the second year, officers were elected including a president, vice-president and secretary. The advisor still ran the meetings, but the officers took on more responsibility in addition to events, such as creating flyers, posting them in the school, taking photographs, setting up and cleaning after events and other related activities.

The past school year has shown even more progress with students. RAP Club membership has quadrupled in size since the inception of the club. Students are taking on more responsibility and gaining comfort in their roles within the club. New officers have come up with countless ideas regarding improving the school and our SWPBS program. After holding pre-planning meetings, the students type up meeting agendas, create passes for club members (for the upcoming meeting), and essentially run the meetings themselves. Following faculty SWPBS team meetings, aggregated monthly student behavior data are shared with club members and they give input in terms of how to tackle the standout issues including targeting social skill lessons based on patterns of problem behavior. SWPBS social skill lessons have also been modified based on student input.







### *Overcoming the Challenges of a Large High School: Timber Creek High School*

The impetus for engaging in SWPBS came when Timber Creek High School (THS) was faced with a projection for a rapid increase in student population and indeed it has increased. THS opened in August 2001 with an enrollment of 1,600 students and has grown each year. Enrollment for the 2008-09 school year was 4,450. The student body is a reflection of the ever-increasing diversity in the community with a wide mix of ethnic groups and socio-economic status. Because of the rapid growth in students, the SWPBS team has had to train between 30 to 50 new teachers each year. Although when interviewed for their positions, new teachers were informed that Timber Creek is a SWPBS school, not all new teachers bought-in to SWPBS. This, coupled with a large number of teachers leaving the school, created a challenge to continually keep a large teaching staff up to speed on SWPBS.

Fortunately, getting students to buy in to the principles of SWPBS has been much easier. Students have provided input as to the types of rewards and recognition they receive and for what behaviors they believe students should be recognized. The TV Production classes have been very supportive by creating student videos reviewing the school-wide expectations. These videos are shown several times a week to reinforce school-wide expectations. In the

Young Educators Academy, students practice teaching, preparing and presenting lessons on school-wide expectations in 9th grade classrooms.

Within a large high school, the support of SWPBS by the administrative team is crucial. The principal leads the way with the expectation that all students can learn and all students should be treated fairly. The administrative team and the teachers look for teachable solutions to problems. Parental involvement is critical to the education of students in all aspects of the school. Teachers are encouraged to contact parents and work as a team with the parent and the student when discipline issues arise. Teachers are encouraged to recognize students by calling parents, writing positive referrals, sending home a postcard and giving out reward tickets.

Although the number of discipline referrals has not decreased dramatically since inception, the referrals have stayed consistent or decreased when comparisons are made per 100 students. These comparisons are more accurate because of the increase in students each year. In addition, TCHS' rate of office discipline referrals is much lower than other schools within the district. Student achievement has also remained steady since SWPBS has been established in spite of the challenges a large high school brings. Florida schools receive grades based on student achievement. TCHS has fluctuated between a high C and B grade since the inception of SWPBS even though we have grown by almost 400 students per year. Currently, TCHS has been graded a B.





### *Freshman Academy, Triton High School*

Triton High School (TCH) established a Freshman Academy divided into three teams (Blue, White, and Grey, the school colors) to promote a positive start for students and to allow staff to identify and intervene early with at-risk students. Students stay within the team to take their core courses. Each team is given a common planning, which allows the team time to meet and discuss individual needs of each student. All freshman students are housed in a separate part of the building and also attend a separate lunch. All freshmen are also required to take Freshman Seminar, which is designed to teach basic skills necessary for success within the high school setting. Students are taught social and behavioral skills, study skills, time management, conflict resolution, and a host of things that will help them throughout their life as an adult. Another important component is the assignment of a faculty adviser who remains as the students' advisor through graduation, to assist with any problems that may arise during their time at THS.

Prior to entering THS, 8th grade students are tested in math and reading during the spring, and the scores are used to help place the students in the appropriate curriculum level when they arrive at THS. Students not scoring high enough in reading are placed in a semester-long strategic reading class. Over the past three years, this program has raised the

average reading level of students who tested as 'at risk' by 2.5 grade levels. These strategic reading students are clustered together for English I second semester with the same classmates and teachers. Since inception of this program, English I students have scored over 80% proficient on state tests the past two years. Similarly, students who test at risk in math are placed in a year-long Algebra I course versus a semester-long course.

Another successful part of the Freshman Academy is the use of report card conferences held every six weeks. Each student is given an assigned time to report to the media center with his or her report card. According to the needs of the students, they are assigned to meet with a specific individual to discuss their grades and overall progress in high school. Guidance counselors, social workers, behavior support specialists, peer-tutoring coordinators, juvenile justice mediation, county office personnel, board of education members, and volunteers from within the community are used based on student need during the report card conferences. Each reviewer is given a rubric to help discuss the student's needs, and strategies or interventions to help the student become more successful.

As part of the Freshman Academy, SWPBS was implemented in an effort to reorganize discipline, reduce suspensions, and increase student achievement. THS discipline was reorganized into a system where teachers handle minor incidents, and certain offenses that were deemed major would result in an automatic office referral. In an effort to help teachers put in place appropriate consequences for minor problem behavior while simultaneously trying to keep students in class during instruction, two new programs were created to help support teachers. The first was a lunch detention program set up in an attempt to reduce tardiness to class. A room



next to the cafeteria was utilized for students to report to as soon as the bell rang to begin their lunch. After all lunch lines emptied, students walked through to receive a plate they took back to where they served silent lunch as a consequence for their tardiness. Triton also created an after school detention program to handle other infractions that did not warrant suspension from school. Teachers could assign a student to after-school detention if pre-correction, verbal or non-verbal cues, and redirection were not helping a student stop their inappropriate behaviors. Students report to after school detention immediately after school for 50 minutes. They may use this time to work on homework, missed assignments, or social skills training worksheets. Using the two programs has allowed teachers to hold students accountable, yet not lose instructional time in the classroom.

To help increase the frequency of appropriate behaviors, the 9th grade SWPBS team created a Hawk Bucks rewards program. Students earn these Hawk Bucks by having no more than one minor incident report or absence during a 10-day period. Students redeem Hawk Bucks for rewards with their classroom teacher or assistant principal. Students can also use them as money to attend school-sponsored events. After one year of implementation at the 9th grade level, the decision to go school-wide was made due to the drastic decrease in instructional hours lost due to out-of-school and in-school suspensions. A separate reward system was created for upperclassmen who maintained appropriate behavior with less frequency of rewards. Students who missed no more than one day per semester, had no more than one tardy, no more than one minor incident report, and no major incident reports, received a Triton VISA card to use the following grading period at school. The VISA card allows students to leave campus two minutes early every day, ½ priced admission to all school-sponsored

events, a homework pass grade replacement for each class, and admission to our SWPBS celebration at the end of the marking period. Close to 50% of upperclassmen earned a VISA card the 1st six weeks of the school year, and an additional 40% the following marking periods.

Since starting the Freshman Academy, suspensions have been reduced by over 70%, less than 200 hours of lost instructional time due to problem behavior have been documented (compared with over 700 prior to the start), test scores have grown over 10%, THS suspension rate is 59% lower than the average of other schools within the county, and the dropout rate was reduced by almost 50%. Through SWPBS, as evidenced by these data, THS has provided incoming students an environment that increases the likelihood of academic success. Keeping students in school, and equally important keeping students in academic classes across the school day, has resulted in both a decrease in problem behavior and an increase in academic achievement.





### *School Example Summary*

The above examples are offered to illustrate how some of the previously identified features the workgroup noted as key to improving academic and social outcomes could be put in place across a variety of high schools. It should be noted that all of the schools had additional strategies in place; each was assigned to focus on one specific aspect of implementation. It should also be noted that not all schools have implemented key strategies for a sufficient amount of time to document academic improvements. A universal recommendation across all the workgroups was the call for additional research on the impact of SWPBS, including academic outcomes, at the high school level.

### **Conclusion**

**T**he focus at the high school level remains the earning of academic credit that leads to a diploma to access post-secondary options. The participating high schools in this forum understand that knowledge transfer between teachers, the curriculum, and students must occur within environments that are supportive, connected, and constructed to set students up for success and not simply wash out those who cannot succeed. The workgroup was tasked with generating data, practices and system supports within the SWPBS framework to promote increased academic achievement. To this end, the workgroup first and foremost acknowledged how the key features demonstrated to be effective at the elementary and middle school level apply equally to the high school level. Given the increased focus on academics and the common organizational structure of high schools, the group also underscored the importance of:

- Positive teacher-student relationships
- Classroom environments designed to increase appropriate social behavior and reduce student removal due to problem behavior
- Setting up incoming freshman students for a successful high school experience

Key features and expanded examples were provided to illustrate how the participating schools are achieving the identified features. Across all, several common themes emerged, outlined below, that should be considered in future research, applied work, professional development, and evaluation efforts. By no means are these recommendations unique to high school, rather, appropriate across all school levels. The group recommended emphasis given some of the concerns noted throughout this chapter.



- Frequent data review plus in-depth review for (a) academic, (b) academic-related, and (c) social behavior, including a dissemination method to classroom teachers and problem solving teams across disciplines to alter environments and embed additional supports beyond primary tier supports
- Professional development that is on-going and responsive to student needs and prior learning history as well as the present fluency level of staff. Professional development should be delivered with the current structures of high schools in mind (e.g., curricular focus, discipline often handled outside classroom) as well as strategies to move toward more effective service delivery
- Engage in on-going activities and build structures to improve relationships and connections between students/ staff including (a) pride in overall school community, and (b) staff sense of ownership for all students. This is especially relevant in large high schools
- The need to change school environments, scheduling, instruction, allocation of resources, staff planning and organization to respond to student need and the discontinuance of ineffective practices that are based on institutional memory or convenience
- Differentiated instruction across student development as independent learners, not based on grade level alone. Goal is to move (a) from teacher-directed to more student-directed learning, and (b) focus on mastery of content v. work completion
- Work in teams (horizontal and vertical) plus specialist/community to promote an interdisciplinary focus to instruction and move beyond traditional curricular organization

In an attempt to implement the above key features, the workgroup offered a set of specific recommendations for high schools, trainers and technical assistance providers, and researchers outlined below. Again, recommendations are not unique to the high school setting but are given priority given the current structure and noted barriers within high schools.

#### *Recommendations for High School SWPBS Teams*

- Prepare before you implement. Allow yourself plenty of time to build staff readiness and make sure all are aware of intended goals/outcomes. Along the way, build buy-in from staff, students, parents and the community. This is especially salient at the high school level given the move from curricular to student-focused instruction
- Start with targeted activities, such as supporting incoming freshman
- Be prepared to adapt and adjust over time based on your data and unanticipated challenges
- Remember students, even those who look and at times act like adults, are still ‘kids’ who need guidance, support and structure
- Keep communication open across stakeholders
- Keep professional development planned, purposeful and on-going
- Celebrate success/share data with stakeholders
- Get students involved on the SWPBS team and in instructional/support activities
- Gain administrative support within the building and at the district level
- Tap leadership among staff and allow them to lead the way
- Carefully choose SWPBS team membership to insure adequate representation and a good working mix



### *Recommendations for Professional Development*

- Must tailor to meet staff at their level of learning and comfort starting with the existing high school organization and structure
- Make it relevant to the school based on their demographics and current struggles (e.g., large high schools with thousands of students and hundreds of staff)
- Should be on-going and sustained to build fluency, and must be adaptable based on data
- Performance-based feedback and skill-building technical assistance should focus on the classroom/teacher level
- Develop clear timelines and task analysis of critical steps and skill sets

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

- How do school demographics relate to amount of supports and outcomes achieved? In particular, what resources are needed in large high schools, schools with large numbers of high-risk students, schools with large percentages of students dropping out, or schools with large staff turnover?
- How can educators evaluate relative growth over time to assess impact of prevention practices?
- How can educators operationalize and measure positive teacher-student relationships (what are essential features common across relationships that are characterized as positive) and do they lead to improved academic achievement as hypothesized?
- How can schools identify at-risk classrooms and offer early assistance?



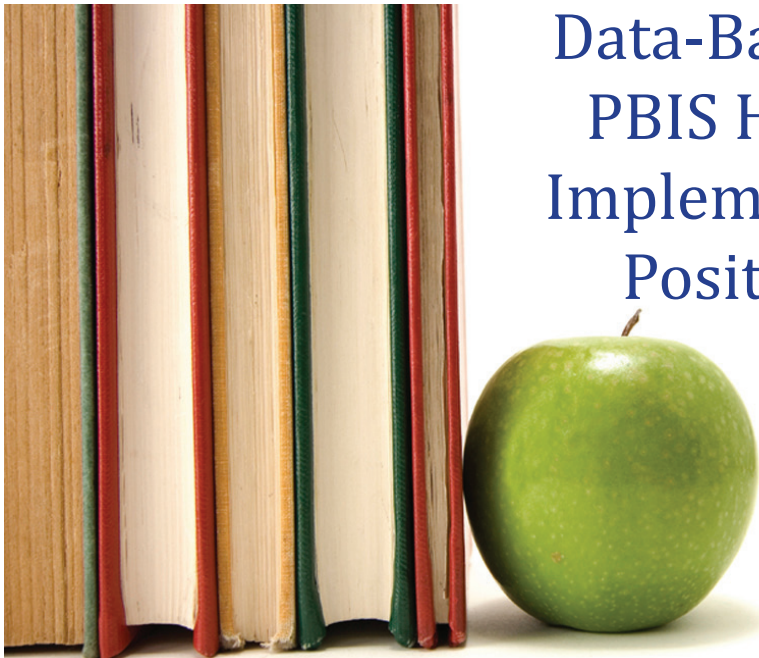
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## Chapter 5

# Data-Based Decision Making in PBIS High Schools: Informed Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Support

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The efficient and systematic use of data-based decision-making is a key component of implementing school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) in high schools. This is partially due to (a) the large number of adults who must work together within a typical high school, (b) the developmental level of adolescents, and (c) the organization of high schools by content-specific departments. When it comes to introducing and implementing SWPBS at the high school level, we have found no feature more important than strategic exploration and sharing of data. Simply having data, however, is insufficient to guide and stimulate successful SWPBS implementation. Instead, construction of an effective and efficient data system should begin with a focus on decisions. In short, an effective data system provides the right information to the right people in the right format at the right time for active decision-making.

Three common misrules associated with data use are (a) gathering too much data and leaving users overwhelmed rather than informed, (b) summarizing data in formats (e.g., tables of numbers) that hinder decision making, and (c) reporting data summaries only to administrators without sharing reports with full a range of decision-makers. In this chapter, we provide one approach for collecting data that can guide decisions about both implementation and on-going adaptation of SWPBS in high schools. To illustrate this approach, successful high school SWPBS implementers provide specific examples of how data may be collected and summarized to provide useful information. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how data has, and should be used, to guide decisions across SWPBS adoption processes, implementation activities, and sustainability efforts so that high school teams committed to improving student behavior through positive behavior support systems have a framework from which to begin thinking about the role of

data.

The content of the chapter is organized around the decisions driven by four critical questions that high school teams experience in the implementation of SWPBS:

- Is there a need to adopt SWPBS in our school?
- Are we implementing SWPBS practices with sufficient fidelity that we can expect improvement in student behavior? Specifically, do we have measures in place (i.e., the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET)) to determine whether or not SWPBS is being implemented with fidelity so that ongoing decisions are related to actual school needs?
- Is student behavior improving?
- How do we sustain and continuously improve behavior support in our school in changing and challenging environments?

For each critical question we include a case study report written by representatives of four high schools successfully implementing SWPBS: Jody Mimmack, Principal at Fruita Monument High School in Grand Junction, Colorado; David Tillman, District PBIS Technical Assistance Provider for Triton High School in Erwin, North Carolina; Devin McNeeley, Teacher at



Somersworth High School in Somersworth, New Hampshire; and Darlene Sobel, Technical Assistance Provider to Foreman High School in Chicago.

### **Critical Question #1: Is there a need to adopt SWPBS in our school?**

**S**WPBS is a multi-tiered, systems approach for building the social culture and intensive individual behavior supports needed for all students to be socially and academically successful. The basic logic of SWPBS is that establishing a positive social culture throughout the school will result in (a) students expecting appropriate behavior from each other, (b) a social context that encourages academic success, and (c) the social supports that make individualized intensive behavioral interventions more effective and more durable. SWPBS initiatives require 2 to 3 years of implementation activities, support, and dedication on the part of administration and faculty. Therefore, the question of whether a high school should commit to the relatively lengthy implementation process should be undertaken prior to the deployment of significant, and likely limited, resources.

School teams typically implement SWPBS for one of three reasons: (a) the level of problem behavior in the school is a serious barrier to effective education and the staff are dissatisfied with current discipline efforts, (b) the state or district mandates that all schools develop a formal plan for addressing the social culture, discipline, drop out, bullying, and/or skipping in the district, and/or (c) elementary and middle schools in the district have adopted SWPBS successfully, and logically recommend extension of the procedures to build a positive social culture in high school.

Choosing to invest in a new (or modified) approach to discipline and social support is a big decision. Many high school faculty

members are frustrated that students do not come to school with the social competence to be active learners, and furthermore do not believe it to be their responsibility to deal with problem behavior (Johnson & Fullwood, 2006; Safran, 1982). Additionally, many faculty members will recall prior unsuccessful attempts at reform in the school, including efforts focused on discipline (Fullen, 2007). The combination of 'school change fatigue' and what some might describe as a 'professional objection' to correcting adolescent problem behaviors constitutes a formidable barrier to implementing successful and sustainable SWPBS programs at the high school level.

As such, a school team considering the adoption of SWPBS should assess (a) the effort that will be required for adoption of SWPBS, (b) the benefits expected for students and faculty, and (c) the data systems needed to most efficiently guide the process. The format of the information needed to address these three critical areas will be both qualitative and quantitative; ultimately, consistent, clear and efficient data systems must be put in place for ongoing decision making.

The information needed when considering SWPBS adoption should be used to address four levels of questions:

- To what extent is student social behavior a problem?
- Is the school already implementing the core features/practices of SWPBS?
- Will the school receive support from district and building administration to ensure high fidelity adoption of SWPBS?
- How do successful SWPBS schools leverage data to successfully secure buy-in from faculty members?
- Sources of information related to each of these questions are outlined below.



*Question 1.1: What are the student behavior patterns that indicate we should invest in a school-wide effort to improve positive behavior support?*

A casual conversation with teachers often reveals numerous and conflicting answers to the question of which student behaviors are most in need of remediation. This is not to say that the perspectives of teachers are off target; but instead, reflects absence of a consistent database. The following questions are designed to yield 'traditional sources of data' that can be quantified for the purpose of building a common vision of the behavior patterns within the high school.

- What are the frequency and type of problem behaviors that lead to office discipline referrals? How do these patterns compare to prior years, other schools of similar size and demographic, and our local standards for acceptable behavior?
- What are the school attendance, tardy, and drop-out rates?
- To what extent do teachers report that students are actively engaged in classroom instruction?
- To what extent do students complete and hand in homework?
- What is the rate of graduation? (i.e., students accrue the sufficient number of credits in the prescribed time to graduate with their class)
- Are there differences in educational success by student ethnicity?
- What is student/ family perception about the quality of student behavior, and school-provided behavior support? Is the school-wide social culture effective in promoting educational success?

Most high schools will have actual (or proxy) measures of these student outcomes. Often,

however, the information is not shared with all faculty/staff. As noted above, most teachers will be able to give ballpark approximations for these questions without ever seeing a data report. That said, approximations derived in individual teachers' minds and discussed in small cliques is not the most efficient system for building school-wide capacity for targeted improvements of student behavior. An important first step is to examine the extent to which students are academically and socially successful. A central feature of effective implementation of SWPBS will be development of systematic procedures for assessing these measures regularly and reporting to the full faculty at least quarterly. Before launching this effort, there should be a consistent impression that there is room for improving the social culture of the school, and that an improved social culture will directly benefit the academic outcomes of students.



*Question 1.2: What elements of SWPBS are already in place?*

Every high school has some semblance of discipline and behavior support systems in place that are typically codified in a student code of conduct approved by the district’s school board. It is a mistake to assume that everything currently being done in schools in terms of behavior support and correction is ineffective and should be discarded. In fact, SWPBS implementation actively recommends that school teams should “never stop doing what already works.” As such, a central source of information that a team needs as they consider adoption of SWPBS is to determine the extent to which core features of SWPBS are

already in place.

Four measures (c.f. Table 1) are available for assessing current implementation of primary tier SWPBS. School teams adopting SWPBS typically receive training to use one or more of these measures to determine if they should move forward with adoption of SWPBS, and for on-going assessment of implementation success. Each of the four measures allow a team to identify what they already do well, identify areas in which improvement would be useful, and develop action planning documents that would lead to implementation at a level of fidelity that would be expected to produce positive student outcomes.

**Table 1: Measures used to assess current SWPBS implementation status**

Measure	What information is provided	Who provides information
<p>School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET)</p> <p>Research Measure to assess the primary tier practices within SWPBS</p>	<p>Information on 28 items across seven sub-scales is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations defined</li> <li>• Expectations taught</li> <li>• Rewards system</li> <li>• Consequences system</li> <li>• Discipline data system</li> <li>• School management</li> <li>• District support</li> </ul> <p>A school is implementing SWPBS when they have a SET Total Score of at least 80% AND an Expectations Taught sub-scale score of 80%</p>	<p>This is a research-quality measure with data collected by an independent reviewer who visits the school and spends 2-3 hours reviewing material, interviewing students and interviewing adults.</p>



Measure	What information is provided	Who provides information
<p>Team Implementation Checklist (TIC)</p> <p>Self-assessment measure to assess the primary tier of SWPBS including the Classroom Management Systems</p>	<p>Information on 22 items across seven subscales is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to improve social culture</li> <li>• Team established to guide implementation</li> <li>• Self-assessment conducted to define current status</li> <li>• Expectations defined, taught, and rewarded</li> <li>• Consequences for problem behavior defined</li> <li>• Classroom management systems being used</li> <li>• Discipline data collected and used for decision making</li> <li>• Capacity developed to support students with more intense behavior support needs.</li> </ul> <p>A school is implementing SWPBS primary tier when they report an 80% total implementation score on the TIC</p>	<p>This is a self-assessment measure used to guide adoption of SWPBS. The TIC is completed by the school PBIS team (typically with their SWPBS coach), takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and can be done online. Teams complete the TIC every month or every other month. The data are used to assess progress toward SWPBS implementation at the primary tier and to guide action planning.</p>
<p>Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)</p> <p>A self-assessment measure used by all adults in a school to assess the Primary tier of SWPBS, with additional focus on Classroom Systems, Non-Classroom systems, and Individual Student Supports.</p>	<p>Information on 46 items across four subscales is reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-wide PBIS systems</li> <li>• Classroom PBIS systems</li> <li>• Non-classroom PBIS systems</li> <li>• Individual student systems</li> </ul> <p>The SAS is used to gather impressions across many individuals within a school, and is not used to assess implementation fidelity.</p>	<p>The Self-Assessment Survey is completed by all adults in the school. The survey can be completed online, and typically is completed when a school is first considering adoption of SWPBS. The SAS is used to gain an overview of the perception of all faculty/staff about the current implementation of SWPBS practices. The time to complete the SAS varies depending on the number of faculty/staff in a school. The information from the SAS can be used to build action plans for implementation.</p>



Measure	What information is provided	Who provides information
<p>Benchmark of Quality (BoQ)</p> <p>A self-assessment measure completed by the school coach with the school PBIS team that assesses implementation of the primary tier of SWPBS</p>	<p>The BoQ provides information from 53 items across 10 subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWPBS team formed and functioning</li> <li>• Faculty commitment to improving the social culture of the school</li> <li>• Consequences for problem behavior</li> <li>• Discipline data collected and used for decision making</li> <li>• Behavioral expectations defined</li> <li>• Recognition system established to support positive behavior</li> <li>• Behavioral expectations taught</li> <li>• Implementation plan defined and used</li> <li>• Crisis plan defined</li> <li>• Evaluation of implementation and impact</li> </ul> <p>A school is considered to be implementing SWPBS when they report a BoQ total score of at least 70%.</p>	<p>The BoQ is completed by the school's SWPBS coach with active input from the SWPBS team. The BoQ requires 30-60 minutes to complete and the final data can be entered online. The BoQ produces an index of primary tier SWPBS implementation and the construction of a specific action plan for guiding implementation.</p>



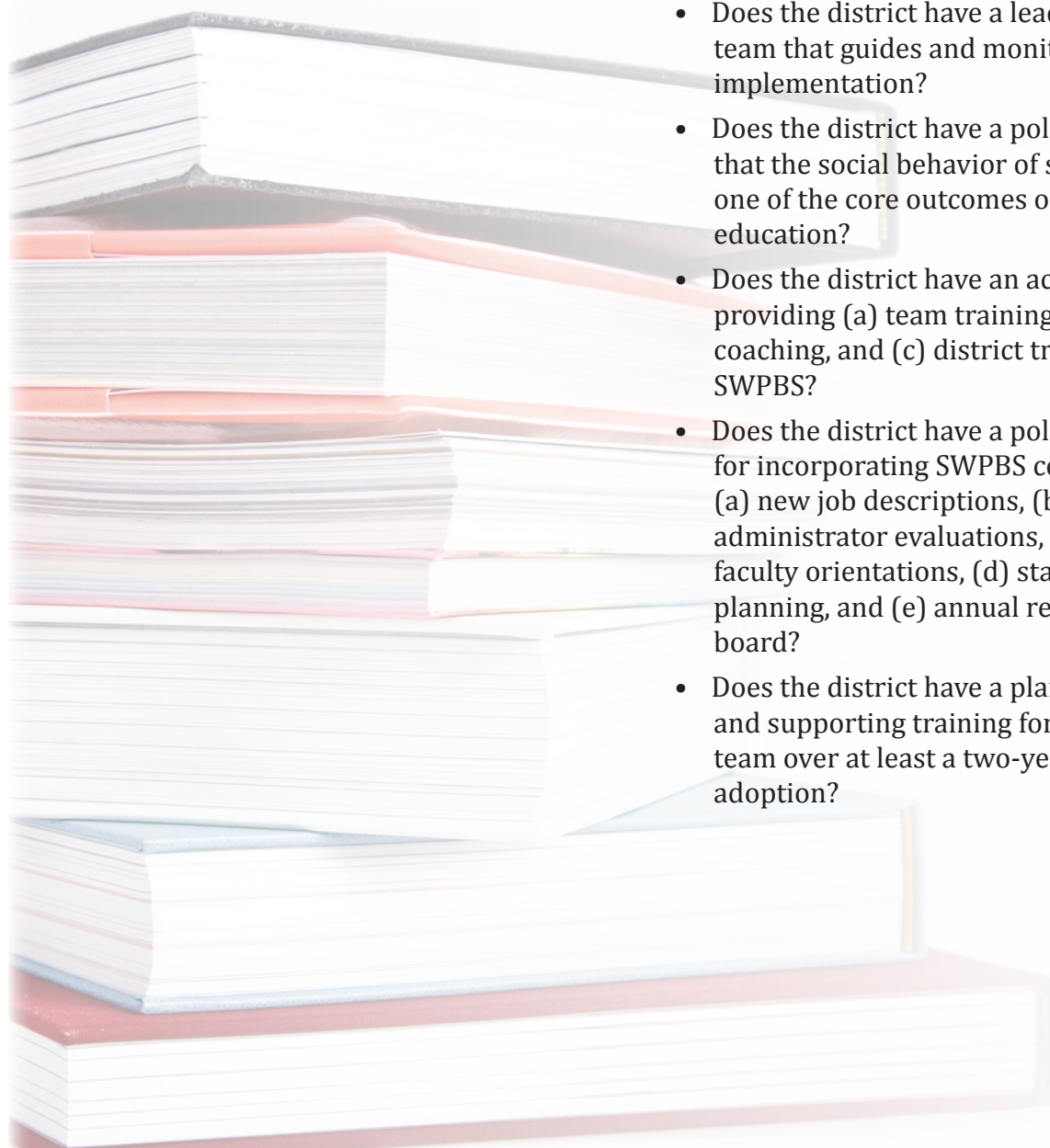


Each of the instruments detailed in Table 1 are freely available and commonly used by national, state, and local SWPBS training units (c.f. [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)). It is critical that data collected for decision making be reliable, easy to understand, and freely shared with all school stakeholders. Using tools like the SET, TIC, SAS and BoQ take away much of the guesswork for schools trying to make the most efficient and effective use of data when designing SWPBS systems.

