

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports

Primary Systems and Practices

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“So, this is why I feel like all I do is deal with student behavior,” said an administrator of an urban middle school, “5,367 office discipline referrals in one year!” While flipping through the latest stack of discipline referrals on her desk, the administrator noticed that students were being referred to the office for anything from tapping a pencil in class (“disruptive behavior”) to fighting in the hallway (“physical aggression”). The administrator sighed, “Teachers should know how to manage some of these behaviors in their classrooms.”

Like this administrator, many school personnel are becoming increasingly frustrated with the impact of student behavior on their schools. More than ever, the public perception is that student behavior is out of control. Although isolated instances of violence (e.g., school shootings) contribute to this perception, people are most concerned with the lack of discipline and control in schools (Rose & Gallup, 2005). As a result, schools establish policies that try to increase discipline and control, often by adopting “get

tough” practices. In other words, schools set strict rules about the types of student behavior that are unacceptable and assign rather severe consequences for students who do not abide by the rules. When the initial policies prove ineffective, schools often respond

by “getting tougher.” That is, they invest in other security (e.g., metal detectors) and punitive measures (e.g., “zero tolerance” policies that result in expulsion) that actually have little impact on student behavior (Skiba & Peterson, 2000).



Simultaneously, schools are trying to close an ever-widening achievement gap and ensure that all students, including students with diverse academic abilities, make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Given the multiple competing initiatives and demands, schools need to invest in a proactive approach to organizing and managing resources. Specifically, schools need to identify clear and measurable *outcomes* (e.g., decrease problem behavior, increase academic achievement); collect and use *data* to guide their decisions; implement relevant, evidence-based *practices*; and invest in *systems* that will ensure that practices are implemented with fidelity and sustained over time.

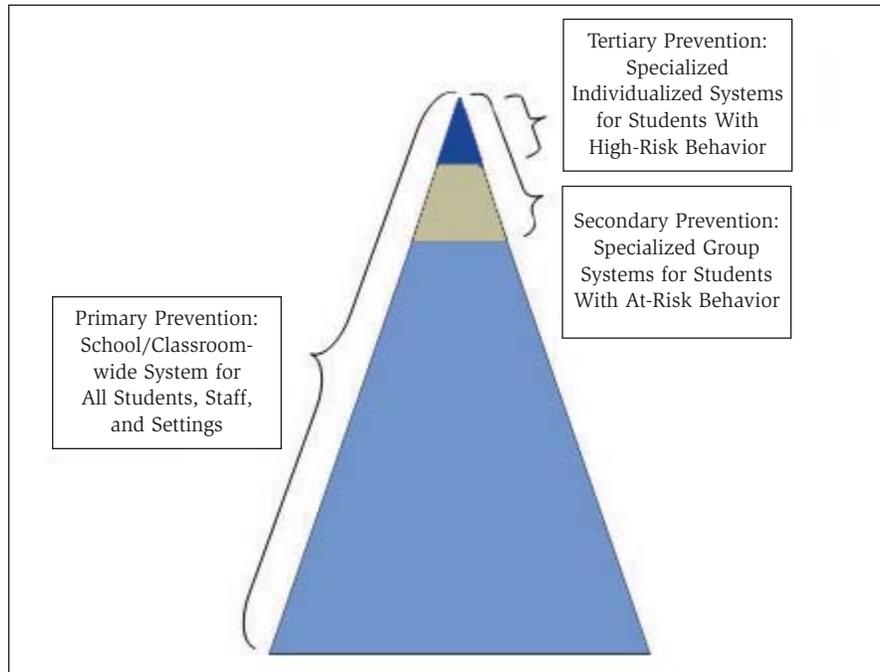
Schoolwide positive behavior supports (SWPBS) is a proactive, systems-level approach that enables schools to effectively and efficiently support student (and staff) behavior. SWPBS specifically asks schools to select outcomes, data, practices, and systems—the four critical elements previously mentioned—that are contextually appropriate and meaningful for the school. When schools implement SWPBS, they typically experience decreases in inappropriate behaviors (as measured by decreases in discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions).

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In addition, schools that implement SWPBS often find that students' academic performance improves, as teachers are able to return to teaching academics after stabilizing the social behavior.