*Question 1.3: Will the SWPBS team receive district-level administrative support needed to implement SWPBS with high fidelity and sustainability?*

There is no formal measure for addressing the first of these two questions, but the PBIS Implementation Blueprint ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)) provides a framework for a team to assess if they will receive adequate support from their administration. Specific questions the team should consider are:

- Does the district have a leadership team that guides and monitors SWPBS implementation?
- Does the district have a policy indicating that the social behavior of students is one of the core outcomes of effective education?
- Does the district have an action plan for providing (a) team training, (b) district coaching, and (c) district training in SWPBS?
- Does the district have a policy or plan for incorporating SWPBS content into (a) new job descriptions, (b) faculty and administrator evaluations, (c) annual faculty orientations, (d) staff development planning, and (e) annual reports to the board?
- Does the district have a plan for funding and supporting training for the school team over at least a two-year process of adoption?



*Question 1.4: How will the SWPBS team use data to build faculty consensus for adopting a SWPBS initiative?*

Investing in data collection at the initial point when SWPBS adoption is being considered is especially useful for building the faculty consensus needed for implementing a school-wide approach to discipline. High schools that have successfully adopted SWPBS repeatedly emphasize the importance of establishing agreement across their diverse faculty/staff that investing in improving the social culture of the school is both possible and valuable. Reaching majority agreement on the need for implementation is more likely if data are used to document the need for addressing student social behavior, the success of other schools, and the prudence of learning about and implementing specific practices that are not currently in place in the school. As will be illustrated by Dr. Jody Mimmack, Principal at Fruita Monument High School in Colorado, the use of data to build agreement, common language and a common vision for moving forward is valuable wherever SWPBS is applied, but is of special importance for high schools.



*Case Study: Fruita Monument High School (FMHS)*

FMHS is the western-most high school in the state of Colorado serving 1,350 students, grades 10-12. Sitting in the high desert at the base of the Colorado National Monument, Fruita, Colorado is equidistance between Denver,

Colorado and Salt Lake City, Utah. FMHS is one of four large high schools within Mesa County Valley School District #51 (D51). The school is consistently ranked “High” by the Colorado Department of Education on the statewide school accountability report, as a majority of the students score proficient or above on state assessments. The student population is approximately 50/50 males/females, 88% identify themselves as Caucasian, 9% identify as Hispanic and 3% identify as Asian, American Indian, Alaskan or African American. Twelve percent of the student population qualify for free and reduced lunch. FMHS employs 85 certified staff members and 40 support staff members; the student to teacher ratio is 19:1.

In 2004, under a statewide mandate to systematically implement programming to increase ‘safe school’ measures, D51 undertook district-wide SWPBS implementation. Over the course of the next 2 years, all elementary (24) and middle schools (8) and two of the four high schools in the district (not FMHS) received training and were ‘implementing’ SWPBS.

Given FMHS’ seemingly homogeneous demographics, low student to teacher ratio, and consistently high performance on accountability measures, the building administrative team at the time did not believe that there were significant behavioral issues contributing to poor student achievement and decisions to drop out among certain populations of students. Furthermore, the general opinion of the faculty was that “we have great kids, there are no significant issues.” In short, enthusiasm for implementing SWPBS at the primary tier was low.

Until 2006, there had been no systematic or routine method of sharing data of any kind with the faculty other than the perfunctory meeting before the school year where the previous year’s test results were disseminated, and



staff celebrated another year of good scores. However, in the fall of 2006, Dr. Jody Mimmack, who had been a principal at another school in the district that was implementing SWPBS, became principal at FMHS. Mimmack was a strong believer in SWPBS, but introducing its systems and tenets to faculty content in its routines, especially as an incoming administrator, would be a challenge.

At the first faculty meeting in 2006, school-wide data including: student achievement, demographics, discipline, organizational health and student/staff/parent perception data were introduced and discussed. These data were taken off of the district data warehouse system (SASI – and D51 SWIS), achievement data from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) website, and from school surveys administered by the district and the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). This information had been collected at the district and school levels for many years; however, it was not shared or used to make systems-wide decisions at FMHS.

To introduce this new collective approach to data exploration, the FMHS leadership team orchestrated a data gallery walk activity, where mixed groups of staff and teachers moved from station to station to review various school data sets. These groups reviewed data presented on large posters, reflected and commented on the data, then moved to the next data set and added their comments. For the final round, groups summarized the totality of comments for the large group. Discussions were rich and lively, and described by one faculty member as being “eye opening”.

The data presented at the meeting were a surprise for most of the staff. While demographic data had remained relatively stable over the last 10 years, the free and reduced lunch population had doubled in the

last 2 years. Additionally, more than 14% of the FMHS population received some kind of special education support, boys lagged in writing, girls were ahead in math, and achievement data had flat-lined. In terms of behavioral statistics, students logged 15,000 tardies, and 320 referrals had been sent to the office regarding student behavior. The faculty was asked where they thought most of these behaviors were occurring; they overwhelmingly claimed disruptive behavior was primarily in the hallway. Interestingly, data revealed that of the 320 referrals, over half were written because of disruptive behavior in the classroom. In short, the presentation and exploration of data gave the faculty some new perspectives regarding their school.

Following the data gallery walk, FMHS’ leadership capitalized on the empowered calls for change among the faculty, and formed the school’s first SWPBS team. In terms of faculty support for the incoming SWPBS initiative, Mimmack said, “I didn’t have to worry about buy-in after that [the data-gallery walk].”

For the next 5 months the SWPBS team attended statewide trainings, researched and visited schools that had successfully implemented SWPBS, and continued to explore school data. Based upon their analyses, the team found nine major locations in the school in need of behavior improvement and teacher response. During an April in-service, the FMHS SWPBS team introduced ‘Wildcat Respect & Responsibility’, and developed an expectations matrix with input from all staff members. A data-gallery walk protocol was again used to solicit staff input and overtly include them in data exploration and decision making. Based on faculty input, expectation matrices were created for each of the nine major problem locations.

The SWPBS team commissioned a student-



produced video that taught school expectations in the various school areas to students. The expectations were matched to the nine trouble areas revealed by faculty data exploration and decision making. Additionally, the SWPBS team created lesson plans for teachers to use in further teaching and reinforcing school expectations in the various problem areas in the school. In short, data helped recruit faculty support for a program of positive behavior, and then provided a blueprint for creating the necessary systems and training for sustained student success.

FMHS is one of two high schools in the state of Colorado to receive an 80-80 SET score for the two years of full implementation of SWPBS. Data also indicate a decrease in referrals for minors of 10% and majors of 20%. Mimmack attributes much of the rapid success of her school's SWPBS program to the buy-in generated through the faculty's collaborative exploration of data.

### *Summary*

Data are a powerful ally when it comes to identifying areas of concern within a school and establishing a need for SWPBS. Furthermore, employment of data in a manner similar to FMHS as a mechanism to communicate with faculty members and subsequently recruit support for an incoming program of positive behavioral supports is consistent with 'best practice' within the field of SWPBS.

The metaphor of data as communication agent is instructive for schools seeking to implement sustainable SWPBS initiatives. That said, the second critical question undertaken by this chapter: *Is SWPBS being implemented with sufficient fidelity to affect student learning?*, implies that data need to do more than simply inform stakeholders of ongoing school phenomena so that appropriate and evaluative decision making can take place.

### **Critical Question 2: Is SWPBS being implemented with sufficient fidelity to affect student behavior?**

A central feature of SWPBS implementation is a continuous commitment to measuring the fidelity with which SWPBS practices are being used. The three tiers (or levels of intensity) of SWPBS practices can require 2-3 years to implement with high fidelity. During this initial period, a central role for data systems is the on-going collection of information about the fidelity of use for SWPBS prevention practices. Data that evaluate whether SWPBS and more individualized SWPBS strategies have been implemented with sufficient fidelity to have an impact on student behavior should address the question: What do evaluative implementation data (i.e., SET scores) tell us about the level of SWPBS implementation across all three tiers, and to what extent is there evidence that student behavior and related outcomes have improved as a result of SWPBS practices and structures?



*Question 2.1: What do data tell us about the level of SWPBS implementation across all three tiers, and what evidence can we disaggregate to measure improvement in student behavior?*

In the first section of this chapter (Question 1.2) we answered the question – What elements of SWPBS are already in place? – as a mechanism to evaluate the readiness of a school to implement SWPBS. To answer this question, we presented Table 1, which includes descriptions of several freely available tools for measuring SWPBS implementation and permeation into a school. Measures such as the BoQ, SAS, TIC and SET are useful in terms of evaluating a school’s readiness for implementing SWPBS

and also are designed to evaluate fidelity of SWPBS implementation within a school. Collection of progress-monitoring fidelity data (e.g., TIC) occurs approximately every other month, and this information is used to guide the action planning needed to build and improve implementation. As all three tiers of SWPBS are implemented successfully, the schedule of fidelity data collection shifts to an annual assessment in the spring of each year. As a school gains success with primary tier practices, additional measures are added to assess implementation of secondary and tertiary tier practices. Measures used to assess the fidelity of secondary and tertiary tier SWPBS implementation are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Measures to assess Secondary and Tertiary implementation fidelity (measures available at [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)).**

Measure	What information is collected	Who provides information
<p>Individual Student System Evaluation Tool (I-SSET)</p> <p>A research measure of the secondary and tertiary tiers of SWPBS</p>	<p>The I-SSET is a 35 item measure organized around three major subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary tier systems</li> <li>• Secondary tier systems</li> <li>• Tertiary tier behavior support systems</li> </ul>	<p>The I-SSET is a research measure with data collected by an independent observer during a 2-hour review of materials and interviews with faculty members.</p>
<p>Benchmark of Advanced Tiers (BAT)</p> <p>A self-assessment measure completed by a team with their SWPBS coach</p>	<p>The BAT is a 48 item measure organized around 10 sub scales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary tier implementation</li> <li>• Commitment to advanced support</li> <li>• Student identification</li> <li>• Primary tier monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Secondary tier systems</li> <li>• Secondary tier practices</li> <li>• Secondary tier monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Tertiary tier assessment practices</li> <li>• Tertiary tier intervention practices</li> <li>• Tertiary tier monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>	<p>The BAT is used for annual fidelity evaluation of the secondary and tertiary systems and practices within SWPBS. The BAT is completed by the school PBIS coach in collaboration with the school PBIS team. The BAT requires 30-45 minutes to complete.</p>



High schools that are successful not only in initial implementation but sustained use of SWPBS build in regular data collection of SWPBS fidelity, student engagement, student academic outcomes, and student social behavior. Measures such as the I-SSET and BAT help high school SWPBS teams answer the question of whether SWPBS has been implemented with sufficient fidelity to improve student behavior. Both of these instruments measure secondary and tertiary tier support implementation and fidelity; which, simply by the individualized nature of secondary and tertiary tier interventions, implies that student behavioral outcomes are being measured and reviewed as well. Data on fidelity are collected at least annually, and if levels of fidelity drop below criterion, more frequent fidelity assessments are conducted.

Ongoing fidelity data related to implementation of primary, secondary and tertiary tiers do more than inform SWPBS teams whether or not SWPBS has been adopted into the school culture and repertoire of practice. The forum participants shared practical application of fidelity data for timely and needed problem solving. For example, Fruita Monument High School Assistant Principal Todd McClaskey reviews annual SET data along with his SWPBS team. They identify areas where improvement is needed, and then collaboratively develop 'action plans' that are specific and contain steps (i.e., seek out or design specific professional development) for improvement. In sum, well-functioning SWPBS teams employ validated instruments like the SET, TIC, I-SSET and BAT to both gather information related to fidelity of implementation of various elements of SWPBS at all three tiers, and simultaneously assess student improvement across categories of behavior.

In the following case, Darlene Sobol, a Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Illinois Character

Education and Positive Supports (ICEPBS) Center gives an example of how implementation fidelity data can be used to evaluate SWPBS implementation and make decisions regarding areas for improvement.



#### *Case Study: Foreman High School (FHS)*

FHS, with an enrollment of 2,000 students, is located on the northwest side of Chicago, Illinois, and is a neighborhood high school that reflects the diversity of the community it serves. FHS has been part of a 4-year longitudinal study by Loyola University of Chicago regarding Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, as well as a participant in the Illinois Character Education Positive Supports Grant (ICEPS).

FHS's school-wide expectations are: PARR (Productive, Appropriate, Responsible, Respectful). FHS' primary tier team began looking at office discipline referral (ODR) data during the 2005 school year, and has continued to update primary tier initiatives based on analyses of these data (Figure 1).

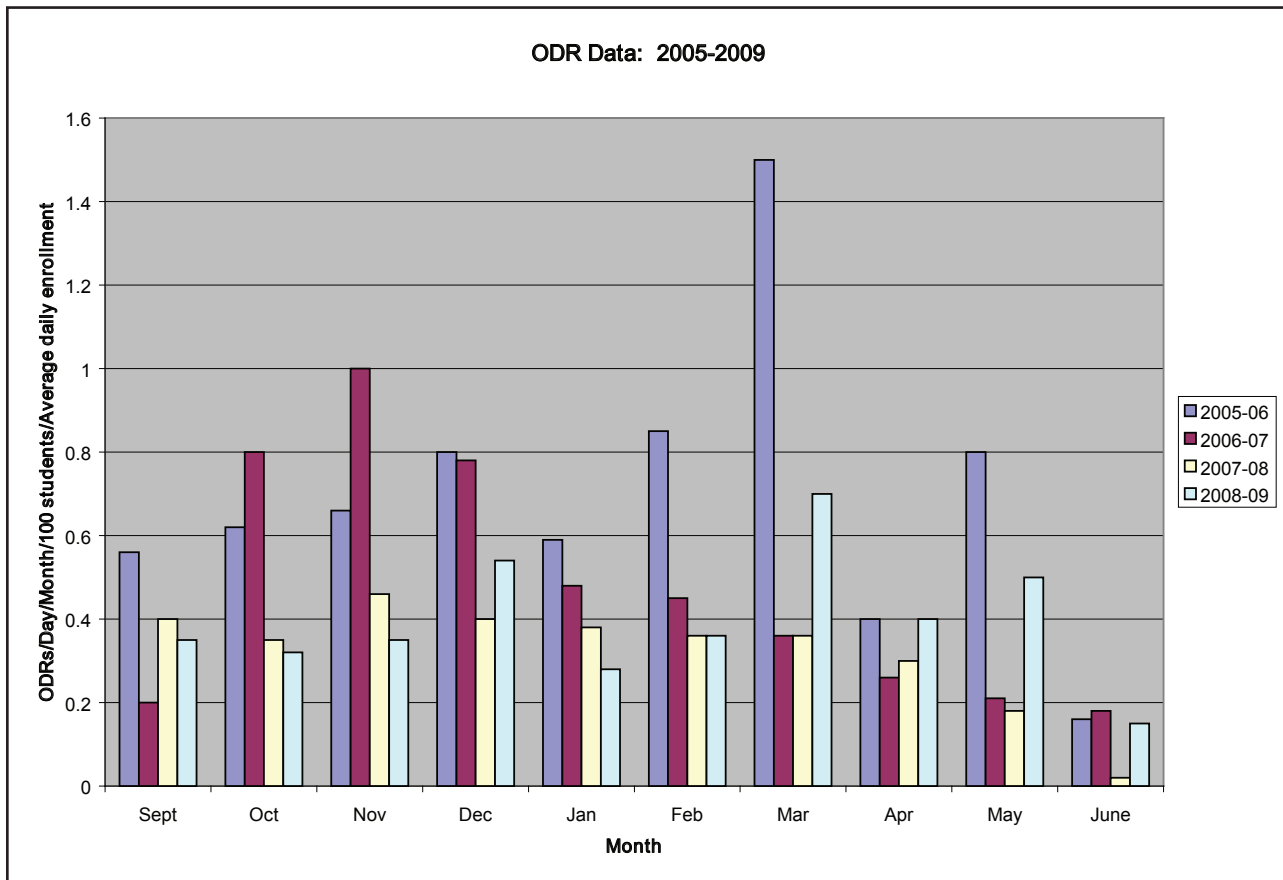
In addition to the monthly referral data collection and analysis, the FHS SWPBS team employs the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) for annual evaluation of its implementation and sustainability of SWPBS initiatives. The SET is typically administered once a year. The most recent SET was completed at FHS in February 2009. This was the fourth SET given at FHS. Ten staff members were interviewed in regards



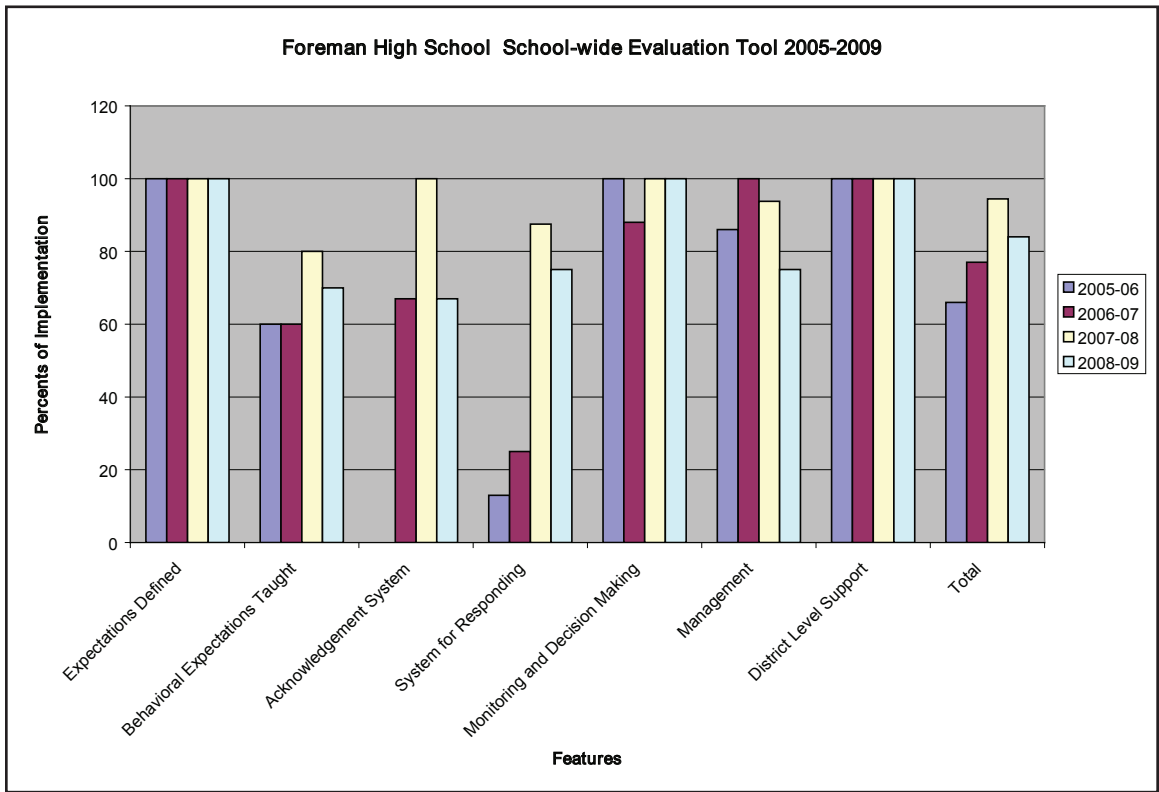
to the school-wide behavior supports currently implemented at Foreman High School. Staff members included eight teachers, one security guard, and one food-service employee. Of the eight teachers, three were members of the

primary tier team. Additionally, the principal at FHS was interviewed. In addition to staff interviews, 15 students were randomly chosen and asked questions regarding the school-wide expectations.

**Figure 1: FHS ODR Data 2005-2009**



**Figure 2: SET Results at FHS, 2005-09**





Data from this most recent SET revealed that SWPBS expectations have been defined and implemented in the school with 100% fidelity. Additionally, monitoring and decision-making systems and level of district support also achieved a score of 100% on the SET. Each of these three categories had achieved 100% fidelity of implementation in 2007-2008 as well. However, some areas of SWPBS implementation showed decreases on the 2008-2009 SET evaluation versus previous years.

Although the cumulative SET score confirmed that FHS is 'implementing PBIS' (as defined by the traditional 80% or higher total SET score), a close look at data revealed that certain critical elements of the program were in need of a tune-up. The SET results indicated that while three categories continue to have 100% implementation, some PARR (primary tier) principles and activities need boosters for students, teachers, and support staff. The following four categories decreased during the 2008-2009 school year:

- behavior expectations are taught
- acknowledgment system
- system for responding
- management.

In short, the result of February's SET raised a red flag for the SWPBS team, and immediate action was taken.

Within a week following the administration of the SET, a professional development session on leadership and sustainability was delivered as part of the ICEPS grant to selected FHS staff. In attendance were the PARR leadership team and staff members representing various building initiatives, which included small learning communities, department chairs, administrators, as well as staff members who were recognized by the administration as having leadership potential. The goal of this professional development session was to

promote additional staff member involvement in the PARR initiative.

The following recommendations were given to assist FHS in supporting sustainability of PBIS in their building:

- Provide a primary tier orientation to new staff and security
- Review current crisis plan with all staff and increase visibility of crisis plan
- Create and implement "boosters" for teaching expectations
- Encourage staff to acknowledge when students demonstrate primary tier expectations by giving out 'buzzy bucks' (acknowledgement coupons)
- Review action plan to align activities and maintain consistency of PARR principles
- Increase diversity of staff members serving on the PARR team
- Provide professional development opportunities to maintain and develop continued PARR successes

In addition, through analysis of the SET results, the following initiatives are in progress and/or currently being developed:

- Review of current crisis plan for all staff
- Boosters to staff regarding the use and importance of 'buzzy buck' acknowledgments
- Articulation between student council and PARR leadership team regarding an in-house survey
- New emphasis for staff on teaching expectations



## Summary

Following the professional development, the PARR leadership team increased the number of staff volunteers to work on various projects and is looking forward to making progress on the identified areas of concern.

ICEPS Technical Assistance Coordinator, Darlene Sobel, and her colleagues were able to do more than simply collect data for informational and celebratory purposes. It would have been easy for the Foreman High School team to celebrate following another year of 80%+ results on the SET. Instead, the team was conscientious and proactive in terms of using the data to make necessary adjustments to improve. In sum, the SWPBS team made efficient use of the SET data to first identify areas where improvement was needed, and then to make decisions that led to immediate improvement.

Thus far, the need to collect and ‘employ’ data for a variety of informed and empowered decision-making and problem-solving purposes has been presented and discussed. In the next section, we propose how data can be used to answer the third critical question – Is student behavior improving? – and the ramifications of the answer. In our discussion and corresponding case studies, we demonstrate the extent to which data is multi-layered in terms of not only providing the information necessary for competent decision making, but also how at a very personal and individual level, data represent how children are actually behaving in school.

## Critical Question 3: Is student behavior improving?

Commitment to improving social and academic outcomes for students is a foundation for SWPBS. As such, any data system associated with SWPBS adoption must monitor student outcomes. In high schools, emphasis on student outcomes is complex, and many times is accompanied by high stakes. Effective decision making requires information about three aspects of student behavior: (a) Are students engaged in the education process? (b) Are students behaving appropriately? and (c) Are students achieving academic gains? Successful high school teams note that it is a challenge to get relevant information from all three aspects of student behavior. Data are entered in different computer applications depending on the preferences of the district. Furthermore, district data systems are sometimes not compatible, accessible, or efficient enough to provide needed information to professionals working with students on a daily basis. Tailored data systems (e.g., SWIS) often are difficult to link with district data systems, and may require wasteful double entry of data. In addition, the size of student enrollment can mean that the simple task of entering discipline data consumes a sizable amount of time, and opens the door for human error.

The net result is that while high school teams adopting SWPBS confirm the high value of information about student behavior, there remains a major gap between what is needed and what is available in terms of student discipline data systems. The need is for a logical, highly efficient and compatible system for collecting, summarizing and displaying information from the three areas of student outcomes listed in Table 3. The data need to be accurate and trustworthy. The data need to be reported monthly to all faculty members, and



more frequently to those making secondary and tertiary tier behavior support decisions. Another critical feature emphasized by high school teams is the need for discipline data that is disaggregated with the precision needed for local decision making. Information about the frequency of discipline referrals is useful for broad decisions, but more detailed information

is needed for local decision making. To be of maximum value, discipline referrals need to be easily summarized and cross-referenced by categories such as grade, gender, time of day, location, faculty member making the referral, type of problem behavior, ethnicity, and location.

**Table 3: Three sources of student outcome data used by high school teams for decision making.**

Needed Information	Specific Variables to be Counted/ Considered	Sources of Information
Information about student social behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counts of office discipline referrals</li> <li>• Discipline referral counts disaggregated by: grade, gender, location, time of day, type of problem behavior, ethnicity, specific students, time (month by month), staff who file referrals, motivation, disability</li> </ul>	<p>School-wide Information System (SWIS)</p> <p>District information systems</p>
Information about student academic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment completion</li> <li>• Graduation progress rate (credits to graduate)</li> <li>• Grades</li> <li>• State Assessment Scores</li> </ul>	<p>District information systems (SASI, eSIS, PowerSchool)</p>
Information about student academic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Tardy</li> <li>• Skipping</li> <li>• Graduation rates</li> <li>• Academic engagement in class</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple Sources</p>



Devin McNelly, a teacher from Somersworth High School in New Hampshire, gives a powerful example of how data can be misused and the steps his colleagues took to ‘right the ship’. As will be illustrated with his story and some graphs of school data, Devin and his colleagues at SHS have made impressive progress in key academic and behavioral areas across the school’s three years of SWPBS implementation.



*Case Study: Somersworth High School (SHS)*

SHS is located in the city of Somersworth in the state of New Hampshire, with a student population of approximately 615 students. The school has 91% of the student population who identify as White, 3% African American, 3% Latino, and 3% Asian. The school has 17% student eligibility for free and reduced priced lunches.

Prior to SWPBS implementation at SHS, there was not a systematic plan for reviewing data, nor was there an organizational culture for collaborative, data-driven problem solving. Although there was a school-wide protocol for handling unwanted student behavior, there were significant inconsistencies in how behavior was handled from classroom to classroom. There was no real sense of cohesiveness in terms of how the faculty thought about and approached student behavior. Prior to the implementation of SWPBS, data dissemination at SHS consisted of an irregular and haphazard review of state assessment scores, SAT scores, and classroom failure and dropout rates. This review of data sources was often triggered by perceived

failures across categorical academic outcomes, and acted as a punitive measure employed by district administration. Faculty, staff and administration were made to answer for these failures with personnel changes, curriculum changes and ongoing staff development.

The primary method for discipline management was handled through office discipline referrals (ODR), written by teachers and submitted to an administrator for action. The ODR data were not shared with faculty, and it was subsequently revealed that many referrals were never actually input into the school’s data management system, and thus, no action was being taken on many referrals. This led to the dually toxic problem of students not being held accountable for their behavior, and teachers losing faith in the existing behavior management system. In short, prior to SWPBS implementation at SHS, data had an inefficient and sometimes counterproductive role in the school. Byproducts of data underuse were conflicts between administrators and faculty members, and ‘free reign’ by students who knew they could violate school rules without fear of consistent consequences.

Overcoming the lack of trust, consistency and sharing of data between administrators and faculty members was difficult, even with the introduction of SWPBS. Many teachers reported that they felt judged as having poor classroom management if they wrote too many referrals for handling by administration. This led to the perception that data had solely punitive applications, as opposed to being a critical tool for school-wide decision making. Additionally, many faculty/staff members believed school-wide behavior was the sole responsibility of administration, and individual classroom teachers should be left alone to handle behavior in the manner they felt most appropriate.

A behavior of concern identified by many faculty members was school attendance. Most of the faculty also admitted that there were



frequent instances of damaging interpersonal disrespect taking place throughout the school between students and faculty. Along with the inconsistent use of data and behavior management, another catalyst for SWPBS implementation was the school's high annual dropout rate of 8% in 2003-2004 and 8.2% in 2004-2005. These data led to the school's participation in the dropout prevention grant (APEX-II) provided by the state of New Hampshire Department of Education. This program was intended to assist schools with the highest dropout rates across the state. Critical elements of the program include training for SWPBS implementation, and the establishment of a student leadership team.

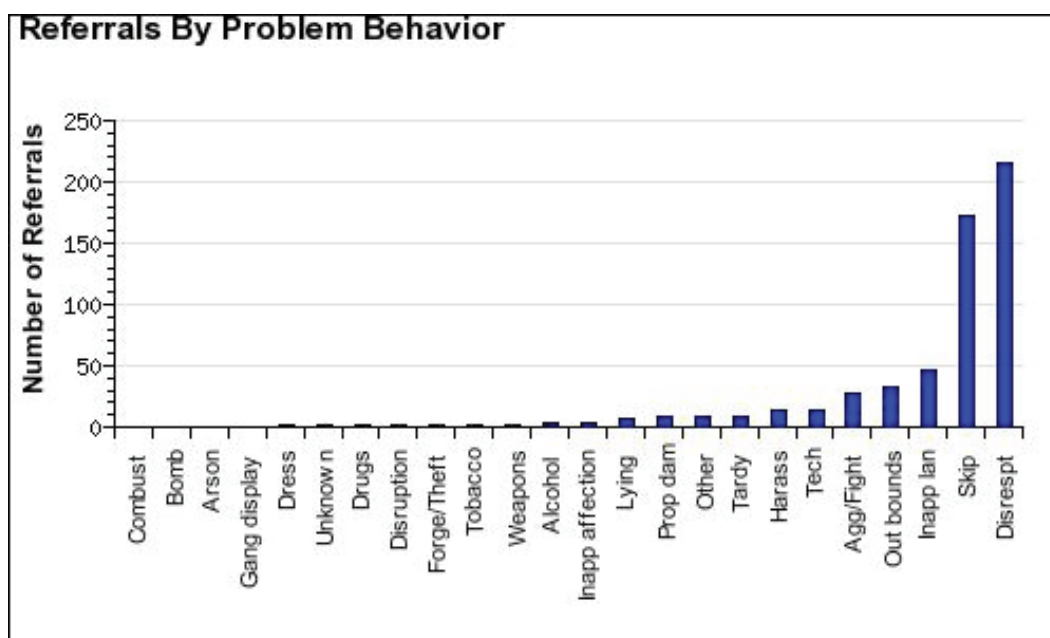
As the plans for the SWPBS program were introduced and developed, the primary tier SWPBS team, consisting of at least one member from each department as well as a good cross section of teaching experience and personalities from the remainder of the school, collected ideas and best practices in relation to teaching respectful behavior. Lesson plans were developed for teachers to use in introducing and teaching the new school expectations. The teaching plan required each teacher to review the classroom expectation

of respectful behavior in each of their classes, and then have students write and act out skits that represented exemplar and non-exemplar behavior.

As SWPBS began its formal implementation, discipline data began to be collected and reviewed by the primary tier team twice a month. School discipline data was collected using the data management software, SWIS. It became apparent that the prevailing unwanted student behavior was disrespect/defiance. Figure 3 is a graph of the ODR's for the first four months of SWPBS implementation when sorted by problem behavior; the graph clearly shows disrespect as being an issue that needed a primary tier intervention.

After a month of implementation, data was shared with the entire faculty and staff at the monthly staff meeting. The total number of ODR's written due to disrespect was reported along with the daily average for the month. The data report highlighted successes across areas the faculty had been focusing on. These were then compared to the previous semester per day average and per month averages. The data showed that there had been a 74% drop in referrals written for defiant behavior.

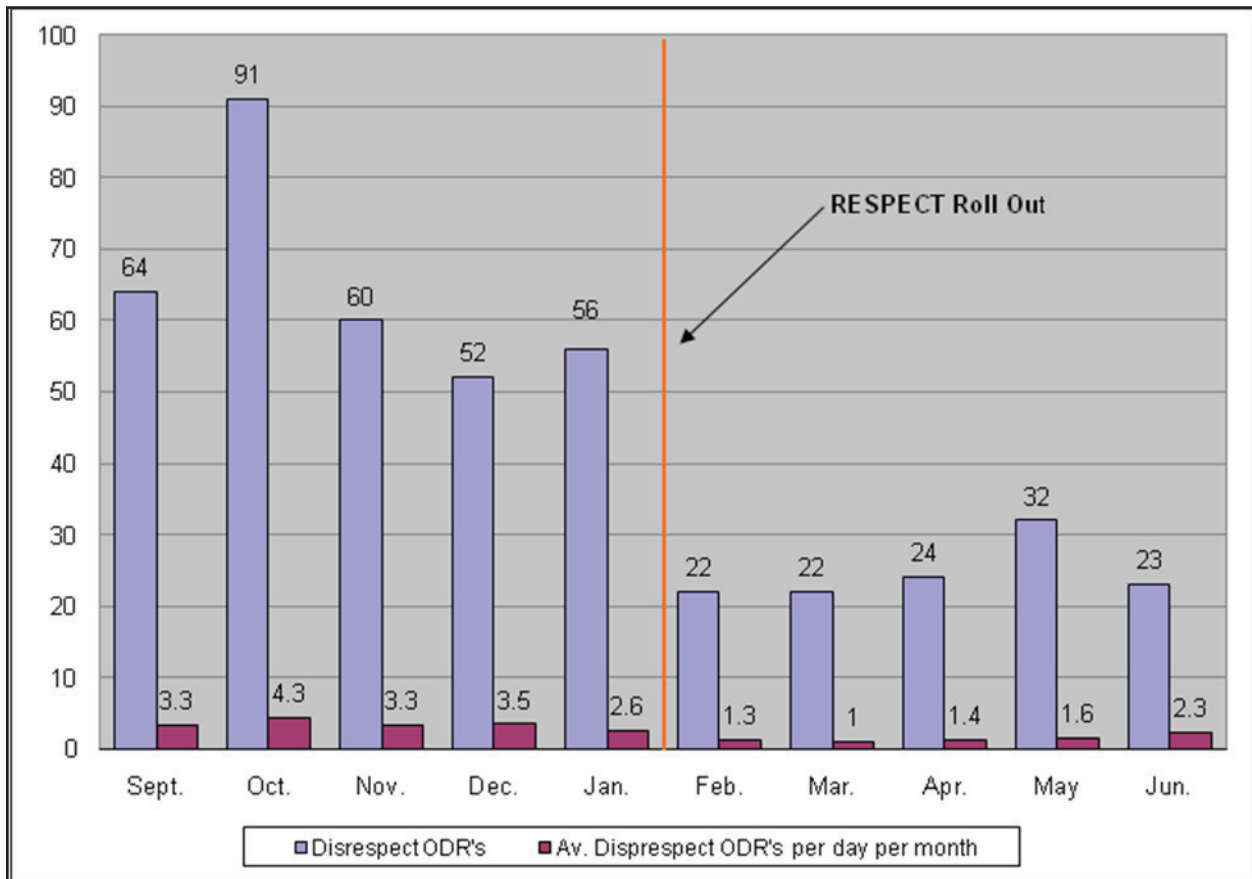
**Figure 3: Office Discipline Referrals reported 8/1/07-12/30/07 (SWIS)**



Data became a critical tool at SHS for continuous monitoring of effectiveness of SWPBS. Specific categories of unwanted behavior, such as defiance, were closely monitored, and data were consistently shared with the faculty. Over time, regular intervals for disseminating data became the cornerstone

of SWPBS’s sustainability. Faculty members came to expect and appreciate the regular data reports, and one faculty member was overheard saying, “It feels good to have our hard work validated and celebrated”. Figure 4 shows the difference in ODR’s between the months before and after SWPBS implementation.

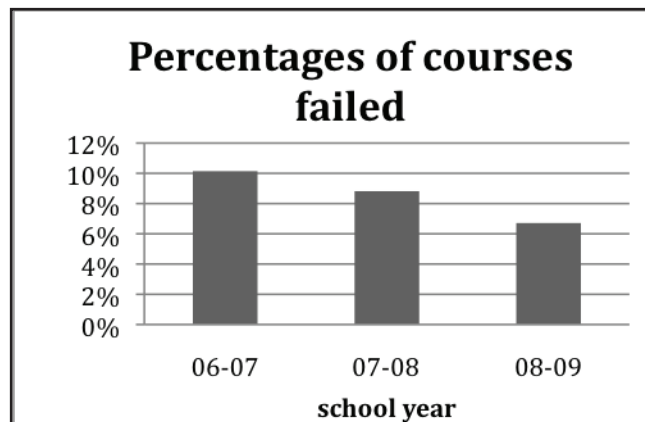
**Figure 4: Major office discipline referrals for disrespect reported 9/1/07-6/15/08 (SWIS) with a comparison of total referrals and average daily referrals. The vertical line on the chart shows when the teaching plan occurred.**



Faculty response to data reports was overwhelmingly positive. The primary tier team congratulated the entire staff for their individual efforts and success with SWPBS implementation and the staff gave the primary tier team a standing ovation of appreciation. Data reports such as those in Figure 4 can be very powerful communication tools to show faculty members how effective their collective shift in practice has been on overall school behavior. Too often data become hard to decipher due to complexity or lack of comparisons made over time. The primary tier team at SHS has made great efforts to make all reports easy to read and understand. When reviewing data in an easy to understand and readable format, teams are able to quickly determine if student behavior is improving or if additional and specific teaching plans are needed to reinforce school expectations.

In addition to behavioral data, academic outcome data was collected and shared with faculty. Two key areas of concern within the school were percentages of courses failed, and the dropout rate. Figure 5 displays SHS data for percentages of courses failed, a key indicator for school drop-out. A key goal of any SWPBS initiative is that academic improvements will come on the heels of behavioral improvement. At SHS, very high profile academic areas, such as course failure and dropout rates, needed to improve in order to validate the efforts and successes of SWPBS. As can be seen in Figure 5, SHS has been successful in improving key academic outcomes. These academic data were also shared with the faculty, who subsequently lent further support to the SWPBS initiative. Even skeptical faculty members who had not fully bought into SWPBS found themselves won over through the dual improvement in behavior and academic data.

**Figure 5: Percent of courses failed, calculated from totals reported by school administrative software**



## Summary

Once the decision to implement SWPBS has been made, the inevitable question of whether student behavior is actually improving comes into play. In the previous case, Devin McNeely's Somersworth High School was able to build decision-making systems using various sources of data and streamline the sometimes-competing strands of data into one powerful communication and decision-making tool employed by the SWPBS team. In the next case, Illinois Character Education and Positive Supports (ICEPS) Technical Assistance Provider, Darlene Sobol, describes an excellent example from Chicago Public Schools in terms of how a high school has utilized multiple sources of data related to SWPBS implementation fidelity to strengthen their SWPBS program and make informed decisions for the future.



### Case Study: Foreman High School (FHS)

Through the past four years, the FHS SWPBS team has reviewed numerous sources of available data, including attendance rates, and location and motivation of behaviors. Attendance, grades, and motivation are the basis for FHS' secondary tier program. The program was developed during the 2008-2009 school year and capitalized on existing attendance and academic failure data. The program combined a Check-In, Check-Out (CICO) system and a Social Academic Instructional Group (SAIG).

Following a targeted exploration of data, the

secondary tier team employs the CICO system and SAIG in order to identify students in need of secondary tier supports. In their pilot of the secondary tier program, the two groups of students identified for secondary tier supports either (a) had zero office discipline referrals (ODR's), but were failing between 2 and 5 classes (who will receive academic supports), or (b) had 1-5 ODR's exhibiting attention seeking behaviors or escaping difficult academic tasks. The pilot program addressed the needs of 20 freshmen for eight weeks at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. The program will increase and continue during the 2009-2010 school year.

The secondary tier team at FHS benefited from several primary tier interventions including:

- Attendance boosters for students – At the kick off at the start of the school year, goals were set for attendance. Students with one absence per month, or three or fewer absences by the end of the first quarter, were acknowledged with treat bags
- Honor Roll dinners for families
- Gold and silver ID cards for Honor Roll students
- Behavior management professional development for teachers, when it was noted that ODR's increased following mid report card and report card periods
- The development of Homeroom Challenges, where freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior divisions competed against grade-level peers for rewards, i.e., pizza parties, etc. Homeroom Challenges included the following student-driven activities:
  - Behavior lesson plans
  - Posters related to behavior expectations
  - Classroom discussions with product





- Independent student analysis of scenarios

The FHS secondary tier team found challenges in dealing with multiple systems of data. Since data are only as accurate as the accuracy of the individuals who complete the ODR forms and those who code and type data into the computer system, human errors are possible, and are unfortunately common. To address this situation, FHS created a system to help improve accessibility and reliability of data. First, the primary tier team decided upon and adopted common language that was used in professional development for staff on the use of SWIS definitions to describe behaviors on ODR forms. Second, additional SWIS training was provided to members of the school's primary and secondary tier teams. Additionally, staff reviews of SWIS and attendance data increased from quarterly reviews to every month.

In addition to access to and review of school attendance and academic data, Foreman also has added capacity to its decision-making processes through several data tracking and reporting software packages. The various data sources include:

- IMPACT, the Chicago Public Schools' Instructional Management Program and Academic Tool, consisting of Student Information Management (SIM), Student Services Management (SSM), Curriculum and Instructional Management (CIM), Gradebook, and Parent Portal
- Dashboard, a new technology adopted by the Chicago Public Schools to measure, collect, track and share timely performance information on students, teachers, and schools
- SWIS, a School-Wide Information System (SWIS), which is a web-based information system designed to help school personnel to use office referral data to design school-wide and individual student interventions

As one might imagine, full access to the various sources of data is restricted to select school administrators and other school leaders who do not necessarily share information with one another. Access to IMPACT and Dashboard is given to administrators and school technology specialists. SWIS data access is given to the data chair of the primary tier team, academic deans, and the clerical staff assistants who input discipline data and generate reports. At FHS, the primary tier team has become the bridge that links and interprets sources of data between the primary tier team leader, data chair, and administration. In short, FHS has been able to leverage the cross-departmental nature of the primary tier team to collect, analyze and report on data from multiple sources across the school in a way no individual team or committee has done in the past.

### *Summary*

Both Somersworth High School (SHS) and Foreman High School (FHS) have developed a system of data exploration and interpretation that draws information from multiple sources. These data-driven systems permit informed decision-making to take place at primary, secondary and tertiary tiers of support for students. Staff members are involved in data exploration in terms of evaluating data to assist in good decision making, and encouraging students to participate in school-wide, and sometimes more intensive interventions. It is interesting to note that both examples, SHS and FHS identify 'human error' as an issue in terms of accurately and efficiently entering data into their respective computer systems for analysis and dissemination. Considering issues of how professionals in a school strategically leverage resources to handle issues like entering data, sharing data with faculty members, and using data to problem solve, require specific decision rules and attention, especially in dynamic and changing modern high schools.



In the concluding section of this chapter, we will take on the issue of ‘human error’ as it is representative and useful for illuminating small details that are often taken for granted, but warrant significant attention when implementing SWPBS.



#### **Critical Question 4: How does a high school implementing SWPBS achieve sustained implementation when on-going adaptations and uncertainty are so prevalent?**

**S**ustainable school change at the high school level is a difficult target for those seeking to design and implement effective interventions to improve academic and/or behavioral outcomes. In the current era of school accountability and standards, budget crises, and other social issues that impact adolescents (i.e., poverty, crime), the complexity of high schools has become even more difficult to untangle. SWPBS is designed to bring consistency to schools seeking to improve behavioral and corresponding academic outcomes. That said, SWPBS initiatives must simultaneously address the generic complications and barriers that frequently derail secondary school reform initiatives, and also the aforementioned issue of high school content area with teachers refusing to shift their thinking and practices in regards to managing adolescent behavior.

Two sub-issues emerge when considering how complex modern high schools implementing SWPBS are able to sustain SWPBS implementation. The first sub-issue (4.1) is: What role do data play in helping SWPBS team members generate creative solutions to complex problems? To answer this question, we will share the example of David Tillman, District PBIS Coach from Harnett County Schools in North Carolina. Along with his colleagues at Triton High School, Tillman has been able to design efficient, effective systems that permit school leaders to leverage existing data sets for developing intensive supports for selected students who need them.

The final sub-issue (4.2) addresses nuts and bolts procedures for collecting data, entering data into computers, and making reports available to faculty members.



*Question 4.1: What role do data play in terms of helping SWPBS team members and other stakeholders generate creative solutions to complex problems?*

Efforts to build a positive, school-wide social culture should not only produce valued effects, but they should lead to systems that become easier to use with time, sustain for at least a decade, and incorporate on-going use of data for continuous improvement. Schools are dynamic settings, dealing annually (at a minimum) with turnover in staff, administration, students and families. Successful efforts to establish SWPBS practices will not sustain without on-going efforts to continually regenerate quality. Two keys to sustainability are the incorporation of systems that make SWPBS easier to use each year, and the use of data to identify new challenges and guide problem solving.

In the following case, David Tillman, the PBIS District Coordinator serving Triton High School in North Carolina, shares some innovative interventions strategically utilized by the school.



*Case Study: Triton High School (THS)*

At Triton High School in Erwin, North Carolina, data are used to identify students in need of more intense interventions than traditional primary tier behavior supports. THS' primary

tier supports include explicit teaching about behavioral expectations at the outset of the school year within each classroom and during homeroom. THS uses a school-wide reward program in which ALL students are reinforced for meeting certain behavioral goals (including attendance and being on time). The THS reinforcement system is called the Triton VISA Card, which stands for Very Important Student Access, and is given every six weeks throughout the school year to students who meet qualifying criteria. The VISA card was developed by a student in response to the inherent 'unfair nature' of raffle/lotto style reward systems used by many high schools. Also, school-wide responses to inappropriate behavior have been made more consistent and less likely to unintentionally reinforce problem behaviors. Specifically, most suspensions have been replaced by lunch and afterschool detentions. The school's SWPBS team meets frequently to discuss office discipline referral (ODR) data from the School-wide Information System (SWIS) in relation to other outcome measures and fidelity checks.

A key to THS's successful SWPBS program is its innovative and proactive approach to universal screening. At the conclusion of each grading period, conferences are conducted with each freshman in the school. During these conferences, central office personnel, counselors, and administrators sit individually with each 9th grader to briefly review data presented in the report card (grades, attendance, teacher comments, and progress towards graduation). In addition to providing an opportunity for students to be encouraged for their successes and counseled regarding performance in relation to post-high school goals, the regularly scheduled conferences function as an informal screening tool for students who may require secondary and tertiary tier academic or behavioral interventions. Beyond the capabilities of an



electronic filter, following each interview, an adult informally assesses the risk factors for academic and behavioral failure for each student. At the conclusion of the interviews, a list of students needing further attention is generated. As a result, many students are connected to academic and behavioral interventions from which they might benefit.

Additionally, THS' use of SWIS enables school administrators to highlight students whose behavior problems have resulted in frequent ODR's. Periodically, assistant principals will summon approximately ten students with the highest number of referrals for a preventive/supportive conference. By seizing an opportunity to discuss the problems, assistant principals are able to build constructive, trusting relationships with students. Assistant principals are thus better equipped to understand the connections between the students' behaviors and their perceptions of the school environment, and to provide introductions between students and other school or related service professionals who provide intense interventions.

ODR's also provide critical information for determining which students might benefit from the work of the behavior support specialist. THS shares a behavioral specialist with other schools in the district; thus, using this resource requires careful planning and decision making. In many instances, the data tracking and reporting features of SWIS aids the team and the school's administrators in making decisions regarding referrals to the behavioral specialist.

As noted, data are used to identify students who are at-risk for intense, tertiary tier interventions. Data also are used to assist school personnel in designing behavioral interventions and monitoring student progress during the intervention period. A combination of referral data from SWIS, indirect data from

intervention/SWPBS/IEP meetings, grade/credit monitoring through NCWISE (e.g., the state mandated data system), and direct behavior ratings (e.g., team perception of student performance) are used to ensure that students are responding to the interventions and to help the team modify interventions to which students are not responding.

### *Summary*

David Tillman's description of how Triton High School uses data to monitor student progress (or lack thereof) and identify students who may require secondary tier interventions is an example of how schools can creatively use data that may originally be intended for use in one arena as a contributor to positive outcomes associated with SWPBS. In sum, in each of the cases provided within this chapter by Tillman, Fruita Monument High School's Jody Mimmack, Illinois Character Education and Positive Support (ICEPS) Technical Assistance Coordinator Darlene Sobel, and Somersworth High School teacher Devin McNeeley, data have filled a role in the respective schools that goes beyond simple reporting capacity. Instead, data are a flexible, responsive tool that underwrites decision making and problem solving.



*Question 4.2: How do successful SWPBS High Schools proactively leverage their resources to successfully get information ‘into the right hands at the right time’?*

Across our exploration of the role of data for successful problem solving, implementation and sustainability of SWPBS, one element not explicitly discussed in depth has been the ‘hidden cogs’ of the various systems that permit effective practice to take place. In this concluding sub-section we will answer the questions using Table 4:

- Who inputs data into the school’s data tracking system?
- Who makes decisions once data have been input?
- How are data explicitly shared with and reviewed by faculty members?
- What role do special education teachers and other service providers play in terms of using data to identify and serve students with behavioral needs
- How are behavior data linked to academic outcomes?