Unlike typical school practices, which often wait for a student to fail before providing support, SWPBS employs a three-tier approach to behavior support to (a) proactively address the social behavior needs of all students and (b) prevent social and academic failure (see Figure 1; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sugai et al., 2000; Walker

Figure 1. The Three-Tiered Continuum of Support



et al., 1996). The primary tier is designed to support all students and staff across all settings in the school. Meaningful outcomes are identified for all students and staff (e.g., increases in the percentage of students making AYP, decreases in the percentage of students receiving two or more office discipline referrals); aggregate data are examined to determine if outcomes are met;

practices (e.g., establishing positively stated schoolwide rules, teaching social skills, developing a schoolwide reinforcement system) are implemented to maximize the success of all students; and systems are selected to ensure that practices are implemented with fidelity by staff. When implemented effectively and accurately, schools can expect most students (approximately 89%, 74%, and 71% of elementary, middle, and high school students, respectively) to respond to the primary tier intervention (Horner, 2007).

Even with effective primary tier intervention in place, a group of students (approximately 11%, 26%, and 29% of elementary, middle, and high school students, respectively) will require additional behavior support to experience success (Horner, 2007). The secondary tier is designed to support a targeted group of students who have not responded to primary tier interventions, but whose behaviors do not pose a serious risk to themselves or others. Outcomes are specific to the targeted group of students and often focus on preventing problem behaviors from becoming chronic. Data are collected to measure progress toward outcomes; data sources may include office discipline referrals, points earned for desired behavior (if using an intervention that employs a point system), attendance records, and other measures of appropriate behavior. Practices typically focus on intensifying the supports provided in the primary tier (i.e., increasing structure, providing more intensive social skills instruction, and delivering more frequent reinforcement); and systems (e.g., a team to run the selected secondary intervention) are established to ensure that adopted practices are implemented with fidelity

and that data are regularly collected, reviewed, and used to make decisions.

Tertiary tier interventions are designed to support individual students (a) who require additional support to benefit from secondary or primary tier intervention (i.e., students who have not responded to secondary tier intervention) or (b) whose behaviors are serious enough to require more immediate and intensive support (i.e., students whose behaviors pose a risk and who are not appropriate for secondary tier intervention). Interventions at this level are highly individualized; thus, outcomes, data, and practices are identified for each student, and systems are designed to support the ongoing implementation of multiple individualized interventions within a school.

In this article, we focus on schoolwide implementation of the primary tier intervention. Subsequent articles in this issue focus on secondary and tertiary tier interventions, classwide interventions, and even more intensive supports. Specifically, we (a) briefly review the supporting literature, (b) describe the key implementation features, and (c) share an example of how one urban middle school implemented primary tier interventions in SWPBS.

Literature Supporting Primary Tier Interventions in SWPBS

Research findings indicate that SWPBS creates an effective school environment where proactive behavioral practices can be implemented successfully (Kartub, Taylor-Greene, March, & Horner, 2000; Lewis, Powers, Kelk, & Newcomer, 2002). Specifically, individual research studies demonstrate that implementation of primary tier interventions is associated with increases in consistency among staff, increases in positive interactions, and decreases in office discipline referrals (Netzel & Eber, 2003; Safran & Oswald, 2003; Turnbull et al., 2002). Similarly, initial findings from randomized control trials, the “gold standard” for experimental research, indicate positive outcomes (e.g., increased fidelity of implementation and improved academic and behavior outcomes) for schools implementing SWPBS (Horner et al., in

press; Leaf & Bradshaw, 2007). Thus, research indicates that SWPBS is an effective approach to schoolwide intervention.

In addition, research documents that SWPBS is an efficient approach to schoolwide intervention. For example, Scott and Barrett (2004) conducted cost-benefit analyses for schools implementing SWPBS; that is, they identified the amount of time saved by school staff and students who were no longer assigning and receiving, respectively, large numbers of office discipline referrals. They found that administrators saved, on average, 15¾ days of administrator time, and students saved, on average, 79½ days of instructional time per year following implementation of SWPBS. Although additional research is still needed, school staff can be con-

fidant that interventions in the primary tier are evidence-based and are likely to be effective when implemented with fidelity in their schools.