**Table 4: Practitioner Responses to Inquires Regarding Nuts and Bolts Data Use in Successful SWPBS Schools**

Question	Specific Action Taken
<p><b>Who inputs data into the school’s data tracking system?</b></p>	<p><b>Jody Mimmack, Fruita Monument High School (FMHS):</b> “We have an administrative aide in one of our Assistant Principal’s office who inputs the data.”</p> <p><b>Devin McNeeley, Somersworth High School (SHS):</b> “A secretary directly supervised by the school principal inputs our data.”</p> <p><b>Darlene Sobel, Foreman High School (FHS):</b> “Foreman has a ‘data chair’ who is a member of the SWPBS team, and along with her there were a couple of support staff trained to input data.”</p> <p><b>David Tillman, Triton High School (THS):</b> “Triton abandoned its ISS model and reassigned the staff member formerly in charge of ISS to become the lead data entry person for the school [using SWIS]. This person has the time and flexibility to quickly enter data, so data reports have basically become available on a real time basis.”</p>



Question	Specific Action Taken
<p><b>Who makes decisions once data have been input?</b></p>	<p><b>Jody Mimmack (FMHS):</b> “At Fruita, the SWPBS leadership team reviews data on a monthly basis and makes decisions. The team reviews ‘big 5 data’ (who, what, when, where, how) and develops an action plan that answers the questions: ‘here’s what’, ‘so what’, and ‘now what’. Following this pattern has allowed the team to consistently and efficiently review data and translate the information into executable action plans.”</p> <p><b>Devin McNeeley (SHS):</b> “Depending on the domain of the data [primary, secondary, or tertiary tiers] the corresponding team interprets the data and makes decisions.”</p> <p><b>Darlene Sobel (FHS):</b> “The primary tier team was responsible for making decisions and planning booster activities.”</p> <p><b>David Tillman (THS):</b> “A collaboration of SWPBS team members and administrators make decisions based on data.”</p>
<p><b>How are data explicitly shared with and reviewed by faculty members?</b></p>	<p><b>Jody Mimmack (FMHS):</b> “Our SWPBS team prepares action plans every month with at least three specific steps that include plans for additional training, action steps for teachers, and specific strategies for addressing problems identified in the data.”</p> <p><b>Devin McNeeley (SHS):</b> “Data are placed in easy to understand reports and graphs, and reported to faculty members at monthly faculty meetings. We have a ‘data guy’ [McNeeley] who produces the easy to understand reports.”</p> <p><b>Darlene Sobel (FHS):</b> “Data are presented monthly at staff meetings. The Universal Team makes decisions regarding data-based interventions with input from the administration. One of the outcomes from this process last year was that the team provided a common set of behavior definitions (from SWIS) to all staff, so that everyone was on the same page when completing ODR’s.”</p> <p><b>David Tillman (THS):</b> “In our monthly SWPBS practice trainings, key data are shared with the entire faculty (1/4 at a time, in their planning). There is opportunity for reflection, questioning, and often some sort of application activities related to the PBIS practices for the day. For instance, when there was a spike in ODRs for disrespect, we asked teachers to reflect on their recent incidences of disrespect and possible intervention options that may have avoided the escalation of the incident to the extent that the students had to be removed.”</p>



Question	Specific Action Taken
<p><b>What role do special education teachers and other related service providers play in terms of using data to identify and serve students with behavioral needs?</b></p>	<p><b>Jody Mimmack (FMHS):</b> “We have a FLEX (RtI) team that meets bi-weekly that includes players from all related services – counselors, SPED, etc.... we do a case study format on kids who are referred – and not making it with just our green zone interventions. I also have a weekly meeting with our interventionists to look at data for the kids who are progress monitored or in one of our academy programs who are not making it.”</p> <p><b>Devin McNeeley (SHS):</b> “At Somersworth, special education teachers and other service providers are able to make referrals of students to the secondary or tertiary tier teams. Depending on the needs of the student, the referring educator may be invited to give detailed information to the secondary/tertiary tier team members, and possibly participate in improvement strategies, including RENEW. There is a real partnership between the Special Education department and primary, secondary and tertiary tier teams.”</p> <p><b>David Tillman (THS):</b> “Referral data are used both as an indication of need for more intense intervention and for progress monitoring. However, the ODRs are not a sensitive enough measure for functional analysis and true progress monitoring, so a myriad of other data collection efforts support these goals—including frequency counts, DBRs, systematic, direct observation, and peer-comparison observation. These are often coordinated by the Behavior Support Specialist in cooperation with counselors and teachers.”</p>
<p><b>How are behavior data linked to academic outcomes?</b></p>	<p><b>Jody Mimmack (FMHS):</b> “We know that kids can’t learn if they are sitting on the pine in the office. We need to keep them in class!”</p> <p><b>Devin McNeeley (SHS):</b> “Somersworth uses SWIS, which has the ability to track academic and behavioral outcomes.”</p> <p><b>Darlene Sobel (FHS):</b> “The primary tier team and administration look at behavior and academic data over time. Last year the principal noticed that ODR’s were increasing during the months that report cards were distributed. He thought that teachers were using grades as a consequence for inappropriate behaviors. We [the Technical Assistance Team] assisted in providing specific professional development for staff regarding basic classroom management techniques.”</p> <p><b>David Tillman (THS):</b> “This is still a rudimentary correlation for us, but both things are always considered. ODR data, suspension data, attendance data, and test scores are key summative indicators at the close of semesters. In an attempt to have correlation be more formative in function, we are attempting to use 6-week report card conferences and even report card data mining to try to get useful information at a point in the semester in which changes might result in better outcomes on the semester’s summative measures.”</p>



As you likely noted, there are common themes that emerged across our four practitioner's responses to the questions. Our HS-SWPBS co-authors and respective school teams have a consistent, trained individual who inputs data. This is key for both consistency and trustworthiness of data. If one professional is always responsible for entering data, the faculty can feel confident that their referrals are indeed being 'counted' and passed on for action by administration. As noted earlier in this chapter, 'human error' is possible when it comes to entering data; that said, our successful schools have limited this pitfall through assigning a consistent person to handle this critical job. This individual typically reports directly to the administrator in charge of data.

Each of the HS-SWPBS teams makes team decisions based on data. The forum participants reported that a blend of SWPBS team members and administrators make decisions based on data. It is critical for administrators to be involved in decision making, input from practitioners is critical as well. Decisions made by SWPBS teams alone lack the 'teeth' to be binding across the school and are subject to question or revocation by administration. This power struggle has been avoided in the participating SWPBS high schools.

The forum participants share data with their faculty members every month, typically at faculty meetings. The schools have produced easy to understand graphs to be disseminated and discussed, and provide opportunity for comment and problem solving from the full faculty. Keeping the faculty apprised of progress and outcomes in terms of SWPBS data is an essential part of the sustainability of successful HS-SWPBS teams. Additionally, faculty members that are included in the data exploration process are also invited to help interpret data and brainstorm ideas for improvement. This collaborative, inclusive

process has resulted in a real sense of 'we really are ALL in this together' in successful schools.

Successful HS-SWPBS teams use data from a variety of sources to identify and serve students with more intense needs. Special education teachers, counselors, and other related service providers are frequently included in the conversation in terms of identifying student needs and linking them with services. In short, when it comes to providing services to students who have more intense needs, the forum participating HS-SWPBS schools use every human and data resource available to give students what the need to be successful.

Finally, the forum participating HS-SWPBS teams use various sources of data, including SWIS, to look at both behavioral and academic outcomes. These professionals understand the dynamic link between behavior and academics, and thus review various measures of outcomes to identify students who are struggling and in need of more intense services.

### *Summary*

The central themes of this chapter can be summed as follows:

- Effective education is based on effective decision making. Effective decision making requires access to the right data at the right time in the right format
- High schools are data rich environments
- Current data management systems are expensive (time and money), poorly integrated, and require highly-trained personnel for management and maintenance
- Provide high school faculty/staff with detailed information (disaggregated) about the academic performance, social behavior, and mental health needs of students to improve the effectiveness of





high schools to produce both social and academic outcomes

- Improved data systems will be a key to building high schools that are successful with a wider range of students (disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status). Data systems will allow earlier identification and support for students, more tailored support, and more intensive cycles of adaptation to unique student needs
- Access to data will be a key asset as high schools respond to unforeseen challenges and on-going demands for adaptation
- Successful HS-SWPBS teams have similarities in terms of how they handle the ‘nuts and bolts’ aspects of capturing data and making decisions for supporting student outcomes



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## Chapter 6

# Secondary and Tertiary Tier Supports in PBIS High Schools

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Secondary and tertiary tier supports are necessary components of the high school environment. Students demonstrating secondary and/or tertiary tier needs often have a history of academic and/or social failure, and they have established patterns of behavior that may be incompatible with school success, such as:

- Academic failure (Allensworth & Easton, 2005; Balfanz, & Herzog, 2005)
- Problem behavior (e.g., disruption, disrespect, verbal aggression, etc.) (Sweeten, 2006; Tobin & Sugai, 1999)
- History of grade retention (Allensworth & Easton, 2005)
- Poor teacher relationships (Barber & Olson, 1997)
- Low attendance (Balfanz, & Herzog, 2005; Jerald, 2006; Neild & Balfanz, 2006)

These types of behaviors put students at risk for negative academic and social outcomes in school. Students who engage in high-level behaviors are more likely to drop out of school than their peers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Greene, 2002; United States Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). They also have difficulty meeting attendance, academic, and social requirements of the mainstream high school setting which creates additional stress for themselves, teachers, and administrators. To ensure the success of students with at-risk and high-risk behaviors, schools must have the tools and strategies to help these students build fluency in school-appropriate behaviors.

The good news is that some high schools across the nation have been implementing tools and strategies through a multi-tiered School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) approach. Secondary and tertiary tier supports are organized as an add-on model that intensify and individualize the supports available to

students at the primary tier by ensuring that the intensity of support matches the severity of need (NRCLD, 2003). This chapter reflects how some high schools are implementing secondary and tertiary tier supports.

The descriptive information provided in this chapter represents a snapshot of the critical features of secondary and tertiary tier interventions as implemented in a small group of high schools in the United States. Invited school faculty members gathered for the two-day HS PBIS Forum to explore and document the implementation of secondary and tertiary tiers of support in high schools. Although implementation and documentation of secondary and tertiary tiers of support in high schools are in relatively nascent stages, clear similarities and differences exist in the intensity and individualization of the supports. In this chapter, features, systems, practices, and data are described separately for secondary and tertiary tier supports.



## Secondary Tier Supports

Secondary tier supports are typically required for approximately 10-13% of students within a school. These students have been identified as non-responders to primary tier supports, which are not sufficient to help students meet academic or social requirements of high school. For this reason, students requiring secondary tier supports are in need of more explicit, intensive supports that target specific skill(s) or behavior(s). This concept of secondary tier supports builds off the same basic principles of primary tier supports: schools can teach and acknowledge appropriate academic and social behaviors.

Students in the secondary tier of support require more intensified instruction or support in academic and or social skills because they are in danger of school failure (failing 2-3 classes, patterns of moderate lateness or absences, moderate levels of class disruption, out-of seat-behaviors, etc.). Secondary tier supports should allow students to be sufficiently engaged in academic and social requirements to meet graduation requirements either in the form of a regular or modified high school diploma.

The following examples illustrate some of the recommended criteria for secondary tier supports:

- Align with and build from school-wide supports (OSEP, 2004)
- Small groups of students with similar needs
- Rapid and continuous access (OSEP, 2004)
- Highly trained staff on intervention implementation and data collection (OSEP, 2004)
- Academic and/or social behavior screeners for identifying non-responders to primary tier supports (OSEP, 2004)
- On-going data collection for team-based

decision making (OSEP, 2004)

- Priority for selection and adoption of evidence-based interventions
- Structured and predictable school environment (Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2004)
- Function-based to behavior assessment and intervention (Broussard & Northrup, 1995)
- Integrated academic and social behavior support (OSEP, 2004)
- Skill building in self-awareness and self-determination (Einsenman, 2007; Lane & Carter, 2006)
- Individualization

Examples of intensifying primary tier supports, or intensifying teaching and rewarding of behaviors that meet some of the above criteria are:

- Systematically intensify universal social support (i.e., positive reinforcement) for a small selected group of students who may benefit from extra reminders to follow school-wide expectations. By systematically increasing positive reinforcement, students can receive more frequent attention for appropriate behaviors, and relatively less contact for inappropriate behaviors. Systematically increasing the positive referrals can be accomplished by providing teachers with lists of students who need more positive feedback, and teachers can simply check names off a list for every positive referral distributed. The list would help teachers remember to give out positive referrals, and track the number of referrals distributed to the small group. As students are identified as needing additional reminders or encouragement, they could be added to the list immediately.



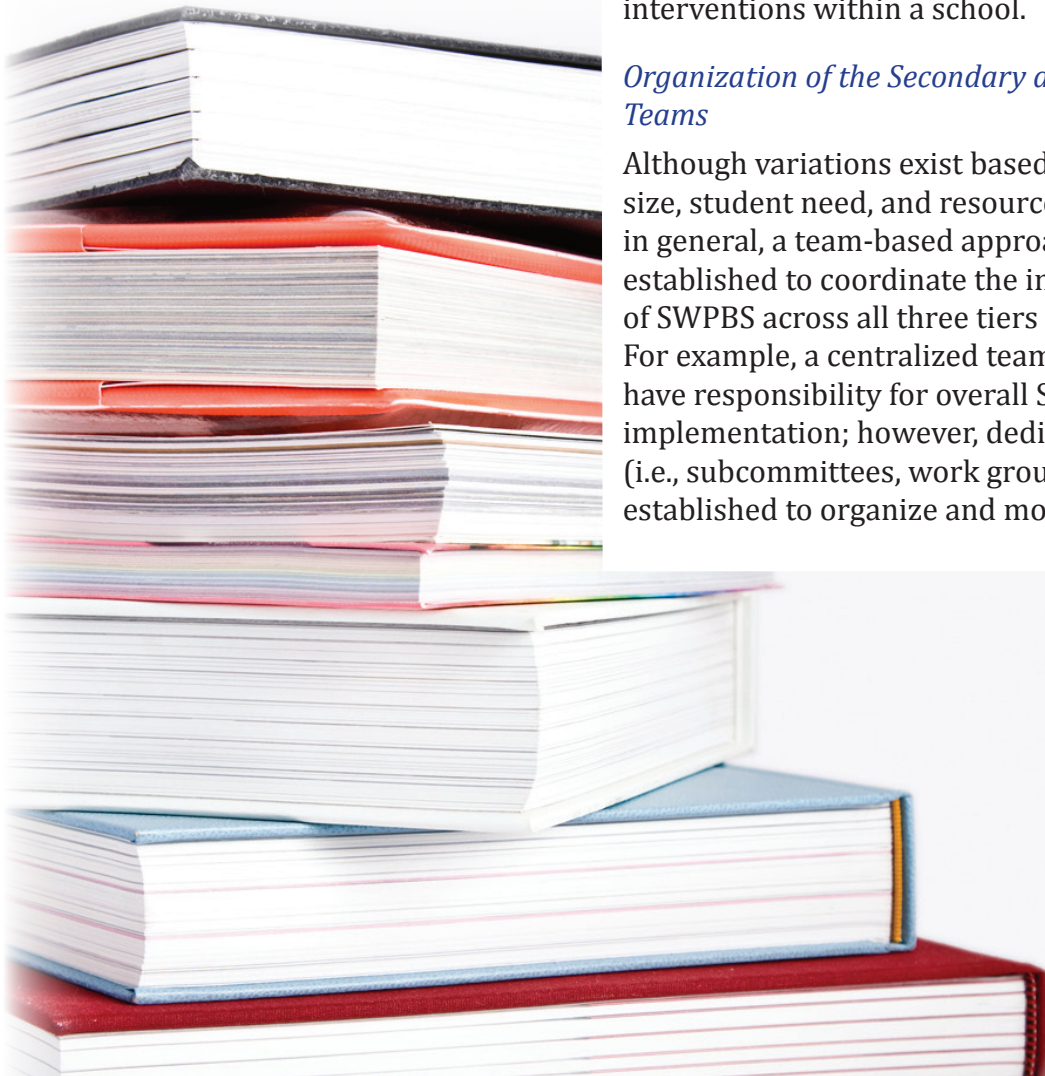
- Use a school-wide mid-term record review to identify students who are not passing mathematics courses, and create a math support class, which would be taken in conjunction with their grade level content math class. By accessing math materials across courses and communicating frequently with teachers, a math support teacher could increase structure and predictability by re-teaching skills, increasing prerequisite skill fluency, or supplementing instruction. A smaller class size would increase performance feedback, allow for additional data collection, and increase adult interaction.

## Systems for Supporting Staff Behavior

When organizing small group supports for students with higher levels of need, priority is given to the alignment of systems, data, and practices with the most valued high school outcome: meeting graduation requirements. This alignment must consider allocation of available resources and time, systems of support for staff implementation, and whole school implementation. Although a team has the responsibility of coordinating the implementation of secondary tier systems of support, all school staff, including administrators, should be trained on the ‘dos and don’ts’ of the secondary and tertiary tier interventions within a school.

### *Organization of the Secondary and Tertiary Tier Teams*

Although variations exist based on enrollment size, student need, and resource availability, in general, a team-based approach should be established to coordinate the implementation of SWPBS across all three tiers of support. For example, a centralized team may have responsibility for overall SWPBS implementation; however, dedicated team(s) (i.e., subcommittees, work groups) may be established to organize and monitor the



implementation of secondary tier supports. These teams would meet more frequently than primary tier teams as their students require more frequent progress checks.

Many high schools already have student support teams that serve students requiring secondary tier supports, for example, Student Support Teams, Intensive PBIS (IPBS), At Risk Planning Teams, Dropout Prevention Committees, Truancy Committees, etc.. These Secondary Tier Support Teams are responsible for:

- Linking students to interventions when needed: Can the student access the intervention when they need it?
- Supporting the day to day tasks associated with the interventions, like training and communication
- Organizing and tracking progress-monitoring data with easy-to-use tools, like checklists, tally sheets, and grade reports
- Planning or modifying secondary tier supports as necessary, for example, reconfiguring student groups, fading supports for students making good progress, or adapting interventions to increase their effectiveness or efficiency

To accomplish these tasks, Secondary Tier Support Teams should:

- Have a specific, well-defined mission or purpose
- Give priority to the implementation of evidence-based practices
- Use data-based criteria for selecting, including, moving, and exiting students for secondary and tertiary tier supports
- Complete self-assessments of implementation procedures
- Communicate and collaborate frequently with other teams, for example,

administrative, counseling, grade level, academic department, and community

- Coordinate staff training and support needs

### *Examples of Team Structures*

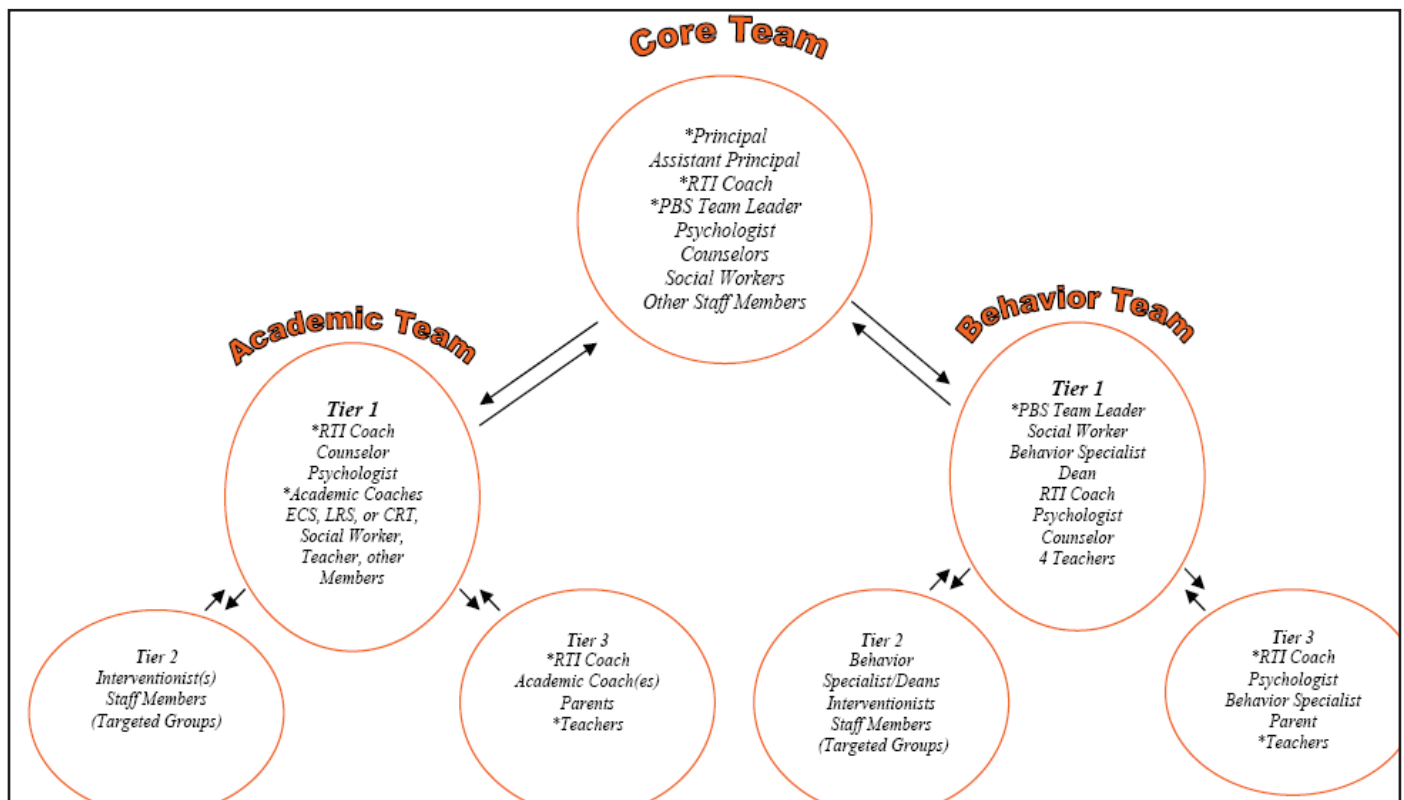
The members and specific processes of school-based teams will look differently across schools with respect to purpose and day-to-day functioning. Examples of team structures are illustrated in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

The teaming structure developed by the School District of Osceola County, Florida, (Figure 1) includes members at each tier for both academic and behavior concerns. The teams communicate frequently via staff who are members on more than one team. The Core Team meets monthly and is responsible for overall organization and allocation of resources. Primary tier academic and behavior teams also meet monthly. Secondary and tertiary tier teams meet 2-3 times per month to review requests for assistance, plan and progress monitor interventions, organize staff training as necessary, and communicate with school-wide staff about student progress.





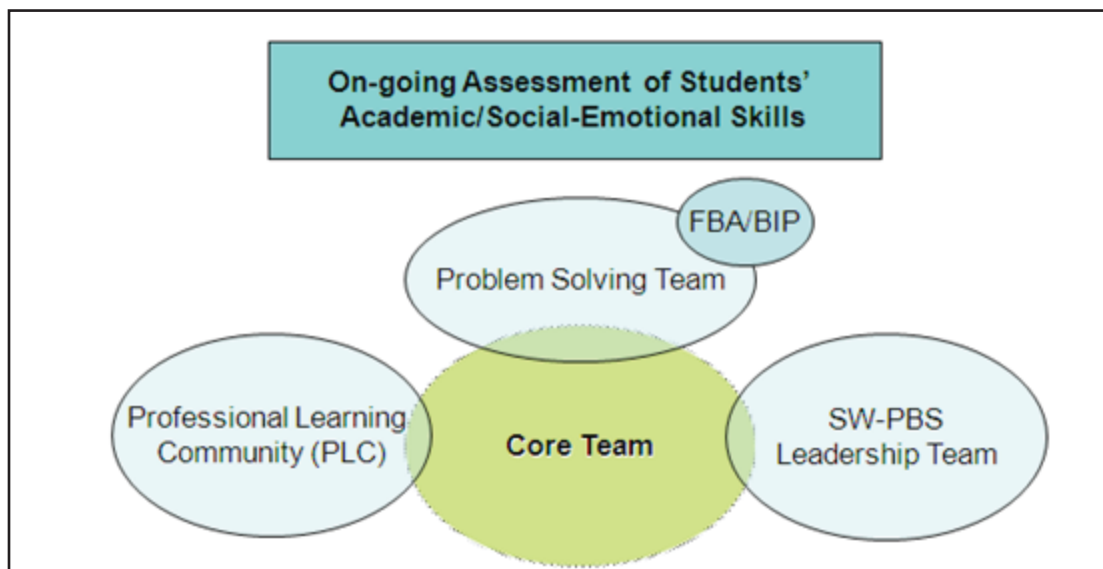
**Figure 1. Staff members and teaming for primary, secondary and tertiary tier academic and behavior teams, School District of Osceola County**



Fairfax County Public School District in Virginia has developed an overlapping four team model (Figure 2). Their Core Team is responsible for the school-wide (primary tier) organization of systems with four additional teams that have more targeted responsibilities. The SWPBS Leadership Team is focused on implementation of primary tier SWPBS. The Professional Learning Community provides direct teacher support. The Problem Solving Team is responsible for secondary

tier supports for students with academic and behavior needs. The FBA/BIP Team is an off-shoot of the Problem Solving Team and provides specialized function-based behavior support for students whose behaviors are not responding to primary or secondary tier supports. The Problem Solving and FAB/BIP Teams meet 2-3 times per month. Whereas, the Core, Professional Learning Community, and SWPBS Leadership Teams meet once per month.