Key Implementation Features

The focus of primary tier interventions is improving school outcomes, as indicated by data, by implementing evidence-based practices to support *all* students across *all* settings. To implement primary tier interventions, schools need to (a) identify meaningful outcomes; (b) establish and invest in schoolwide systems; (c) select and implement contextually appropriate, evidence-based practices; and (d) collect and use data to make decisions.

Identify Meaningful Outcomes

Before implementing primary tier interventions, schools need to identify what they plan to achieve. Specifically, schools should review their school or district improvement plans to identify priority areas. To be implemented suc-

cessfully, SWPBS should be among the top three initiatives listed in the school or district improvement plan. In addition, schools should review extant data sources (i.e., rates of office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions; state or districtwide test scores; numbers of students referred for or served by special education; etc.) and other relevant information to identify areas for improvement. Based on these data, schools need to identify observable, measurable, specific, and achievable annual outcomes, which will become the metric by which success of an intervention is judged. Outcomes may include a reduction, by a certain percentage, in the number of students receiving multiple office discipline referrals, an increase in the number of students meeting criteria on the state

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or districtwide assessments, and other similar contextually important schoolwide improvements.

Establish and Invest in Schoolwide Systems

After schools have identified outcomes, the focus shifts to establishing the systems that facilitate the implementation of primary tier interventions. First, schools need to establish a representative team that guides the implementation process. Team membership should include a (a) school administrator who has the authority to commit school resources; (b) select group of teachers who are representative of the certified faculty; (c) representative of special services (i.e., counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, etc.) who brings behavioral expertise; (d) member of the support staff (i.e., paraprofessional, secretary, janitor, etc.); and (e) family member. The members of the team should be positive people with social influence. The goal is to

start with a team that “works” (i.e., members are supportive of improving practices in the school and understand the importance of using data to make decisions).

Second, the team must identify someone who will act as the team coach. Coaches are responsible for ensuring the team meets regularly, develops and follows a data-based action plan, and adheres to the information gathered during training activities; often, we joke that coaches are the “positive nags” of the team because they provide regular supportive or positive reminders rather than negative punishers. Any member of the team may serve as the coach; however, the coach should have social influence over other team members (and the faculty at large).

Third, schools need to obtain 80% buy-in, or agreement from the faculty and staff, to implement SWPBS. Buy-in is often documented by a staff vote.

Fourth, schools need to ensure that they have a system that allows efficient input (i.e., data entry) and output (i.e., visual displays, or graphs) of data (i.e., office discipline referrals); data should be easily accessible and used for decision making. To make data more meaningful, many schools find that they need to redesign their office discipline referrals. For example, the behaviors listed on the referral are often ambiguous; schools may revise the names of behaviors listed and provide operational definitions of each.

Finally, schools need to sign up for training in SWPBS. Training activities are offered locally in most states, and information about training can be found on the Web site of the Office of Special Education Program’s National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (<http://pbis.org>). Following each training event, the SWPBS team needs to efficiently disseminate the information to all faculty and staff. Typically, school teams spend a year attending training events and planning for implementation; then, they implement the planned activities during the second year. School teams should use a brief readiness checklist to determine if they

Figure 2. Primary Tier Readiness Requirements: Systems

- ☑ Establish a representative SWPBS **team** that “works.”
- ☑ Identify a team member who will serve as a **coach**.
- ☑ Secure **80% buy-in** from the school staff.
- ☑ Employ a **data system** that facilitates data entry and meaningful visual displays (graphs).
- ☑ Participate, as a team, in **SWPBS training**.

have met these requirements for establishing SWPBS systems (see Figure 2).

Select and Implement Practices

Once a school has established the systems described in the previous section and is in the process of receiving training, the SWPBS team is ready to select and implement practices. To be clear, the majority of the work will be completed by members of the SWPBS team; however, the team members should actively recruit and incorporate feedback from the larger faculty at every step. The key steps to selecting and implementing practices are presented in Figure 3.