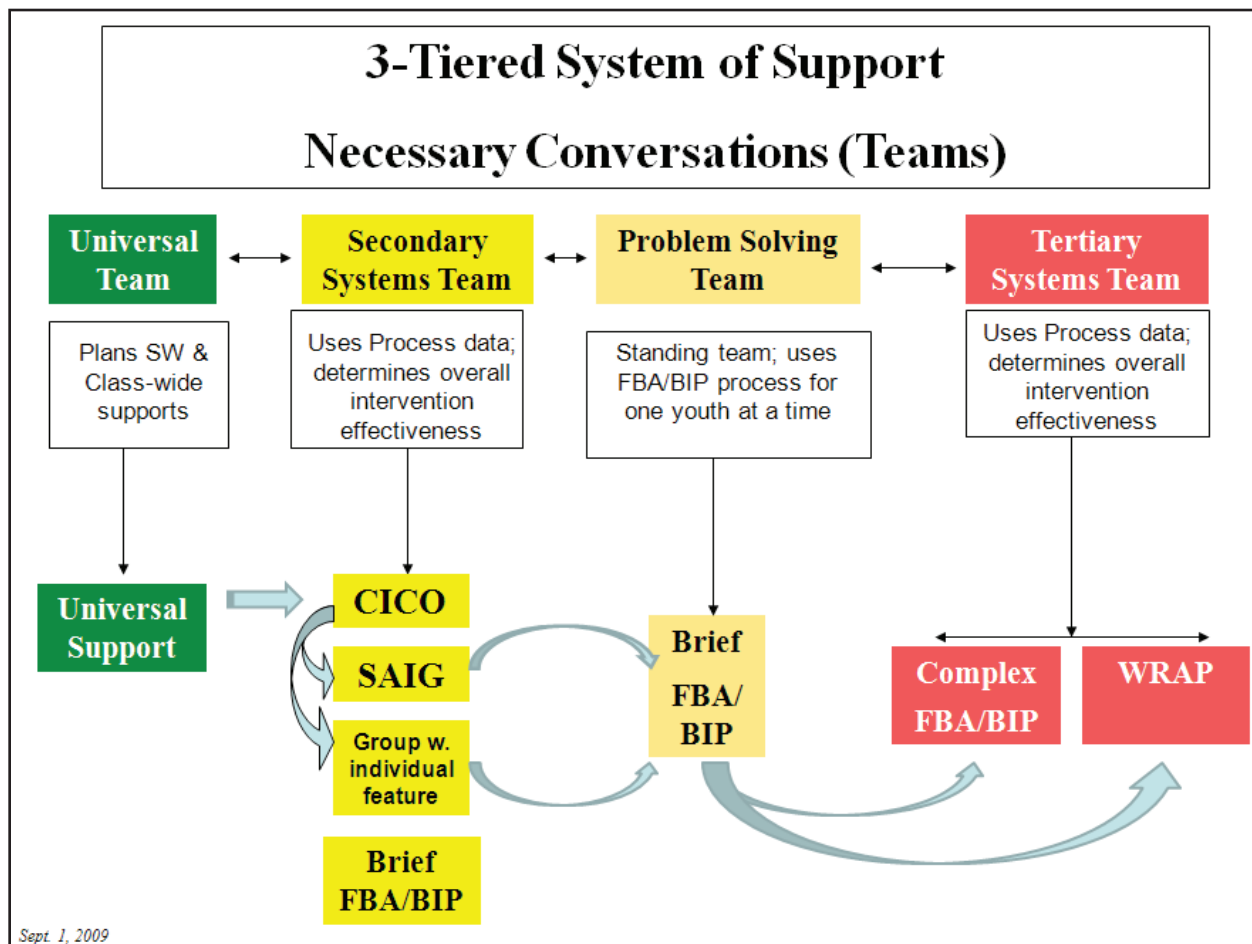
**Figure 2: Fairfax County Public School Four Team Model, Example of EBIS team organization, Based on Sprague et al, 2008.**



The last example of teaming (Figure 3) comes from Illinois PBIS network. Although this model is not in place yet within a high school, it is being introduced into several high schools this year, and it is operational in elementary and middle schools in several districts across the state. In addition to the ongoing primary tier system development and monitoring through a leadership team, the Illinois model positions leadership team members to consistently engage in three additional conversations to accomplish tasks specific to secondary and tertiary tier, including progress monitoring of secondary tier interventions (Tier 2 Systems Planning), brief function-based behavior plans through a generic problem-solving team, and

progress monitoring of tertiary tier supports (Tier 3 Systems Planning Team). Students not responding to secondary tier interventions are referred for problem solving using a brief FBA and resulting in a simple BIP. Although this brief FBA/BIP process happens separately from the secondary tier progress monitoring function, the persons engaged in secondary tier progress monitoring and secondary tier problem solving may be the same, they meet at a separate designated time to accomplish each task. If students do not make adequate progress, they are referred to the Tertiary Systems Team to be assigned a team facilitator who will facilitate a complex FBA and/or Wraparound Process.

**Figure 3: Three-Tiered System of Support Teaming Model, Illinois PBIS.**



## *Communication Systems*

Secondary Tier Support Teams require a system for communicating with the Primary and Tertiary Tier teams to ensure students who are not responding to the current level of supports are reported to the next team of support in a timely manner. A system of communication means non-responders to primary tier are able to access secondary tier supports in a timely manner, and students not responding to secondary tier supports are able to access tertiary tier supports quickly. Secondary Tier Support Teams consider the following questions and communicate their answers to other support teams:

- What is the mission, or goal, of this team?
- What outcomes (academic, social, etc.) are associated with interventions being monitored by this team?
- At what point is a student considered a non-responder?
- What constitutes acceptable progress?
- What constitutes behaviors that require a crisis response?

System structures needed to support Secondary Tier Support Teams

- Congruent meeting times with other support teams
- Common prep times for team members
- Pre-set meeting schedules
- Routine emails
- Communication coordinator
- Shared “Action Planning” (who, what & by when)
- Common or shared membership and meeting attendance across teams
- Participation by outside support personnel (social worker, mental health nurse, drug counselor, etc.)

Participation of community partners in Secondary Tier Support Teams is gaining acceptance among administrators and coaches who see the need for supports in areas that have not typically been headed by high schools. Churchill High School (CHS) in Oregon has begun a recent collaboration with Ophelia’s Place, ([www.opheliasplace.net](http://www.opheliasplace.net)) a not for profit community group that provides group counseling to adolescent young women who have been identified as at-risk. Progress monitoring for this group includes pre and post participation surveys about at-risk behaviors.

CHS has also invited personnel from the local HIV Alliance into the school to present once a semester to the larger student body, and three times per semester to students who have been identified as engaging in at-risk sexual behaviors. The collaboration with social service providers within the community has allowed CHS to expand the scope of secondary tier interventions beyond what is feasible with existing school resources.

## *Merging Initiatives/Resource Mapping*

To meet the needs of their students, Secondary Tier Support Teams must have adequate information about what resources are available within the school and community. Resource mapping allows teams to identify, align, and integrate all the initiatives, programs, and services related to student behavioral and academic achievement. (See [www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/mapping](http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/mapping) for more information about resource mapping.) Money, time, and other resources can be used more effectively and efficiently to meet student needs by identifying overlap and redundancy, assessing effectiveness of the program, utilization, and specifying implementation resources. Resource mapping provides information that will allow school teams to:

- Remove or combine supports that are not



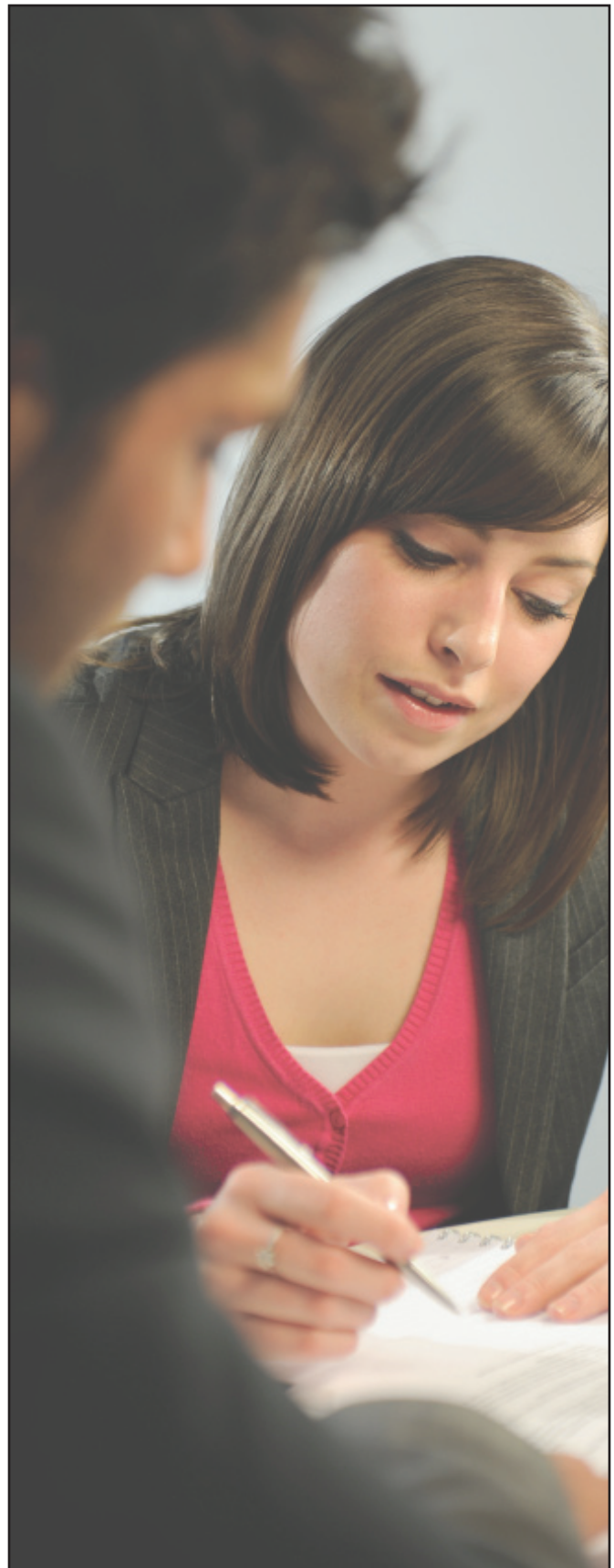
optimally effective

- Realign current supports to reflect school-based data and evidence-based practices
- Identify student needs and link them to appropriate supports within two weeks
- Assess and focus their specialized secondary and tertiary tier supports for students with the most needs

### *Administrative Roles and Responsibilities*

An active and supportive administrative leader at both the school and district levels is necessary for successful implementation of secondary and tertiary tier supports. Supportive administrators allocate resources and time to enable selection of evidence-based practices, implementation with integrity, and continuous monitoring for effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, members of administrative teams should be familiar with the secondary tier supports available within the schools, and ensure that Secondary Tier Support Teams are staffed by knowledgeable and skilled personnel. The following provides a list of possible leadership personnel and their roles within the secondary and tertiary tier teams:

- School leadership (principal, vice-principal, dean of students) for resource allocation, personnel hiring and assignments, intervention support
- Community leaders/Social service providers (social workers, mental health providers, child and family caseworkers) for collaborative coordination of resources outside the school
- Behavior support specialists and coaches (school psychologists, school counselors, special educators, school social workers) for establishment, implementation, and monitoring of secondary and tertiary tier assessment and intervention systems



## Data for Decision Making

If the implementation of secondary tier supports is to be effective, efficient, and relevant, decisions must be data-based. Behavior support teams must have procedures in place that address three main questions: (a) Are we using the evidence-based practices that align with the needs of the student?, (b) Are we implementing the practice with fidelity?, and (c) Are we producing the desired outcomes and making a difference?

At the secondary tier, a variety of screening tools are available to examine the academic and behavior status of small groups of students or individual students:

- Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach 1991)
- Student Behavior Survey (Lachar, Sabine, Wingenfeld, Kline & Gruber, 1999)
- School Social Behavior Scales (Merrell, 2002)
- Social Skills Improvement System (Gresham & Elliot, 1990)
- BASC-2 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BASC-2 BESS) (Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2006)

More intensive and individualized assessments (e.g., functional behavioral assessments) can be conducted to provide more detailed information about academic, social, and emotional or mental health needs. This information is particularly important for developing individually specific and relevant behavior intervention plans that enable: (a) monitoring of students' progress on academic and social behaviors, (b) modifying or intensifying supports, (c) allocation of resources, and (d) communications with teachers, family members, students, and others.

Sources of secondary tier data for aligning supports with student needs or progress monitoring can include the following:

- Academic data: grades, GPA, credit accrual, state or grade level testing, curriculum-based measures, and progress reports
- Social data: attendance, social skills ratings scales/checklists, office discipline referrals, teacher frequency counts of behaviors, behavior report cards, and self-management checklists
- Emotional/Mental health data: social/emotional needs assessments, medical tests, home/school/community checklists

In addition to tracking progress data, Secondary Tier Support Teams should be actively tracking information on the integrity of implementation: Are we doing what we said we'd do? Several evaluation tools can be used to assess the process of implementing secondary and tertiary tier supports. In Table 1, descriptions, common names, and reference information are provided for evaluation tools used to assess implementation integrity:



**Table 1: Evaluation Tools for Secondary and Tertiary Tier Implementation**

Tool	What information is provided	Who provides the information
<p>Effective Behavior Support (EBS) Self-Assessment Survey (Sugai, Horner, &amp; Todd, 2000)</p> <p><a href="http://pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_tools.aspx">http://pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_tools.aspx</a></p>	<p>Initial and annual assessment of behavior support systems in schools: includes school-wide, classroom and non-classroom settings, and individual student system assessment</p>	<p>Initially, the entire staff in a school completes the EBS Survey. As an on-going assessment and planning tool, it can be completed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff at a staff meeting</li> <li>• Individuals from a representative group</li> <li>• Team member-led focus group</li> </ul>
<p>Checklist for Individual Student Systems (CISS; Anderson, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, Horner, Sugai &amp; Sampson, 2007)</p> <p><a href="http://pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_tools.aspx">http://pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_tools.aspx</a></p>	<p>School-based teams self-assessment of the implementation of secondary and tertiary tier support systems within their school</p>	<p>School-based secondary and tertiary tier teams</p>
<p>Tier 2/Tier 3 tracking tool (Illinois PBIS Network, 2008)</p> <p><a href="http://www.pbisillinois.org/">http://www.pbisillinois.org/</a></p>	<p>Tracks number of students and progress for all secondary and tertiary tier interventions</p>	<p>School-based secondary and tertiary tier teams</p>
<p>RENEW Readiness Checklist (UNH Institute on Disability)</p> <p><a href="http://www.iod.unh.edu/renew.html">http://www.iod.unh.edu/renew.html</a></p>	<p>For school team to self-assess readiness to implement RENEW model of transition planning</p>	<p>School-based secondary and tertiary tier teams</p>
<p>RENEW Student Progress Tracker</p> <p><a href="http://www.iod.unh.edu/renew.html">www.iod.unh.edu/renew.html</a></p>	<p>To assess student outcomes using the RENEW practice</p>	<p>Individual tertiary tier team</p>



### *Other Ways to Use Data*

Data-based decision making is helpful to secondary and tertiary tier implementation in additional ways. Data can be used to increase staff buy-in by increasing their knowledge about:

- Severity of a given problem
- Effectiveness of specific interventions
- Allocation of resources
- Implementation accuracy
- Extent of student change or progress
- Need for professional development
- Short and long-term action planning
- Program development and enhancement
- Practices for Supporting Student Behaviors

The following examples are of secondary and tertiary tier practices currently in place within the participating high schools. The practices listed do not all represent empirically tested interventions, but do meet criteria for secondary tier supports as listed at the beginning of the chapter. It is important to remember that these supports are intended to increase instruction, prompts and positive feedback for specific skills and behaviors, and that specific application of supports must be individualized to the needs and characteristics of individual students and schools.

### *Examples of Practices at the Secondary Tier of Support*

#### Positive primary tier climate

- Continuum of early identification and care for all students
- Teaching, monitoring, and rewarding expected academic and social behavior
- Positive active supervision

#### Evidence-based academic and social

#### instructional groups

- Within classroom
- Resource room
- Small groups:
  - ◊ Social skills instruction (getting along with peers, responding to adults)
  - ◊ Substance abuse groups

#### Academic interventions

- Academic screening and appropriate placement
- Scaffolded instruction
- Differentiated instruction
- Extended day/tutorials
- Extending supports by using self-management strategies in content area classes

#### Self-management

- Behavior Report Card/Self-Checklist
- Check-In Check-Out (Hawken & Horner, 2004)
- Check & Connect (Evelo, Sinclair, Hurley, Christenson, & Thurlow, 1996) (<http://www.ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/>)

#### Academic and social supports combined

- High School Behavior Education Program (Swain-Bradway, in press) ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org))

#### Mentoring

- School-based: small group, individual, academic or social support
  - ◊ One adult in school is responsible for checking in with small number of students (Wolf Watch), or providing one-on-one mentoring (Momma and Poppa Wolves: Timbercreek High School)
- Adult mediator: designated staff person to increase communication between





teachers, parents and students (West Charlotte High School)

School-based mental health services provided by community resources

- Individual counseling
- Case management



*Case Study: HS-Behavior Education Program (Combined Academic and Social Supports), Churchill High School*

An emerging secondary tier support is the combination of academic and social supports. Schools across the nation are implementing versions of a 'study skills' class that focuses on building organizational skills for students who demonstrate secondary tier academic needs. A few high schools in Oregon, supported by the PBIS Technical Assistance Center, are implementing the study skills class combined with a check-in model. The High School Behavior Education Program (HS-BEP; Swain-Bradway, in press) is modeled, in part, after the Behavior Education Program (Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2004) and adapted to findings from the school retention and SWPBS literature.

The intention of the HS-BEP is to reduce negative academic and social experiences through explicit instruction, and practice in seven foundational study skills: planner use, notebook organization, graduation plan, goal setting, tracking progress, test taking, and studying. In addition to explicit instruction in

organizational skills, students participate in a Check-In Check-Out (CICO) cycle, embedded within the class, and have supported homework time.

Churchill High School in Oregon, has been implementing the HS-BEP for three years and is experiencing increasing success each year. Ninth grade students are the targeted group for inclusion in the HS-BEP class. Academic (GPA, classes failed) and social (ODRs, absences, tardies) data from middle school and teacher referrals are used to screen students for inclusion in the program. Students can enter the HS-BEP at the start of each semester. In order to be included in the HS-BEP the student must meet the following criteria:

- Student is engaging in problem behavior, but no crisis behaviors:
  - ◊ Occasionally skips class
  - ◊ Talking during teacher instruction
  - ◊ Failure to complete homework, class work, class projects
- Improved structure would help student succeed.
- Student may lack organizational skills
  - ◊ Notebook, backpack is disorganized
  - ◊ Student often misplaces or can't find assignments
- Student is placed at appropriate instructional level for academic courses (math, reading, history, etc.)
- Student is not achieving at least a C in core classes due to lack of, or poor quality Completion, of class/homework, tests, or class projects
- Student responds positively to at least one adult in the school

The class consists of 40 minutes of instruction in the HS-BEP curriculum (Swain-Bradway, in press) (PBIS.org: search HS-BEP) and 40



minutes of homework completion assistance. Progress monitoring of students' academic and social behaviors are conducted on a weekly basis. Twice each month a review of school progress or mid-term reports and CICO points are shared with students as part of goal setting. Student participants have shown increases in on-task behaviors in content area classes. Teachers report student participants as completing more assignments and higher quality assignments. Student participants in the HS-BEP report feeling more 'appreciated' and academically successful.



### Tertiary Tier of Support

Much like the secondary tier of support, the tertiary tier is focused on increasing instruction and supports around specific skills or behaviors, that is, students are taught and rewarded for displays of appropriate school and social behaviors. However, the most notable difference is the increased intensity, individualization, and variation in supports at the tertiary tier.

Students who are non-responders to primary and secondary tiers of support typically represent about 1-3% of the student population and, by definition, require intensive, individualized services matched to their needs. In general terms, the student who needs intensive supports will often have challenges that extend beyond just school, such as mental health needs, disruptions at home or in the community, juvenile justice or child welfare involvement, among other issues. Students requiring tertiary tier supports may be participating in several secondary interventions within the school, and also require individual attention for their specific academic and social needs.

To ensure that students who need tertiary tier supports receive those services in a timely manner (e.g., before disengagement, dropping out, academic failure), the school should have in place:

- A Secondary/Tertiary Tiers Support or Student Assistance Team to coordinate behavior support implementation
- A clearly defined referral process and specific decision-making rules to guide teams in the screening, identification, assessment, and referral of individual students with tertiary tier support needs
- A point person who is responsible for coordinating and tracking the referral



process and its referral outcome

- A list of evidence-based interventions and services (resource map) for tertiary tier supports
- A process and decision rules for matching services to student need
- A comprehensive individualized planning and support process (such as Wraparound, Scott & Eber, 2003; RENEW, Malloy, Drake, & Couture, 2009; or individualized special education transition planning)
- Adequate administrative support to allow tertiary tier providers adequate time and support for professional development and coaching
- Individualized student progress and outcome tracking tools (such as SIMEO or the RENEW Student Progress Tracker)
- Planning and support processes that are outcomes driven, including transition planning and post-school outcomes (Bruns, Suter, Force, & Burchard, 2005)

### *Tertiary Tier Teams*

The Tertiary Tier Team process differs from primary and secondary tier teams in that a system planning team oversees tertiary tier systems and overall effectiveness, but does not design and implement the individualized interventions for each student. Due to the complexity of needs at this level, each student has his/her own individualized team that designs and implements the interventions for the student. First, we describe the function of the Tertiary Tier System Planning Teams followed by a description of the individualized Tertiary Tier Support Teams that facilitate and support the unique interventions for each student.

The Tertiary Systems Planning Team monitors the tertiary system capacity and overall

effectiveness as a component of the multi-tiered intervention process within the school and the overall district. Functions include review of system structures (i.e., referral process, personnel capacity, etc.) and progress monitoring effectiveness of the tertiary tier systems through data review of all students receiving tertiary tier supports. Examples of specific functions of this team include:

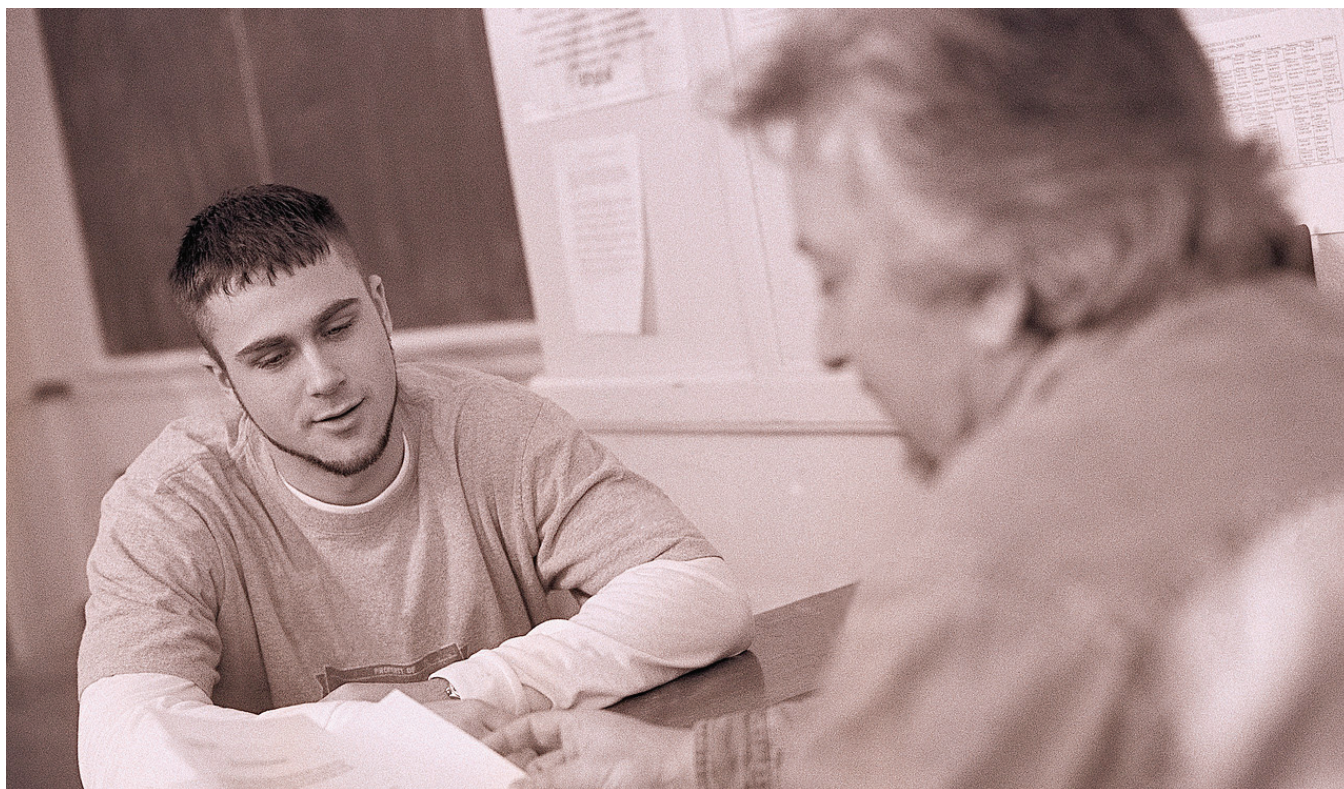
- Developing criteria for determining when tertiary tier services and supports are required
- Assessing and coordinating implementation, and evaluating the effectiveness of tertiary tier evidence-based practices
- Supporting professional development related to staff capacity
- Identifying services and evidence-based intervention gaps with respect to school, family, and mental health supports
- Developing systems for the efficient and most effective use of school resources (e.g., special education dollars, staff deployment, behavioral expertise, policy rules and procedures)
- Creating and monitoring the data collection, analysis, and reporting.



As described above, an important distinction of tertiary tier systems design is that the development of a unique team for each student is actually a part of the intervention at this level. Each student who requires tertiary tier interventions is engaged by a facilitator (typically a school-based clinician such as a social worker, psychologist, counselor, etc.) who guides and supports the student through the design and development of their own unique team. In other words, the tertiary tier intervention includes a process that results in a unique team being formed, and the team will then review data, design interventions, monitor the student's progress ensuring that multiple settings (home, school, community) are addressed, and needed supports are accessible in and out of the school setting. At a minimum, the team should include the student, a facilitator, a parent or guardian, and teachers or other staff members who are important to that student's success. Strength-based connections at school (i.e., a peer, a coach, etc.)

and within the family/community (i.e., a cousin, friend, mentor, etc.) are also sought to ensure student voice and strengths guide the planning. If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the special education teacher should also be involved. An administrator or behavior support specialist with resource authority should be considered for team participation for each student with the role to ensure appropriate access to needed resources.

It is important to note that these individualized teams are not the same as IEP teams. Rather they are directed by the student as much as possible, and are composed of people who can provide both formal and natural supports to the student in school, at home, and in the community. The individual-focused teams are designed to help the youth and family identify their needs and to improve the youth's quality of life. The student and parents should be active partners in the development, implementation and monitoring of any and all interventions and supports.



### *Tertiary Tier Practice Features*

High schools may find it particularly difficult to meet the intensive support needs of adolescents given the way programs and schedules are organized and delivered. For example, many high schools have highly specialized teaching and graduation requirements that are difficult to change or adjust for individual students. For example, pressure is continuous to gain credits towards graduation, and many resources are tied up in specialized alternative or special education programs.

In light of these kinds of organizational obstacles and the highly individualized and intensive resources needed to implement tertiary tier supports, an individualized wraparound planning process in addition to intensive-level individualized behavior support services has been promoted in Illinois and New Hampshire as the preferred model for working with students who require tertiary tier supports (Scott & Eber, 2003). For many service providers in Illinois and New Hampshire, tertiary tier support includes the wraparound process.

Statewide Director of Illinois PBIS Network, Lucille Eber, describes Wraparound as a ‘whatever it takes’ approach of building unique services and supports around natural and extended family members (Eber, 2007, p. VIII). The wraparound process has a number of key principles: (a) family voice and choice, (b) community-based, (c) cultural relevance, (d) individualization, (e) strength-based, (f) unconditional care, and (g) outcome-based (Bruns et al., 2005). Wraparound is associated with strong, positive outcomes for high-need families and their children (Crusto et al., 2008; Eber, Osuch, & Redditt, 1996; Kamradt, 2001), and was developed outside of the professional services system in response to the expressed needs of families. Again, this highly individualized approach is for a small

proportion of students within the school setting who are demonstrating high levels of need.

In New Hampshire, the APEX II Dropout Prevention project uses the RENEW model at the high school level as the planning process to help youth who need intensive supports to remain in or re-engage with the educational process (Malloy, Drake, & Couture, 2009; Malloy & Cormier, 2004). The RENEW model uses personal futures planning to engage each youth in a conversation about strengths, experiences, resources (including people who are important to the youth), goals, concerns, and action steps. This process allows the youth to create a plan with the help of support people in the school (guidance counselors, special education teachers, regular education teachers and administrators), and with consideration of all manner of career and quality of life activities, including courses of study, support needs, alternative courses of study, work-based learning opportunities, job options, options for obtaining a diploma, and post-high school activities.

Beyond a strong individualized planning practice such as RENEW, high schools should be continuously and critically evaluating the varied interventions, programs, and services experienced by youth with significant behavioral support needs. Examples of important questions include the following:

- Is the full array of programs and services available to all students without contingencies (vocational programs for example)?
- Does a range of services exist for students with varied emotional and social needs?
- Are there linkages with community mental health centers?
- Are the supports evidence-based?
- Are the supports producing positive



results?

- Are tertiary tier supports allowing students with significant support needs to access all the programs and services?
- Are tertiary tier supports offered in addition to and not instead of primary and secondary tier supports?

#### *Data for Decision Making at the Tertiary Tier*

Data-based decision-making processes are important for guiding the effective and efficient implementation of tertiary tier supports. These processes should include (a) individualized data collection points that relate directly to each student's needs, (b) continuous, frequent data collection, (c) student and team-based decision making (OSEP, 2004), and (d) a focus on intervention effectiveness and implementation integrity. Again, the intensity of student needs should drive the intensity of data collection. Students receiving tertiary tier supports should have a data collection schedule that includes daily, mid-term, and semester information; for example, semester grades, academic progress reports, report cards, Check-In Check-Out

(CICO) data, attendance, office discipline referrals, and other data as specified by the students and team.

Data collection formats often reflect the implementation model, for example:

- Wraparound models
  - ◊ SIMEO (Systematic Information Management for Educational Outcomes) to facilitate efficient, comprehensive, web-based data collection and analysis (Eber, 2007)
  - ◊ Team checklists to facilitate the planning process
  - ◊ Home, School, Community Checklist to assess the student's needs and progress in various quality of life domains
- Person Centered Planning model
  - ◊ RENEW model: Student Progress Tracker, Credit Gap Analysis, CICO data, attendance and other individualized data points (<http://www.iod.unh.edu/renew.html>)



## Tertiary Tier Case Studies




### *Case Study: Somersworth High School*

In New Hampshire, the APEX I and II initiatives, funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, have produced positive outcomes and allowed for model-building of a developmentally-appropriate framework of PBIS/Secondary Transition/Dropout

Prevention in ten high schools. APEX is a tiered model of intervention that incorporates both Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural supports, Education and Work (RENEW) and student development (Figure 4). For more information about the APEX model please go to: [www.iod.unh.edu/apex](http://www.iod.unh.edu/apex).

**Figure 4. APEX Model (Malloy et al, 2009; Adapted from Bohanon et al, 2007)**

<b>Tertiary Spectrum; APEX Model for Individualized Intervention within a High School PBIS System</b>		
<b>In School Supports</b>	<b>In School Supports <u>and</u> RENEW</b>	<b>In School Supports, RENEW <u>and</u> Wraparound</b>
Student referred due to performance/ behavioral issues	Student needs alternative plan or strategies to be successful	Student needs a team approach to alleviate multiple barriers, a crisis, or the potential for crisis at home, in school, or in the community
Behavior Support Plan-School/classroom-based supports. Group or Individualized Interventions including, Check and Connect, Tutoring, etc.	Student-led futures plan, School-to Career Transition, Support Services, resource development, mentoring	In school supports, RENEW process plus development of a family-driven plan, services, and supports
LEAST INTENSIVE		MOST INTENSIVE

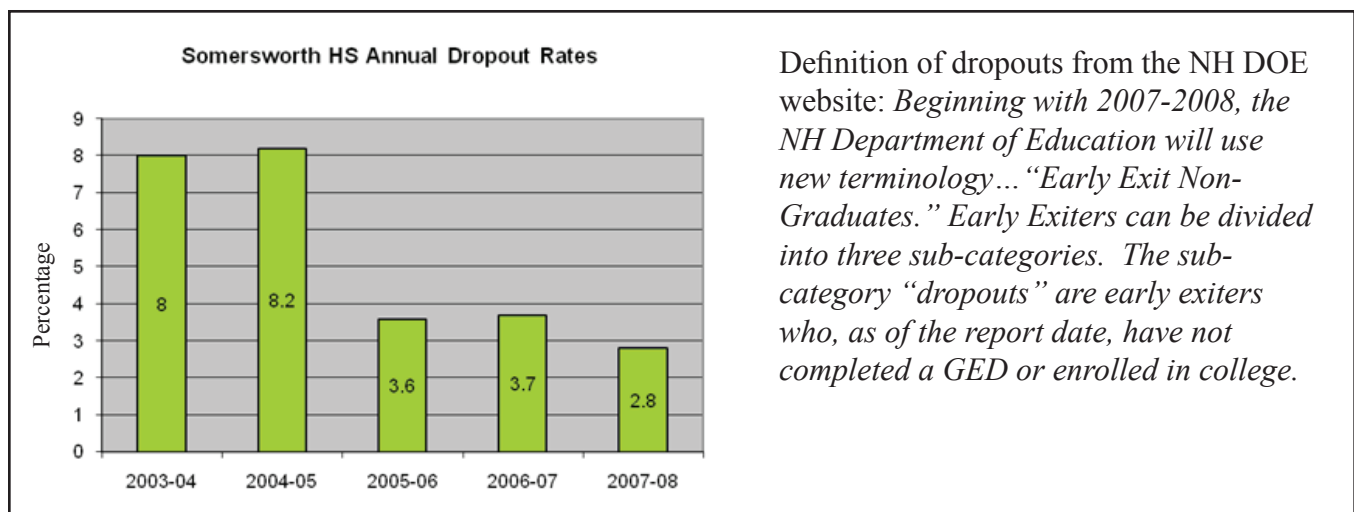


Somersworth High School (SHS) achieved full PBIS implementation at all three tiers during the 2008-2009 school year with positive results (see Figure 5). In addition to a range of secondary tier supports, such as academic and social instructional groups, Check-In Check-Out (CICO) and mentoring, the RENEW model has become the school's primary tool for developing, monitoring, and assessing tertiary tier supports.

The secondary tier team provides specialized interventions for students who are referred for behavioral support services. Using an At-Risk Screening Tool, the team identifies students who require individualized planning

and support services in addition to secondary tier behavioral support. During the end of the 2007-08 school year, the team identified about 20 students who needed intensive services, including school-to-career planning, mentoring and guidance, individualized selection of classes and teachers, internships, and work-based learning for credit. Above and beyond the positive results summarized in Figure 5, the school has seen improvements in school culture and climate at the primary tier as measured by the Effective Behavioral Supports survey, and has achieved an overall score of 91% implementation on the School-wide Evaluation Tool. Secondary and tertiary tier supports were beneficial to the entire school climate.

**Figure 5: Somersworth High School Annual Event Dropout Rates 2003-2008.**



SHS participated in the APEX II project beginning in October 2006. The staff developed strong primary and secondary tier teams and systems, and achieved full implementation status, with fidelity, on the Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET). In October of 2007, the APEX II university staff trained 15 teachers and paraprofessionals to become RENEW facilitators or mentors. RENEW facilitators work with youth who have been matched with

high-risk youth, and focus on personal futures planning, team building and facilitation, action planning, and support for youth. Additional information about RENEW is available at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability website at <http://www.iod.unh.edu/baaa.html>.

The RENEW model is designed to build self-determined skills and behaviors, enhance and





create work experiences and other activities that relate to individually-constructed post-school outcomes, and build linkages to natural and paid supports that enhance the young person's transition from high school (Lane & Carter, 2006; Wagner & Davis, 2006).

RENEW has a strong evidence base of positive outcomes for youth with serious emotional and behavioral challenges (Bullis & Cheney, 1999; Malloy & Cormier, 2004). The key features of the RENEW intensive model are:

- Self-determination reflected in the personal futures planning process
- Creative and individualized school-to-career services including work-based learning, school-based learning, and connecting activities
- Unconditional service provision and supports
- Strengths-based service provision
- Building relationships and linkages in the community (natural supports)
- Flexible resource development and funding
- Wraparound team development
- Workplace or career-related mentoring

### *Case Study: "Shelley", Tertiary Tier Supports using the RENEW model*

"Shelley" was first referred for tertiary support in April 2008 when she was 17. She had been recently diagnosed with a genetic condition that causes a significant yet unpredictable degeneration of her brain. She was from a disadvantaged, single-parent family, and had displayed behavior problems over the previous six months, including skipping classes and failure to complete her work. The staff believed that much of her decline was associated with her boyfriend, a young man who had significant behavior problems (explosive and aggressive behavior, skipping classes, and truancy). The secondary tier team had worked with the student and her teachers to develop a functional support plan that included a daily check-in/check-out, but the team believed that this student and her mother needed additional supports. The team referred Shelley for RENEW services.

Shelley reluctantly engaged in the RENEW meetings during the spring of 2008. Her facilitator was a paraprofessional who had been trained in RENEW and who worked with students in the middle school. Shelley's team included Shelley, her guidance counselor, her special education coordinator, the facilitator, her mother (who was unable to make most meetings but was kept informed via email), and the APEX II project staff member. The next steps included questions about her strengths and weaknesses, the people in her life, and her goals/dreams.

Shelley's support network was small and it was clear that she lacked female friends at school. Her short-term goals were to pass her classes and get connected with vocational rehabilitation. By looking at her credits earned, current classes, and credits needed to graduate, the team determined that she could possibly graduate in June 2009. Shelley met with the

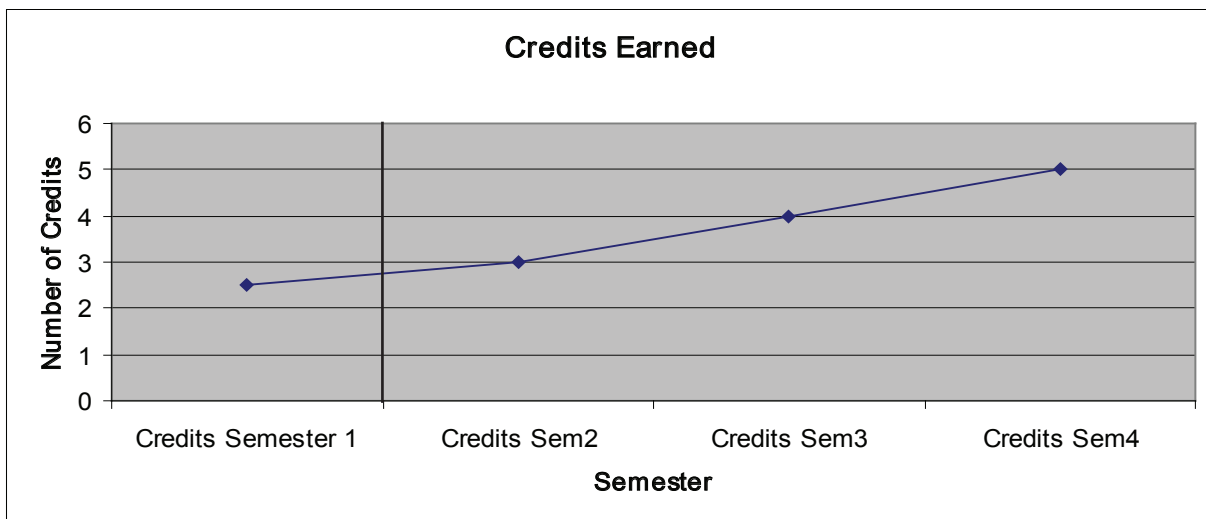


team in the fall of 2008 and checked off her accomplishments to date. Shelley indicated that her goal/dream was to become a nurse or doctor, and this goal directed the team to help her graduate and apply for a community college program.

The team continued to meet during the school year, monitoring Shelley’s progress through weekly check-ins with her guidance counselor and special education coordinator. The guidance counselor used the RENEW Student Progress Tracker to monitor Shelley’s needs and progress. Shelley received academic assistance from one of the school paraprofessionals. She required a modified math class to meet the graduation requirement for math. In the spring of 2009, a vocational rehabilitation

counselor and youth transition nurse from the state Bureau of Special Medical Services joined Shelley’s team. In April 2009, Shelley was accepted into the local community college program and attended the school prom. She also received credit for interning in the school’s childcare center program, where she continued to intern during the summer of 2009. Many teachers would expect that a student with such depth of problems would continue in a downward trajectory, earning fewer and fewer credits over the course of a school year. Shelly, as shown in Figure 6 below, increased her earned credits over the year and graduated in June 2009. As a testament to the pride Shelly felt for her accomplishments, she proudly wore her community college backpack to school each day at the end of the school year.

**Figure 6: Number of Credits Earned for Shelly for the 2008-2009 school year.** *Note: Line represents the date of initiation of RENEW planning services.*



## Recommendations and Conclusions

The need for secondary and tertiary tier supports at the high school level must not be underestimated. The rate of high school dropout and problem behaviors are indicators of a school environment that is systematically failing students with academic and social needs. The contents of this chapter are a collaboration of ideas from high schools implementing SWPBS across various states. The schools vary in size, demographics, teacher experience, free and reduced lunch rates, special education populations, and resources.

Despite organizational differences within schools, the consistent assertion from the personnel is that secondary and tertiary tier supports can indeed be implemented effectively at the high school level. Implementation and sustainability depend on a commitment from the district and school personnel and administrators to (a) approach student needs in a systematic data-based manner and (b) allocate resources for selection and use of evidence-based practices.

### *Recommendations for Schools Implementing Secondary and Tertiary Tier Supports*

Based on the experiences of high schools participating in this forum, a number of recommendations can be made. First, implementation leadership teams should start with a thorough evaluation of the primary tier supports. Ensuring the primary tier supports are being implemented with fidelity is paramount for building effective, efficient secondary and tertiary tier supports. Second, it is important to recognize that students with a magnitude of needs will most likely not act like their peers overnight, and, perhaps not ever. The purpose of secondary and tertiary supports is to reduce the intensity, frequency and severity of problem behaviors so students can function in the school environment.

Third, school staff, students, and families should set realistic goals for students receiving these supports, so that student success is enabled, progress can be evaluated, and staff morale is enhanced. Fourth, high school personnel must make decisions with the understanding that this group of students will require concerted and consistent access to resources. In a system of support, the approach of the ‘ship them off’ attitude is unacceptable. High school may be one of the more important, if not last, times within a student’s educational career for school personnel to provide adequate supports because access to social supports decreases rapidly after high school.

### *Recommendations for Technical Assistance Providers*

Technical assistance providers (TAs) can support the implementation and sustainability of secondary and tertiary tier supports by providing models or examples of how other schools have implemented similar supports. As each school has a unique culture, TAs should help schools identify, implement, and maintain the critical components of these supports. This process may include mapping community resources and incorporation of outside resources.

The critical components of the supports must be directly and explicitly taught to administrators to ensure resources are allocated appropriately. Similarly, the personnel directly responsible for implementing the supports must be prepared to implement with durability and fidelity. When schools are implementing the supports, TAs should provide regular coaching to prompt implementation, make adjustments to improve outcomes, and provide regular positive performance feedback to maintain accurate implementation. Data-based management and decision making should be in place to support these coaching activities.



TA providers and school and district-based implementers across the nation should have regular conversations and interactions to develop an ‘example bank’ to document the features of implementation efforts. For example, high school forums or conferences that specifically target secondary and tertiary tier supports would enable dissemination of examples, outcome data, effective practices, and implementation processes. In addition, these meeting opportunities would establish a professional network of researchers, technical assistance providers, and school and community implementers.

#### *Recommendations for the Research Community*

High schools across the nation are implementing various secondary and tertiary tier interventions without a systematic investigation of outcome or implementation data. A large-scale, systematic analysis of secondary and tertiary tier supports within the public high school setting would yield insight into the critical features of implementation and associated student outcomes.

Descriptive studies yielding information about teacher perception of students requiring secondary and tertiary tier supports could encourage a philosophical shift among educators from reactive and exclusionary to a more inclusive, preventive, and positive approach for supporting the academic and social needs for all students. Similarly, these data would encourage district and state level administrators to make policy and fiscal decisions that would give priority to effective multi-tiered approaches of behavior support.

## **Conclusion**

The examples in this chapter demonstrate that secondary and tertiary tier supports can be effectively implemented in high schools. A consistent, clear message is that effective supports are guided by data, are integrated along a continuum of supports that are grounded in an effective primary tier of supports, and require concerted and collaborative efforts by all classroom implementers and administrative personnel. Secondary and tertiary tier supports should not be seen as the ‘other’ part of the school for ‘those kids’ but an integral part of how a school supports the success of all students. John Wright, principal of Timbercreek High School in Orland, Florida, puts it best “This is just how we do business.”



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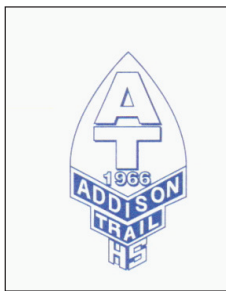






## Appendix: School Summaries





## School: Addison Trail High School

### Respondent:

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Addison Trail High School is part of the Du Page High School District 88 in Addison, Illinois. Student population is approximately 1,900 students with 50% identifying as White, 40% as Latino, 5% as Asian, 2% as African-American, and less than 1% as Native American/Alaskan. The student to teacher ratio is 15:1 with 24% of student population eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

Addison first implemented SWPBS in 2007 in response to (a) Concern regarding inconsistency with behavior intervention throughout the building, (b) Negative building climate among staff due to student behavior, (c) Concerns in community regarding discipline/safety, and (d) Rising discipline and attendance concerns. Staff training began in February of that year and continued throughout the summer until formal implementation in the fall. Addison received support from several SWPBS coaches who helped customize primary tier practices to the school's needs, provided encouragement to school staff, and responded quickly to requests for further assistance and training. The administrative role was to promote teacher buy-in and provide technical assistance to SWPBS coaches and teams.

Teacher buy-in was promoted by SWPBS coaches who provided encouragement to staff. Buy-in was also addressed via the inclusion of at least one Core Team member from each department. Staff members participate in SWPBS through team membership, continued teaching of behavioral expectations and ongoing acknowledgment of positive behavior.

Student buy-in is addressed through SWPBS student advisory teams. Students join the team by way of peer election or teacher recommendation. Emphasis is placed on including students that have not previously had leadership experience.

SWPBS expectations were selected by the SWPBS team based upon trends in student discipline. Large and small group presentations were used to teach expectations.

The SWPBS team monitored the effectiveness of SWPBS implementation through review of discipline and attendance data, as well as staff feedback. The large size of Addison made data management difficult. This process was eased through the use of Powerschool, a student information system created by Pearson. Powerschool was used without the addition of SWIS in hope of avoiding a two-fold increase in the data entry demands placed upon school staff.

The SWPBS teams use PBIS surveys and Powerschool reports to identify students in need of more intensive supports. Secondary tier supports targeted the top 50 "rule violators" and included a modified check-in/check-out



with school administrators as well as a pilot of classroom behavior intervention planning. Individual student reports were reviewed daily by the secondary tier teams. Students in need of tertiary supports were identified by the Tertiary tier team. Addison provided tertiary support in student social skills, anger management, and self-esteem. Student progress was monitored using office discipline referrals, attendance, grades, and reading data.

Addison High School saw a tremendous improvement in school climate as evidenced during feedback sessions and by staff surveys. The data show there has been a 40-60% reduction in unexcused absences as well as a 10% reduction in tardies and ODRs. The school staff at Addison would recommend SWPBS to other high schools.

### **Summary/Recommendations**

#### *Implementation*

Critical elements to successful SWPBS implementation for Addison have been:

- Prioritizing SWPBS as a school need, by the entire school community
- Willingness of staff to admit that behavior intervention is everyone's responsibility (not the sole responsibility of the dean's office)
- District-level commitment
- Resource commitment for training and coaching
- Core team representation from all parts of school community (teachers, deans, PPS staff, secretaries, teacher aides, administrators, hall monitors, etc.)
- Coaches that have an ability to lead

#### *Obstacles to initial implementation:*

- Teacher buy-in

- Consensus on behavioral expectations
- Data collection

#### *Solutions:*

- Continued emphasis on consistency
- Diverse representation on SWPBS team
- Tech support

#### *Sustaining*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Addison have been:

- Frequent meetings (2 per month)
- Strong coaches
- Strong sub-committee structure
- Heavy principal involvement
- Large SWPBS team
- Dissemination of positive data
- Regular communication (daily emails, staff meetings, department meetings).





## Foreman High School

Respondent: Larry Irvin

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Foreman High School is part of the City of Chicago School District. Foreman has a student population of approximately 1,975 students with 70% identifying as Latino, 17% as African American, 10% as White, 1% as Asian and less than 1% identifying as Native American/Alaskan. The student to teacher ratio is nearly 19:1 with 52% Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

**F**oreman High School first implemented SWPBS in the 2005-2006 school year. The school personnel received external support through Loyola University in Chicago. The external coaches provided training for the leadership team while modeling effective teaming practices. Loyola personnel also provided professional development (PD) for teachers on classroom management. The coaches were flexible and able to support teachers at their current level of SWPBS knowledge. They stressed incremental success and supported teachers' efforts. The administrative team at Foreman worked closely with the external coaches to plan PD. They took steps to include SWPBS in the school improvement plan and protected time within faculty meetings to discuss SWPBS.

The development of school-wide expectations was a whole school process involving students, staff, and parents. To teach the expectations Foreman conducted assemblies, directly taught expectations in classrooms, had SWPBS activities during planned booster weeks, and held grade-level and classroom-level SWPBS challenges with rewards.

Teachers participated in SWPBS through membership on the leadership team. The leadership team had sub-committees to address data, acknowledgements, teaching and communication. Involving teachers in the process of implementing and teaching SWPBS required appealing to the staff's self-interest to improve the working and learning environment for their students. Administrators made a commitment to manage student behavior as informed by data. Teachers were actively acknowledged for their contributions to the SWPBS effort.

Student buy-in was addressed through well planned teaching activities as well as grade and classroom-level SWPBS challenges. The challenges presented realistic situations that require students to respond in a manner consistent with SWPBS practices. The class or grade members wrote their collective responses to submit to the SWPBS committee. Students create visual and symbolic representations of the school-wide expectations to be posted around the school. Meaningful incentives are also available to students.

Changes to the primary tier SWPBS strategies



were made on an as needed basis based on (a) top three misbehaviors reported in SWIS, (b) notable changes in the reasons for ODRs, and/or (c) top ODR locations. Other data used for decision-making included the BoQ, SET, attendance data and on-track (academic) data. Foreman is currently piloting a screening protocol for identifying students who may require secondary tier supports. The protocol includes screening for students with 3-4 ODRs, 5-10 days of absences, and 1-2 F's. Pilot secondary supports at Foreman include Check-In Check-Out, Lunch Bunch tutoring, and weekly conferences with counselor, psychologist or social worker. To monitor secondary tier supports, ODR, attendance and grades are tracked. Identification and strategies for tertiary supports are in development.

To monitor the effectiveness of SWPBS, the SWPBS team completed a readiness checklist, SET and TIC periodically. The team also received School-Wide Information System (SWIS) training to monitor ODRs. Surveys were completed by staff and students regarding issues of school climate and the extent of their collective knowledge of SWPBS.

While the volume of data requiring organization

was an obstacle, staff training on SWIS, along with the reorganizing of Foreman's ODR form were two of the steps that made managing data easier. A data sub-committee and chairperson on the leadership team and a school staff person assigned to data entry also contributed to ease of data management. The leadership team reviewed ODR data to determine topics for booster activities and re-teaching opportunities. Data were also shared with the staff quarterly, by email, and 2-3 times per school year in faculty meetings.

SWPBS has contributed to a safer and more orderly school environment at Foreman. There are fewer ODRs overall, and fewer high-level infractions. There have been fewer incidents involving conflicts between students, including low-level physical altercations, compared to the years prior to SWPBS implementation. Prior to SWPBS implementation Foreman had 25-28 ODRs per 100 students per month. Post implementation, Foreman saw a reduction of 7-8 ODRs per 100 students per month. Out of school suspensions also decreased by almost 30% and attendance has increased by 2%-3%. Foreman is an example of well implemented, effective SWPBS.



## Summary/Recommendations

### Implementation

Critical elements to successful SWPBS implementation for Foreman have been:

- Staff recognition of the need for change to a system-wide effort
- Acknowledging and validating the reasons some faculty are resistant to SWPBS
- Clear understanding, among faculty, of the three-tiered system of support
- Securing a multi-year commitment from faculty
- Proposed implementation timeline
- Professional development on SWPBS classroom management, supported by coaching in the classroom
- Monitoring implementation of SWPBS in the classrooms
- Sharing SWPBS successes amongst teachers
- Leadership team fluent in effective meeting protocols, action planning and communication

### Obstacles to initial implementation:

- Faculty resistance
- Time to implement and train faculty
- Consistency among adults
- Convincing faculty to implement as planned

### Solutions:

- Anticipating and acknowledging the sentiments of the faculty members who are resistant to change while continuing to move forward
- Focusing on improvements and how

increased success translates to improved outcomes for students and teachers

- Build SWPBS into the school improvement plan and the budget
- Establish a core SWPBS team and provide training to ensure they can function at a high level of efficiency
- Enlist at least one support staff member for assistance with paperwork, distributing information, etc.
- Expand the team through rotating positions to avoid burnout
- Address lack of consistency among adults through in-class coaching, ongoing PD, and active and visible involvement of administrators in the SWPBS effort
- Acknowledge and reward faculty practicing SWPBS
- Share positive data with staff
- Test run SWPBS strategies in classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, etc., and share pre and post data with staff

### Sustaining

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Foreman have been:

- Consistent meetings
- Meeting protocols
- Action planning
- Administrative support and active participation
- Protecting time, space and funding





### **School: Fruita Monument High School**

Respondent: Jody Mimmack  
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Fruita Monument High School is part of the Mesa County Valley School District No. 51 in Fruita, Colorado. Student population is approximately 1,300 with 88% identifying as White, 9% identifying as Latino, and approximately 3% identifying as Asian, Native American/Alaskan, or African-American. The student to teacher ratio is just over 19:1 with 11.5% of students qualifying for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (NCES, 2006).

#### **Implementation**

**F**ruita Monument first implemented SWPBS in 2007 after receiving training at a statewide conference. The new principal was very active in developing a workshop for school faculty, setting expectations, and helping the SWPBS team develop an action plan.

Results of the initial SET evaluation revealed areas within the school where problem behavior occurred. Teachers identified expected behavior in these areas and provided positive examples to students. The SWPBS team, with the help of students, also created a DVD to teach school wide expectations. The expectations matrix was included in the student handbook and is posted throughout the school.

Teacher buy-in was addressed by making clear that participation was expected of all teachers. Student buy-in was addressed by featuring current students in the informational DVD. Students also had input in the selection of the reinforcer pool. Prom tickets were made available to students meeting a specified level of tickets within the schools token economy. Other potential reinforcers included gift certificates, frisbees, shoe bags, parking spaces, and access

to concessions during sporting events.

Primary tier changes to the SWPBS implementation were driven by progress toward school improvement goals. SET and SWIS data informed these decisions. The SWPBS team developed an annual action plan based on school goals and SET data to support decisions that increase our schools effectiveness with SWPBS. The school used a Response to Intervention and Ed Flex process as a universal screening tool to identify students in need of secondary and tertiary supports. Fruita Monument provided a number of secondary and tertiary level supports for identified students and monitored progress using student attendance and grades off Parent Bridge.

Fruita Monument saw a 25% decrease in student referrals and suspensions since full implementation. Teachers also employed a common language when discussing student behavior. Strong administrator support and a responsive SWPBS team were critical to successful SWPBS implementation. Additional funding for the purchase of student incentives would be helpful in continued implementation.





## Summary

### *Implementation*

Critical elements to successful SWPBS implementation for Fruita Monument have been:

- Administrator experience and support
- Student involvement

### *Obstacles to initial implementation:*

- Teachers often believe that students should know how to behave

### *Solutions:*

- Setting reasonable/attainable expectations for teachers and staff.

### *Sustaining*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Fruita Monument have been:

- Strong SWPBS team leadership
- Administrator support





## School: Lebanon Senior High School

Respondent: Jessica Williams  
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Lebanon Senior High School is part of the Lebanon R-3 School District in Lebanon, Missouri. Student population is approximately 1,550 students with 97% identifying as White and 3% identifying as African-American, Asian, Latino, or Native American/Alaskan. The student to teacher ratio is 22:1 with nearly 47% of the student population eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch.

### Implementation

Lebanon first implemented SWPBS in 2004 as part of a district initiative to install a positive discipline system and address tardiness and truancy issues. A group of administrators and instruction staff were first trained in a two-day session conducted by the South-Central Regional Professional Development Center. The regional consultant led the initial professional development and served as a resource to answer questions. The internal SWPBS coach worked as a liaison between the school faculty and the regional consultant. The internal coach also led the faculty in setting the universal practices and in implementation of initial SWPBS goals. Later the internal SWPBS coach organized team efforts and facilitated the creation of a SWPBS action plan. The administrator role in implementation was to select a team coach, guide faculty training, facilitate the establishment of universal expectations and provide access to interventions to address identified problems.

Teacher buy-in was addressed by first establishing knowledge and SWPBS communications within the school. In a

monthly newsletter, the SWPBS team shared information about SWPBS and available behavioral data. Each month the team also recognized teachers and students who were outstanding contributors to the school's SWPBS culture. The SWPBS team created a teacher handbook with explanations of SWPBS, implementation schedules, lesson plans and materials. A teacher recognition/reward system was created that mirrored the system in place for students. Teachers who received Lowery Loot were include in monthly STAR recognitions and received Jacketgrams from the SWPBS team. Additionally, teacher feedback was actively sought about school practices, and they were encouraged to identify their ongoing needs.

School staff and faculty participated in the implementation of SWPBS by teaching, re-teaching, and enforcing universal expectations of student behavior. They also distributed SWPBS recognition items in the form of Jacketgrams and Buzz Bucks. At the secondary and tertiary intervention tiers, they made recommendations of students who needed more intensive supports.



Student buy-in was addressed via recognition programs (Buzz Bucks and Jacketgrams). Students saw value in these and appreciated being recognized. More buy-in came as students were taught the school-wide expectations, and even more buy-in came through as the SWPBS team expanded the recognitions programs focusing on privileges for students. A student panel was also formed to give students a voice in SWPBS.

In selecting SWPBS expectations the SWPBS team looked at what other schools used as examples. The core team then developed what they saw as the ideal list for Lebanon. The SWPBS team then guided the faculty in a final definitions process to determine what the universal expectations would be for the school. Sample lesson plans for each expectation were developed to facilitate instruction and teachers were required to teach classroom behavioral expectations to students for the first week and a half of each school year. Out of classroom expectations were taught during the student advisory period using a video and sample lesson plans prepared by the SWPBS team.

The universal screening protocol for identifying students with secondary and tertiary tier needs was based upon data notes identifying “frequent flyers”—student behavioral data is the key data used in establishing who these students are, but other data is reviewed as it applies to individual students. The SWPBS team also sought feedback from school faculty on students that may not have been identified through data review.

Decision rules for inclusion in secondary and/or tertiary tier supports were based on behavioral and academic data, as well as feedback from faculty members. A determination was then made regarding the type of intervention that would be most appropriate to meet each student’s needs. It was also determined whether a student needed more intensive

support such as an intervention plan focusing on antecedents and replacement behaviors. Lebanon offered a variety of secondary and tertiary tier supports including:

- Alternative Suspension Center
- Self-Management Center (short term)
- Student Assistance Team
- Save One Student
- Buzz Time (check-in/check-out)
- Counselor Watch
- Tardy Sweep
- HOT Sheets (Homework On Time)
- Peer Assistance Leaders
- Privilege Time Intervention Rooms (behavioral locations)
- Night School
- Academic Advisory Labs
- Resource in Basics
- Tutoring
- Self-Management Center (long term)
- Functional Behavior Assessment, Behavior Improvement Plan
- Social Worker or Juvenile Justice Referral
- Special Education Interventions
- 504 plans
- The Lebanon Alternative School
- Missouri Options (GED) program

The SWPBS team monitored the effectiveness of SWPBS through SWIS data. To address consistency in data management the SWPBS team (a) provided a list of behavior referral definitions to all faculty and staff and (b) established a specific list of office-managed versus classroom managed behaviors. To address the difficulty in serving a large student population, the SWPBS team divided data management tasks between team members and other school staff. In addition to SWIS the SWPBS team also used Excel and SIS to



customize their data tracking for specific areas.

The SWPBS team made decision rules for universal changes to SWPBS based upon the following data sources:

- Effective Behavior Support Self-Assessment Survey results
- SET data
- Missouri School Improvement Program Cycle 4 Advance Questionnaire results
- Student behavioral data
- Recognition program data
- Tardy data
- Homework completion data (Hot Sheet Program)
- Attendance data
- Secondary intervention data
- Tertiary intervention data (Self-Management Center, FBA and BIP)
- Data from student, parent, and faculty surveys

Lebanon would recommend implementing SWPBS to other high schools. There has been an improvement in school climate and a decrease in office discipline referrals. Instructional time has been gained, students are beginning to see the value in academic work, attendance is improving, and the general culture of the school has a more positive feeling. The focus has shifted from mandates and consequences to input, successes, and recognition. Both faculty and students have experienced the benefits of SWPBS in the building, and the general climate has become one where people feel welcomed and successful as opposed to feeling unwanted and hopeless. The very people who walk the halls demonstrate the power of SWPBS constantly because the structures of SWPBS in the building have effectively changed the culture at Lebanon from one where students were victims of random behavior management systems to one where students are consistently

instructed on what behaviors are acceptable and why. The guessing has been removed from the game, and Lebanon students and faculty are the winners as a result.

Due to changing data entry programs, exact numbers for the year before implementation are difficult to determine. Data for the 2003-2004 school year data (the first year of implementation) are as follows (a) major office referrals for the year totaled 1,167; this is an average of 0.84 referrals per student; the average referrals per 100 students for the year was 83.716 (b) 630 days of OSS were assigned; the total number of incidents is not known at this time (c) 571 days of ISS were assigned (d) the attendance rate for the 2004-2005 year was 90.69%.

After implementation Lebanon is on track for a 25% decrease in overall referrals for the 2008-2009 school year as compared to the previous school year; variations in school policies and implementation of SWPBS programs has affected the data in such a way that a true “apples to apples” comparison of numbers is impossible. In consideration of the impact SWPBS has had on policy as well as data management, the 2007-2008 school year data are as follows (a) major office referrals for the year totaled 1,326; this is an average of 0.83 referrals per student; the average referrals per 100 students for the year was 82.823; (b) 494 days of OSS were assigned; (c) 1,011 days of ISS were assigned; (d) the attendance rate for the 2007-2008 year was 91.86%. SET score results for the past three years are as follows: 2006-2007 66%, 2007-2008 96%, and 2008-2009 100%.



## Summary/Recommendations

### Implementation

Critical elements to successful SWPBS implementation for Lebanon have been:

- Administrative support
- Communication
- Staff buy-in

### Obstacles to initial implementation

- Staff buy-in
- Development of universal expectations
- Consistent enforcement of universal expectations
- Direct instruction of universal expectations
- Too many changes to make at once

### Solutions

- Dissemination of data and teacher recognitions program
- Developing universal expectations as a

team

- Distinguishing between classroom-managed behavior and office-managed behavior
- Development of sample lesson plans
- Gradual implementation (action plans created for two need areas at a time)

### Sustaining

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Lebanon have been:

- Team meetings
- Data analysis
- Balanced team representation
- Student involvement
- Recognition
- Universal Expectations
- Direct instruction of expectations
- Action planning
- Secondary and tertiary tier interventions
- Communication
- Administrative support





## Mountain View High School

Respondent: K. Kevin Aten  
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Mountain View is part of the Thompson School District R2-J in Loveland, Colorado. Student population is approximately 1,200 with 79% of students identifying as White, 17% as Latino, 2% as African-American and 2% as Asian or Native American/Alaskan. The student to teacher ratio is 20:1 with approximately 30% of the student population eligible for free and reduced priced lunch (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

During the 2004-05 school year, prior to SWPBS implementation, Mountain View examined feasibility, planned for implementation, and established baseline behavioral data utilizing the SWIS data management system for data collection. Full SWPBS implementation began in 2005-06 in an effort to increase the academic achievement and behavioral competence of all students. Three major factors spurred the Mountain View administration to investigate and adopt SWPBS as the Mountain View disciplinary framework: (a) a desire to improve the social climate at the school, (b) a desire to decrease the frequency of disciplinary incidences, and (c) SWPBS impetus, support, and training provided by the Colorado Department of Education Behavior Support Initiative. School staff received training through the Colorado Department of Education and received assistance from the Thompson School District SWPBS coach who coordinated training with the school's SWPBS team, offered advice, and provided access to resources and SWPBS materials. The administrative role was to provide leadership and support for the SWPBS team, to provide training time and venues for

all staff members, and to provide additional resources and funding for summer trainings, rewards, etc. The principal and an assistant principal were integral members of the SWPBS team.

Teacher commitment and support was addressed through a full year of orientation and training prior to implementation. Participation in trainings was mandatory for all school staff members.

Student commitment and support was addressed by introducing positive behavior as an expectation. Behavioral expectations were taught and modeled at kick-off assemblies. Staff members taught, modeled, and practiced SWPBS behaviors and language in classrooms and throughout the school. A 5:1 ratio of positive to corrective responses was initiated as a normative practice in the standard classroom management protocol. A system of verbal as well as tangible rewards for positive behavior was developed.

The SWPBS team created school-wide expectations by reviewing the Mountain View baseline data and emulating the expectations of other implementing schools.



SWIS and state testing data were used as the universal screening protocol for identifying students needing secondary and tertiary tier supports. The school recently began using the Acuity program as a Response to Intervention measure for all 9th and 10th grade math and language arts students. Decisions about secondary and tertiary tier supports were based on the number of student office discipline referrals, severity of behaviors, current grade, attendance, and qualitative data including the student's task orientation and attitude and input from external agents and agencies (the district truancy office, probation, judicial mandates, mental health providers, and social services). Decisions were made on a case-by-case basis. Mountain View offered many secondary and tertiary supports including:

- A student intervention/problem solving team,
- A drug/alcohol counselor
- Functional behavior/threat assessment
- Check-In/Check-Out
- Push-in and pull-out special education services
- A self-contained Significant Identifiable Emotional Disability classroom with integration as deemed prudent.

Review of individual SWIS and state testing data, as well as parent input, teacher comments, results of various reading assessments, (e.g., Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment, Informal Reading Inventory), and consultation with external agencies were used for progress monitoring.

Decisions to modify practices and rules were based on SWIS data as well as information from the SET, teacher survey data (Effective Behavior Self-Assessment) and state testing data. The process began with the SWPBS team and progressed to the instructional leadership team (known in some schools as the department chairs). Administrators discussed

any proposed changes. Final approval of changes was determined by a staff-wide vote. Data were reviewed on an established timeline to measure the effect of any changes to primary tier supports.

Sustainability was an issue. Mountain View used annual data from the SET and SAS surveys to determine fidelity of implementation and as a gauge of staff perception of individual and SWPBS efficacy. During the 2008-09 school year, Mountain View instituted a short classroom implementation survey to allow staff to monitor their individual implementation levels at various times during the school year.

Mountain View experienced improved school climate, student behavior, and academic achievement since implementation of SWPBS. The school's baseline year Implementation Average (SET total) was 58% with an Expectations Taught score of 10%. The Implementation Average in the four ensuing years (2006 through 2009) exceeded 80%. The Expectations Taught scores were above 80% except in 2007 when they dropped to 70%. Office discipline referrals (ODRs) decreased by approximately 30% from May 2005 to May 2008. The number of ODRs increased in 2008-09. Causes for this upslope are not yet apparent because discipline data for the 2008-09 school year has not been disaggregated.

The staff of Mountain View recommends SWPBS implementation to other high schools because of the improvements in school climate and student social and academic achievement. Additional funding, allowing for increased time for SWPBS planning and implementation and for more substantial tangible rewards for students and staff who exhibit SWPBS behaviors, would be helpful in implementing and sustaining SWPBS.



## Summary/Recommendations

### Implementation

Critical elements to successful SWPBS implementation for Mountain View have been:

- Strong administrative support
- Staff commitment and support
- Use of the SWIS data management system
- Strong, consistent SWPBS team

### Obstacles to initial implementation:

- Aligning the system with the variety of different academic programs
- Lack of high school SWPBS models to emulate
- Parent/community involvement
- Consistency in classroom management
- Distinction between discipline and punishment
- Funding

### Solutions:

- Staff training and on-going support
- Transparency in discipline process
- Staff education (applied behavior analysis)
- Use of data to support instruction
- Sharing data with entire staff
- Development of a flexible behavior matrix

### Sustaining

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Mountain View have been:

- Focus of leadership team in building sustainability
- Involvement of principal and key SWPBS team members

- Making SWPBS a permanent item on the faculty meeting agenda
- Continued reliance upon data for decision making
- Inclusion in all school events
- Kick-off assemblies and training at beginning of school year

### Obstacles to sustaining SWPBS:

- Time
- Funding
- Communication
- Staff turnover

### Solutions:

- Regular SWPBS discussions (daily, weekly, monthly)
- Use of SWPBS in all facets of professional development
- Embedding SWPBS in the infrastructure of the school
- SWPBS information and links on the school website







## Newark High School

Respondent: Eileen Baker

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[www.apposchooldistrict.com](http://www.apposchooldistrict.com)

Newark is part of the Christina School District in Newark, Delaware. Student population is approximately 1,700 students with 54% of students identifying as White, 33% as African American, 8% as Latino, and 5 % as Asian. The student to teacher ratio is 18:1 with 27% of the student population eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

Newark first implemented SWPBS in 2004 with the assistance of personnel from the University of Delaware. The school benefited from SWPBS coach involvement in meetings, training, and financial support. The administrative role in implementation was to support the team leader, assist with logistical concerns and assist with securing financial supports.

Decision rules for universal changes to SWPBS were based on PBE meetings, administrative decisions and feedback from students and staff. The SWPBS team monitored the effectiveness of SWPBS through data collection review including: (a) SET, (b) staff and student surveys, (c) statewide school climate surveys for parents, staff and students, and (d) end of year progress data. Data management was eased by the active role PBIS coaches took in collecting and disaggregating data. The difficulties of data management included staff members' lack of access to data, large volume of referrals to process and inconsistency with processing and classifying referrals.

In selecting SWPBS expectations the PBIS

team created and voted on the expectations. A DVD version of the SWPBS expectation lesson plans, with discussion questions, was created and distributed to homeroom teachers. To address teacher buy-in, a critical piece of implementation and sustaining SWPBS, Newark created staff PBIS competitions. Participation of staff and faculty in PBIS included the membership of several staff members on the PBIS team. To enhance teacher buy-in, coaches and administration managed all data collection and after initial PBIS team review, the data were sent out to all staff through email.

To address student buy-in, Newark focused on grade appropriate, social privileges such as: allowing students to be late to class, miss classes for acknowledgements, Friendly's fundraisers, bake sales, etc. Students created agendas and actually facilitated all SWPBS meetings. The high level of teacher buy-in helped with student buy-in.

This end of year progress data came primarily from our E-school system. This system tracks grades, attendance, and discipline. Newark focused on attendance as tardies were a major issue, as well as discipline referrals. Referrals



were also grouped to provide more information. Referrals by time of day and referrals by staff were some of the areas Newark examined carefully. The SWPBS team also examined school-created surveys as well as the State School Climate data. Data management was eased by the active role SWPBS coaches took in collecting and disaggregating data.

Secondary and tertiary tier supports were available at Newark. Secondary tier supports were housed in the Creative Mentoring program, which supports one-on-one relationships between staff and students. Students were selected via administrator, counselor and dean recommendations. Tertiary tier supports were developed from Functional Behavior Assessments, and could take the form of individual counseling, CICO, alcohol and drug counseling, wellness center visits. To review effectiveness of secondary and tertiary supports, Newark relied on FBA and BSP reviews with IEP team and informal observational data.

Newark saw a positive impact on staff attendance, staff morale, fewer tardies and lower dropout rates. More efficient, consistent data collection would help the school make statements that are more concise about areas of improvement. Faculty and administrators would whole-heartedly recommend SWPBS to other high schools. Included in this recommendation would be the developmental appropriateness of acknowledgement and rewards system. Additional resources that would help in the implementation of SWPBS include: (a) technical assistance from other high schools that have implemented SWPBS, (b) funding, (c) assistance with creation of SWPBS media (DVDs, movies, lesson plans, etc.).

## Summary/Recommendations

### *Implementation*

Critical elements to successful SWPBS implementation for Newark have been:

- Student involvement
- Student involvement
- Staff buy-in
- Fun events
- Volleyball, Basketball and Kickball tournaments, Ice Cream Party, Raffles for \$50 gift card, etc.
- Working to enhance students and teacher relationships

### *Obstacles to initial implementation:*

- Staff buy-in
- Concerns with developmental appropriateness
- Logistics of teachers having up to 150 students to teach each day

### *Solutions:*

- Sharing behavioral data and reviewing it monthly with staff
- Having a team that is representative of staff
- Student involvement
- Having a flexible approach to implementation

### *Sustaining*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Newark have been:

- Committee membership; they are not required
- Shared responsibility among staff





## North County High School

Respondent: Virginia Dolan

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North County is part of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools District in Glen Burnie, Maryland. Student population is approximately 2,000 students with 72% identifying as White, 22% as African-American, 3% as Latino, and 2% as Asian or Native American/Alaskan. The student to teacher ratio is approximately 16:1 with nearly 25% of the student population eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

North County first implemented SWPBS in 2003. The implementation was prompted by high referral and expulsion rates as well as a history of SWPBS in feeder middle schools. Initial training took place during a summer staff development day with the assistance of a SWPBS coach, who acted as a conduit to county support. Training was updated annually, with data and other information presented at each faculty meeting.

Teacher buy-in was addressed by having teachers handle SWPBS presentations rather than school administrators. It was hypothesized that this approach would make implementation more meaningful to other teachers.

Student buy-in increased as a function of staff consistency. The ideals of SWPBS were displayed throughout the school and modeled by school staff. Students who demonstrated positive behaviors and who modeled respect were recognized with “knight notes”.

In selecting SWPBS expectations a behavioral matrix was created that displayed what “respect” looked like in various areas around

the school. The matrix was shared with students and staff, who provided feedback on which items were appropriate and information that needed to be revised. The behavioral matrix was routinely updated in accordance with student and staff feedback.

Decision rules for universal changes to SWPBS were based on county High School Assessments (HSAs), attendance, discipline, and SET data. The SWPBS team also reviewed SWIS data as well as information collected periodically from student and staff surveys. The team analyzed the information, generated possible solutions, and presented the information to staff at faculty or academic department meetings. Students in need of secondary and tertiary tier support were identified by looking at office discipline data. Students who received 2-5 office discipline referrals were targeted for more intensive supports. North County conducted a functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plan for identified students. Progress sheets (weekly or daily) as well as teacher feedback were used to monitor behavioral and academic progress of students receiving secondary and tertiary tier supports. Additionally, an Alt-1 teacher monitored “red



zone” students and behavior support specialists mentored a small group of students. The school also provided Check-In/Check-Out services in its Check and Connect program.

The SWPBS team monitored effectiveness of SWPBS implementation through direct classroom observations and analysis of SWIS data. Data management was eased by chart/graph capacity of the SWIS system that allowed clear communication with school staff. Entering office discipline information into SWIS in a timely manner proved difficult, but the school considered this a high priority.

Since implementation, the school climate and spirit at North County improved dramatically. Prior to implementation the school averaged approximately 4000 referrals and 56 expulsions per year. Attendance was also between 80-90%. After implementation the number of referrals decreased to between 2000-3000 per year and expulsions/extended suspensions were down to approximately 25 per year. Attendance also increased to between 90-95% of students. The school’s pre-implementation SET score was about 67% while the post-implementation scores averaged between 95-98%. The staff at North County would recommend SWPBS to other high schools and believes that a collection of resources/strategies for positive behavioral interventions would be beneficial to implementing schools.

## Summary/Recommendations

### *Implementation:*

Critical elements to successful SWPBS implementation for North County have been:

- Staff buy-in
- Poor presentation the year before consistency

### *Obstacles to initial implementation:*

- Staff buy-in
- Poor presentation the year before consistency

### *Solutions:*

- Staff inclusion in shaping SWPBS practices

### *Sustaining:*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for North County have been:

- Frequent staff meetings
- Providing activities for students and staff

### *Obstacles to sustaining SWPBS:*

- Equitable representation from academic departments
- Communication

### *Corresponding solutions:*

- Improved meeting attendance
- Ongoing discussion of SWPBS





## Somersworth High School

Respondent: Sharon Lampros

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Somersworth is located in Somersworth, New Hampshire with a student population of approximately 615 students, with 91% of the student population identifying as White, approximately 3% as African American, 3% as Latino, and 3% as Asian. The student to teacher ratio is about 13 to 1 with 17% eligibility for Free and Reduced Priced Lunches (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

The 2007-2008 school year was the first year of SWPBS implementation. The implementation of SWPBS was prompted by a high drop-out rate; staff desires to change the operating system of the school, and financial and professional support from the state and district.

The Universal Team formed and started training in January of 2007. In the fall of 2007, the Targeted Team joined with University of New Hampshire to receive training. The fall of 2007 also included school-wide training of faculty and staff. The SWPBS coach supported implementation by facilitating the team process (i.e., tracking time and agenda items). This helped the team stay organized and make efficient use of time.

The active involvement of the principal and assistant principal aided implementation greatly. The principal gave the initial "go ahead" to the Universal Team, provided financial support and resources to collect and enter data and, perhaps most importantly, shared the philosophical approach of SWPBS.

To address faculty buy-in, the Universal Team had representatives from each department within the school. The Universal Team members were enthusiastic collaborators who encouraged peers to try, and made a concerted effort to gain support from the teachers within the school who had the most longevity.

The process for selecting school-wide expectations was a collaborative initiative between faculty and the Universal Team. Staff members brainstormed with the Universal Team, who then refined the options. Final "choices" were presented to the faculty for input. The initial roll-out of the SWPBS lessons focused on one specific behavioral expectation at a time. SWPBS teaching events were consistently aligned with one of the school-wide expectations. To reiterate the importance of the school-wide expectations, disciplinary interventions were also aligned with the school-wide expectations, for example, "Are you being responsible?"

Somersworth took great strides to ease discipline data collection through the creation of a uniform office referral process, form, and corresponding teacher training. Repeated



teacher trainings on what behaviors warranted an office referral and how to complete the referrals contributed to consistency in the use of the forms and reduced inappropriate referrals. Somersworth dedicated a staff member to enter and retrieve data for both the Universal and Targeted Teams. Somersworth utilizes School Wide Information System (SWIS), School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET), attendance and dropout data to monitor SWPBS implementation and outcomes.

Teaching plans were utilized by the Universal Team to teach school-wide expectations, school-wide behavior definitions and school-wide protocol to the staff, students and the community. The Universal Team used data to determine areas of need and then developed a teaching plan to address the need. The components that had to be addressed in a teaching plan were (a) who was teaching, (b) what were they teaching, (c) how would it be taught and (d) how would it be assessed. Each teaching plan was required to include a description of the data that would be collected prior to the teaching event.

On occasion, communication between the Universal Team and faculty was difficult. Somersworth administration provided food at the meetings to boost attendance, but the funding was not always secure to make this happen. Communication and data sharing were instrumental in gaining faculty buy-in. Data sharing allowed for SWPBS to be a positive contribution to faculty meetings. Email correspondence was also used for communicating to the faculty at large. This was effective provided the emails were short reminders. Staff meetings also provided a good forum for sharing data and updates.

Data sharing was important for gaining student buy-in at Somersworth. Students responded very well to the consistency of behavioral expectations, positive feedback, and the

opportunity to have a voice in the SWPBS process. Student leadership participated on the Universal Team. The student leadership team, called Chain Reaction Club, was formed to promote acts of kindness in addition to providing feedback to the Universal Team; they addressed issues such as bullying and diversity, which were subsumed under the school-wide expectations.

Changes to the primary tier of supports at Somersworth necessitated full Universal Team and principal approval. The team worked collaboratively to reach a consensus on every decision before moving forward. Changes to the primary tier were based on SET data, SWIS-reported discipline data, attendance data, failure rates, GPA and grades.

The Targeted Team also used these data sources to identify students who needed additional secondary or tertiary tier supports. The team organized support according to a pre-determined hierarchy of decisions. Any staff, administrator or parent could request that a student be referred to the Targeted Team. Once the nature of the problem was determined to be academic or social, the targeted team determined what additional information was necessary. Function of the behavior was a consideration, and any FBA data were shared with the student, parents/guardian, referring teacher and administrator to develop an appropriate behavior support plan. The student was monitored and progress reports were presented at the targeted team meetings every other week.

The numerous secondary and tertiary tier supports available at Somersworth were channeled through the Targeted Team or the RENEW team which was directed by the Crisis Intervention counselor and a Special Education teacher. Both the RENEW and Targeted Teams determined what academic and behavior supports would be needed for an



individual student. Students participating in the secondary or tertiary tier supports were monitored in a variety of ways, dependent upon supports provided: class performance, attendance, office referrals, credits earned per semester, daily or weekly progress reports, meeting objectives from personalized learning plans, and/or transition plans.

Obstacles to data management included the difficulty of bringing together data from various software programs that track grade data, attendance, and office referrals. A lack of time for data entry was another major detraction. Some of the data was cumbersome to enter, and

required trained personnel to enter accurately.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support fostered a more consistent environment. Somersworth faculty and administrators were more able to address pressing needs, such as truancy, because the rates of other problem behaviors were considerably lower than previous years. The school environment was more respectful, students felt safer and expressed a desire to be in school and be successful. The hallways and administrative offices were quieter. Office referrals were down, failure rates decreased, attendance was up and the drop-out rate was down (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Somersworth Office Discipline, Attendance Data Pre and Post SWPBS Implementation**

Data Source	Pre SWPBS Implementation	Post SWPBS Implementation
	2007-2008	2008-2009
Average ODRs per month per 100 students	263	153
Out of school suspensions (events)	284	133
In-school suspensions (events)	182	268
Daily attendance	92.5%	94%



SET scores evidenced the level of implementation for Somersworth at 82/70 during the 2007-2008 school year and 91/100 for the 2008-2009 school year. The Somersworth SWPBS team members are convinced of the effectiveness of SWPBS, and would recommend other high schools implement with the following in mind:

*“The addition of teaching behavior, as well as content matter took a lot of time, but it paid off.”*

*“A clearinghouse of teaching activities around SWPBS would be very helpful to other teams implementing.”*

*“Increasing incentives for faculty and team members to participate in SWPBS tasks were very motivating.”*

## Summary

### Implementation

Critical elements to implementation of SWPBS at Somersworth have been:

- Administration and staff buy-in
- Providing data that documented changes in student behavior
- Training
- Positive recognition of students and faculty

### Obstacles to initial implementation:

- Lack of time for meeting and planning
- Difficulty of getting team members together consistently
- Initial lack of information about SWPBS among faculty and administrators

### Solutions:

- Massive commitment from large number of faculty – incentives included paid

summer days to complete SWPBS work

- Use of professional time during school year for training
- Consistent education of faculty
- Data-based decision making
- Sharing data used for decision making at faculty meetings

### Sustaining

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS at Somersworth have been:

- Keeping the Universal Team energy high and replenished by
  - ◊ Maintaining at least 10 members
  - ◊ Having a good balance of personalities on the team
  - ◊ Using professional development days to meet, plan and get the work done
- Positive feedback to faculty and students







## South Lakes High School

Respondents: Teresa Fennessy and Marly Fullerton

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South Lakes, located in Reston, Virginia, is part of the Fairfax County Public School System. With a total student population around 1,650 students, with 45% of the student population identifying as White, 21% as African American, 17% as Latino, and 12% as Asian. The student to teacher ratio is 12:1, with 34% of the student population qualifying for Free and Reduced Priced Lunches (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

**T**he move to SWPBS, in the 2005-2006 school year, was motivated by a desire to capture and sustain students' interests, motivation to learn, and to develop a school-wide environment extremely conducive to learning. The administrative team and instructional leaders wanted to maximize instructional time and minimize disruptions in the learning environment by creating consistently implemented school-wide policies.

The initial implementation of SWPBS started with the formation and training of the SWPBS team. Team members, seven teachers and two administrators, were sent for training at the county level. The team then led school level training sessions. Administration provided support, time and encouragement in the implementation of SWPBS. The principal continuously expressed his support of SWPBS at faculty meetings, modeling positive reinforcement by providing specific positive praise coupled with tangible rewards to members of the faculty who followed the tenants of SWPBS.

The process of team participation in county-

level training and school-level dissemination continued annually. In addition, the SWPBS coach was the main contact with the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) SWPBS director/coach and continued to attend monthly county-level meetings. The FCPS model was to provide communication from the FCPS SWPBS coach to school-based coaches through monthly forums disseminating specific information to improve action plans, processes, networking, and state/county access to nationally recognized consultants. Also, the forums provided updates and specific training for SWPBS nationwide initiatives (i.e. data interpretations, survey development and analysis). Further, the team used FCPS resources regarding teacher research to foster our expertise in analyzing data and funds to conduct off-site data analysis. The coach contributed to FCPS monthly meetings by preparing quarterly reports and helping the South Lakes SWPBS team develop action plans.

The positive reinforcement of faculty behavior promoted faculty buy-in. Other important components to increasing buy-in were teacher training and periodic analysis of relevant data at faculty meetings. Sharing data helped faculty see the connection between attendance,



discipline and academic success. The broad representation of faculty on the SWPBS team helped communication between the team and school faculty.

Student buy-in was facilitated by involving student leadership and eventually including students as part of the SWPBS team. Students on the team had an active voice and participated in the team’s decision-making process. They participated in the creation of policies, lessons, positive reinforcements and initiatives. The consistent uses of positive incentives, such as the Success Passes, public acknowledgment by the principal, and other celebrations of success, contributed to student buy-in.

School-wide expectations were developed out of close inspection of school-wide discipline and attendance data. Analysis of the data identified student problem behaviors; the team evaluated the impact of these behaviors on student learning. The team monitored implementation

and effectiveness of SWPBS through (a) the use of monthly student outcome data, and (b) the use of semiannual program self-assessment check-lists, and surveys completed by faculty members and student leadership. Some obstacles to effective data interpretation were inconsistent administrator coding of behavior (i.e. defiant behavior versus disruptive behavior), lack of easy access by SWPBS team members to reports, and inadequate time to deeply study the data.

The school-wide expectations were taught through SWPBS lessons and reinforced monthly. After initial development of the SWPBS lessons, the expectations were presented in faculty meetings and taught to students via direct instruction. Each year incoming faculty received SWPBS introductory training at the beginning of the school year, while continuing faculty received refresher training. Faculty development workshops were critical in initial implementation which helped the faculty build fluency in teaching school-wide expectations. Complementing the thorough teaching of expectations, students and faculty received positive reinforcement on a continual basis.

Decisions for modification of the primary tier of supports were supported by BoQ, SET, Virginia Standards of Learning, enrollment data, and successful completion of honors level Pre-International Baccalaureate, International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement classes, SASI attendance, discipline data and grade data, teacher and student surveys, Success Passes and incentive programs for students (five prizes given bi-weekly) and staff (five prizes given monthly.) The modifications were first presented to the SWPBS team by members of the SWPBS committee or members of the faculty. The inclusion of an administrator as part of the SWPBS Team helped facilitate discussion of and refinement of suggested proposals in light of FCPS policies,



administrative perspectives, and school history. The committee discussed the proposal, looked at the data (if applicable), and made a recommendation that was forwarded to the administrative team for discussion. The principal lent approval and the proposal went to the faculty and students for their feedback. If the change was approved, faculty training ensued. Training was conducted through faculty meetings and monthly SWPBS Lessons for students.

South Lakes had a secondary tier support called, The Seahawk Program, with about 20 students. The team screening students for inclusion was made up of counselors, SWPBS representatives, and administrators. Students with 2-5 office referrals were initially considered candidates for the supports. The Seahawk Program used an individual point system to evaluate student progress. Students received daily feedback from teachers. Progress was monitored weekly with feedback to students, parents and teachers. Student progress was monitored in the same way as primary tier supports: through student data related to discipline, attendance, and grades.

Implementing a SWPBS program created consistent school-wide policies at South Lakes. These initiatives helped increase instructional time and minimized disruptions to the learning environment. The implementation of SWPBS, along with inspection of school data, revealed South Lakes' strengths as well as what steps were needed to continue to increase student success and achievement. SWPBS initiatives helped South Lakes' faculty to identify and solve problems by creating positive, proactive, and consistent policies and appropriate intervention strategies. As a result, school climate and organization dramatically improved, and student engagement and motivation continued to increase. Additionally, the annual SWPBS faculty forum provided a platform for self-reflection which in turn built transparency

within the school.

## Summary/Recommendations

### *Implementation*

Critical elements to implementation of SWPBS for South Lakes have been:

- Administrative Support
- County level support and continuous training
- Consistent school-wide policies
- Limited number of new initiatives implemented each year
- Faculty buy-in
- Broad representation from all departments, including students
- Protected monthly SWPBS meetings
- Soliciting feedback from the faculty (surveys/forums) and student leadership (exit tickets from SWPBS Lesson/informal surveys)
- Periodic sharing of school data at faculty meetings
- Research-based and data-based decision making
- Continuous use of positive reinforcement for students and faculty

### *Obstacles to implementation:*

- Initial reservations from some administrators and school faculty
- It took time for some faculty members to adapt to new policies
- Lack of time impeded team members from following through with tasks
- Initial difficulty in scheduling a consistent time and day for the SWPBS team to meet
- Lack of clear delineation of responsibilities for key committee members
- Modification to teaching schedule/



responsibilities or compensation for key committee members.

- Limited use of access to data systems to analyze trends.
- Small percentage of the faculty did not want to follow the program

*Solutions:*

- Principal continuously supported team decisions
- Use of data to show positive changes (improvements in absences, tardies, discipline, standardized testing outcomes, i.e. IB, PSAT, SOL, AP, SAT)
- Presentation of effective data showing positive changes such as improved climate and student performance increased faculty participation and buy-in
- Administrative support for setting and protecting a schedule for the SWPBS team

to meet

- Consistent meetings, faculty presentations, and SWPBS lessons increased support from faculty and students alike.

*Sustaining*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for South Lakes have been:

- Administrative support
- FCPS county-wide support and continuous training
- Sub-committees; research, lessons, honor code, yellow zone, technology, etc.
- Protected time for SWPBS team to meet
- Broad representation of students, parents and faculty on SWPBS team
- Ongoing training and support from county
- Allocation of adequate time for data analysis

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## Timber Creek High School

Respondent: Lisa Coffey and Colleen Hermann

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Timber Creek is located in Orlando, Florida. Student population is approximately 4,000 students with 10% of the students identifying as African American, 30% Latino, 53% White, 4% Asian. The student to teacher ratio is 19:1 with 24% of the student population eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

**T**imber Creek first implemented SWPBS in 2002. Impetus for implementing SWPBS came from the administration. The school was a new school that would likely see a rapid increase in student population. The administrators were innovative and desired to recognize students for appropriate behaviors as a way to encourage positive behaviors.

The initial SWPBS team attended a 4-day summer training conducted at University of South Florida. The team then trained the entire faculty in an in-service during pre-planning. Follow-up information and training were also provided through handouts and monthly emails. Small group discussion and training were provided to new teachers. The school psychologist provided coaching support in the form of tracking and reporting discipline data.

The overt support of SWPBS by the administrative team was very important. Administrative action emphasized the alignment with SWPBS and the administrative team's philosophical beliefs. The administrators secured funding for SWPBS rewards and activities for students.

The initial SWPBS team was responsible for developing the school-wide expectations. The team wanted to come up with expectations that would cover all behaviors listed in the existing code of conduct. The team decided to align the expectations with Timber Creek's TCHS acronym. To teach the expectations, lesson plans and posters were provided to the teachers. The lesson plans are connected to the code of conduct instruction that occurred each year.

To address teacher buy-in, teachers identified as "resisting" SWPBS were invited to join the SWPBS team. Ongoing training and information was also provided to teachers to foster buy-in. The training and dissemination of information was done through email information, small group discussions, monthly reports of discipline data, and comparison data of our school to other similar schools within the school district. Teachers participated in SWPBS by teaching the school district's code of conduct and Timber Creek's school-wide expectations, providing feedback through surveys, and providing input at monthly meetings. The school-wide expectations were aligned with the district-wide code of conduct.



Getting student buy-in included: (a) meaningful rewards, (b) assisting with the creation of commercials and public service announcements for appropriate behaviors and (c) reminders form the student news anchors on the daily morning announcements. Students were invited to attend SWPBS meetings. Feedback was solicited from students about meaningful rewards. Student input was highly valued by the SWPBS team.

The effectiveness of SWPBS was monitored by monthly inspection of staff surveys. Surveys were completed 1-2 times per year. Data management was eased through the use of an online, district-wide data system. These data were then entered into Excel so all school information was located in one place. A drawback was that not all personnel within the district had access to the online data system. This minor inconvenience simply resulted in assigning specific team members to be responsible for obtaining data.

Disseminating data to staff was hindered by inconsistent attention to emails. To address, this curriculum leaders within the school were responsible for disseminating SWPBS information to the members of their team. Feedback from teachers as well as the online data system prompted changes to the primary tier of SWPBS. The SET, BoQ, and student outcome data were all reviewed for decision making. An action plan was developed each year based on these sources of data. Timber Creek also reviewed new data tracking and management tools from University of South Florida. Mid- and end-of-year staff surveys were completed to assist in planning for teacher buy-in and areas of training need.

Discipline, GPA, and attendance data were used for identifying students with secondary and tertiary tier needs. Administrators also looked at students who were frequently in the administrative offices without referrals. Plans

were in effect to move Timber Creek into a more formal process for documenting and tracking students who did not receive referrals, but who spent time in the administrators' offices. Decision rules for inclusion in secondary and or tertiary tier supports were in development. They functioned more informally through input from guidance department and Student Assistance and Family Empowerment (SAFE) department. SAFE, provided a comprehensive range of prevention and intervention services for students and their families at the elementary and secondary schools in the district. It was established and funded under the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act. Progress monitoring of the supports included reviewing grades, attendance and discipline referrals. Secondary and tertiary tier supports available at Timber Creek included:

- New Horizons counselor for drug/alcohol issues
- In-school groups conducted by guidance and SAFE:
  - ◊ Anger management
  - ◊ The Not On Tobacco (NOT) group
  - ◊ Weekly academic feedback sheets
  - ◊ Behavior contracts
  - ◊ Attendance contracts
  - ◊ Wolf watch mentoring

Timber Creek administrators would recommend SWPBS to other high schools, "This is a good way to get everyone on the same page." SWPBS had a huge impact on school climate. Although the number of referrals did not decrease dramatically, the referrals stayed consistent or decreased with comparisons made per 100 students. In addition, Timber Creeks' rate of referrals was much lower than other schools within the district.



## Summary/Recommendations

### *Implementation*

Critical elements to implementation of SWPBS for Timber Creek have been:

- Scheduled monthly meetings:
  - ◊ First Tuesday of each month
  - ◊ Dates set at the beginning of the school year
  - ◊ Allowed to secure this time in faculty schedule
- Providing feedback to faculty about most prevalent discipline issues
- Involve students in disseminating information
- Frequent reinforcement of student and staff behavior

### *Obstacles to initial implementation:*

- Increases in student population
- Changes in staff
- Time for staff training
- Funding

### *Solutions:*

- Preplanning training (including mid-year and booster sessions)
- Working with partners in education to get coupons and gift cards for rewards.

### *Sustaining*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Timber Creek have been:

- Team meetings
- Administrative support
- Funding





## Triton High School

Respondent: Steve Matthews  
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Triton is part of the Harnett County Schools District in Erwin, North Carolina. Student population is approximately 1,300 with 56% of students identifying as White, 35% African-American, 6% Latino and less than 1% identifying as Asian or Native American / Alaskan. The student to teacher ratio is nearly 15:1 with 48% of the student population eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (NCES, 2006).

### Implementation

**T**riton first implemented SWPBS in 2007 with support from North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction.

Triton's school administration and SWPBS coach worked to build staff buy-in and provide support for the SWPBS team.

Teacher buy-in was addressed via guest lectures and presentations of data from other implementing schools. Student buy-in was addressed by staff creating excitement around SWPBS and consistently carrying out designated practices. Student buy-in was one of the strengths of Triton's SWPBS implementation. Triton's SWPBS team included student input in their selection of school-wide expectations.

Decision rules for universal changes to SWPBS were made by the SWPBS team using School-Wide Information System (SWIS) discipline data and results of the SET. The school created a SWPBS data manager position to collect and enter data. Students in need of secondary and/or tertiary tier supports were identified using SWIS data. Resources available to help build secondary and tertiary tier supports at Triton included a positive behavior support specialist,

a drop out prevention coordinator, and assistance teams. Teacher forms and SWIS data were used to progress monitor at the secondary and tertiary tiers of support.

The SWPBS team monitored the effectiveness of SWPBS implementation through surveys and site visits. Volume of data and teacher misunderstanding of the data management process made data management difficult.

Triton saw improvement in school climate as well as in attendance and test scores since SWPBS implementation. There was some decrease in office discipline referrals. Before implementation attendance was decreasing monthly and the school's suspension rate was 33 per 100 students. Students were losing over 700 hours of instructional time per week to in-school and out-of-school suspensions. After implementation student attendance increased monthly and there was a 59% reduction in the suspension rate. Instruction hours lost per week to suspensions also decreased by approximately 78%.





## Summary/Recommendations

### *Implementation*

Critical elements for implementation of SWPBS for Triton have been:

- Staff enthusiasm

### *Obstacles to initial implementation:*

- Staff buy-in
- Time for teacher training

### *Solutions*

- Clear, consistent expectations
- Focus on scheduling teacher training

### *Sustaining*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for Triton have been:

- Training
- Motivation

### *Obstacles to sustaining SWPBS:*

- Budget
- Time

### *Solutions:*

- Understanding that SWPBS is a work in progress





## West Charlotte High School

Respondent: Ron Bailey

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West Charlotte is a school of approximately 1,978 students located in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) District in North Carolina. Approximately 89% of the school's population identify as African American, with 6% Latino, 3% Asian, 1% White and 0.6% Native American / Alaskan. Seventy-two percent of the student population is eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch.

### Implementation

West Charlotte began implementation of SWPBS in 2004. An increasing number of office referrals, suspensions, and low student achievement prompted the switch from the previous management system. The "High School Challenge" was created by the district after a state judge labeled four of the district's high schools as under performing. Additional funding and personnel were added to the schools to solve the issues accompanying low academic achievement of an urban high school. After the four-year project ended in 2008, PBIS was the only strategy remaining from the original model.

Administrators of West Charlotte viewed implementation of SWPBS as a high priority and provided the necessary resources for staff training, team meetings and staff accountability. Data use was also considered a high priority. Two people were dedicated to entering all office referrals, tardies and suspensions into the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) system. The district supported their efforts by providing overtime funding for staff to enter the data. Even with the organizational changes and

full support of the administration, the addition of a full-time staff member to organize the implementation process helped with sustaining SWPBS.

To support the district's pilot initiative, CMS partnered with the University of Missouri for PBIS module training and technical assistance. External PBIS Coaches District also supported the initiative through training and direct technical support. The external coach attended team and department meetings, provided SWIS training, helped with data entry, provided teacher-level support and assisted in troubleshooting.

West Charlotte addressed initial staff buy-in through continuous staff training and data reporting. Staff at all levels attended district-wide SWPBS trainings. All teachers attended secondary level training geared toward PBIS in the classroom. Behavior management was linked to instructional success.

Faculty members were surveyed periodically and data was regularly incorporated into staff meetings. Staff feedback was brought to the SWPBS team for discussion. Staff were also included in the SWPBS reinforcement system.



Faculty members were eligible for regular raffle drawings for a variety of prizes such as iPods. Administration also gave “Shout-outs” and “Thank-you Cards” to acknowledge positive staff behavior.

To address student buy-in, West Charlotte created a student advisory group. Student surveys were utilized for feedback on SWPBS, including student behavior and rewards. The student advisory met monthly to develop solutions for school issues. They also developed reward ideas for faculty.

West Charlotte’s SWPBS team developed the school-wide expectations during Module 1 training in January 2004. The school used the entire spring semester to complete products, organize and gain staff buy-in. Full implementation took place in the fall of 2005. Expectations were taught during advisory period, in a direct instruction manner. Posters were created for all areas of the building. The school’s closed circuit channel was used to broadcast skits that were developed by the creative arts class. The school-wide expectations and lesson plans were utilized as the framework. During the initial implementation, a PBIS student orientation was created to further emphasize the expectations and procedures. Student orientation continued to be held approximately every two weeks. Orientation was led by administrators and behavioral support personnel with each orientation concluding with a quiz.

A “Renaissance Card” system was developed for student recognition. The cards were awarded to students by their teachers on a weekly basis. The cards could be exchanged for tokens. A special partnership was developed with Coca-Cola for a special drink machine that only operates on the tokens. The school also recognized a “Student of the Month”. Eligible students could also attend quarterly ice cream socials.

Effectiveness of SWPBS was monitored using SWIS data and staff surveys at regular team meetings. Changes to the primary tier supports were supported through data review (SWIS, attendance, grades, standardized tests, surveys). Administrative feedback was important to determine if changes to the primary tier supports would conflict with other school or district initiatives. SWIS data and teacher referrals were utilized for identifying students with secondary or tertiary tier needs. If a student fell within the referral guidelines, they were referred to a pre-referral student support team for screening.

Resources available at West Charlotte to help build secondary and tertiary tier supports included: IEP Team, Student Intervention Team, behavior modification technician, counselor, psychologist, Dean of Students, social worker, school nurse. The support staff worked diligently to develop behavioral interventions such as Check-In, Check-Out, substance abuse services, health and mental health supports, dropout prevention services and academic assessment. Progress monitoring of these behavioral supports came in the form of SWIS data, grades, attendance data and anecdotal information from teachers.

SWPBS made a huge difference in reducing student office referrals and reduction of suspensions. West Charlotte also saw an overall increase in student performance. Suspension events per 100 students decreased by 28% since the 2006-2007 school year. Incidents of fighting averaged .028 per 100 students for the last three years. Academic proficiency on end-of-grade state testing rose from 34.5% (2004) to 61% (2008). For the 2008-2009, West Charlotte scored 90% on Behavior Taught and an Overall score of 87% on the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET).

West Charlotte administrators would wholeheartedly recommend SWPBS to other high



schools. Schools that seek to create a uniform system for students, staff and administrators, whereby all stakeholders can be successful should implement SWPBS. It helps everyone to understand their roles. The data systems, collaborative nature and relationship building help to support school success.

### Summary/Recommendations

#### *Implementation*

Critical elements to implementation of SWPBS for West Charlotte have been:

- Staff buy-in
- Full administration support

#### *Obstacles to initial implementation:*

- Large staff
- Staff buy-in
- Teaching philosophy of staff
- Competing district initiatives

#### *Solutions:*

- Regular opportunities for staff training

- Professional development on developmental needs and students of poverty
- Increasing teacher supports to help staff integrate the social and cultural needs of students with academic instruction
- Development of peer observation and mentoring support systems
- Creation of professional learning communities to increase the level of instruction and discover what works
- Developing differentiated learning opportunities for 9th graders that are two or more years behind
- 1 FTE staff member to organize the implementation process

#### *Sustaining*

Critical elements to sustaining SWPBS for West Charlotte have been:

- High administrative support and involvement
- Staff buy-in
- Student involvement