First, school faculty are asked to identify a small (three to five) number of positively stated schoolwide expectations. The expectations, or rules, should be broad enough to encompass the majority of desired behavior and be mutually exclusive (i.e., they should not overlap). For example, the expectations *Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible* are broad enough to prompt all desired behavior, and most individual behaviors fit within only one of the expectations (e.g., “keeping

hands, feet, and objects to self” fits within the broader expectation of “Be Safe”). Typically, posters are made of the expectations and displayed in all locations of the school—in both classroom and nonclassroom settings.

Second, the SWPBS team defines the selected expectations in the context of all settings and routines in the school (e.g., classroom, cafeteria, hallway, bathroom). Often, SWPBS teams use a matrix format; expectations are written as row headings, settings and routines are written as column headings, and the description of what it “looks like” to follow each expectation within each setting/routine is documented, using a few bullet points, in the cross-sections of each row and column in the matrix (see Fairbanks in this issue for an example).

Third, the SWPBS team develops lesson plans to teach each expectation within each setting/routine. Like lesson plans developed to teach academic skills, social skills lesson plans follow a consistent format: (a) state the rule and routine; (b) provide students with a definition, or description, of what it looks like to follow the rule within the

Figure 3. Implementing Primary Tier SWPBS Interventions: Practices

- ☑ Establish a small number of positively stated **expectations**.
- ☑ Define the expectations in the context of **routines/settings**.
- ☑ Develop scripted **lesson plans** to teach expectations.
- ☑ Increase **active supervision** in classroom and nonclassroom settings.
- ☑ Establish a continuum of strategies to **acknowledge appropriate behavior**.
- ☑ Establish a continuum of strategies to **respond to inappropriate behavior**.
- ☑ Develop a **staff reinforcement system**.
- ☑ Develop an **action plan** to guide roll-out and **implement**.

routine; (c) model the expected behavior; (d) engage students in an activity that allows them to practice the expected behavior in the natural setting (i.e., the place where the behavior is expected); and (e) assess to ensure students have acquired and are fluent with the social skill (the expected behavior). To ensure that all teachers deliver the lesson plans consistently, lesson plans should be scripted.

Fourth, the SWPBS team should identify a plan to increase active supervision in both classroom and nonclassroom settings. Active supervision includes three key staff behaviors: moving around the environment in unpredictable patterns so that students have the sense that they are always being watched, visually scanning the environment, and interacting with most students in the environment (Colvin, Sugai, Good, & Lee, 1997). During interactions, staff should provide specific praise or error corrections contingent on appropriate or inappropriate behavior, respectively.

Fifth, the SWPBS team should establish a continuum of strategies to acknowledge appropriate, or “expectation-following,” behavior. At a minimum, the SWPBS team should ensure that school staff are consistently using specific and contingent praise to recognize instances of appropriate behavior (i.e., telling students exactly what they did well immediately after the desired behavior is observed). Many schools also choose to establish a more overt reinforcement system. For example, schools may create positive behavior tickets that recognize students for appropriate behavior. In some schools, tickets can be turned in for a lottery drawing; in other schools, tickets can be used as money in a school store. Regardless of how schools operationalize their reinforcement system, the key idea is to “catch kids being good.”

Sixth, schools need to review the strategies they have in place to discourage inappropriate behavior. Specifically, schools should ensure that the first response to minor inappropriate behavior is a brief error correction that redirects the student back to the appropriate behavior (e.g., I saw X, and instead

I would like to see Y). The second response should be to re-teach the desired behavior. In other words, school staff should treat social behavior errors just like academic errors; they should provide feedback and instruction as necessary. For more intense or chronic problem behaviors, the SWPBS team needs to ensure that a documented and predictable staff and administrator response is in place and applied consistently by all staff. Often, this process results in the SWPBS team modifying the discipline handbook and creating two levels of behaviors: minor behaviors that should be handled in the classroom with basic behavior interventions and major behaviors that are referred to the office for additional support.

Seventh, the SWPBS team should design a staff reinforcement system that recognizes staff for the efforts involved in implementing SWPBS. Like the system designed for students, expectations for staff (e.g., staff are expected to teach lesson plans on scheduled days and deliver X number of positive behavior tickets) should be clearly defined, and staff members should receive, at a minimum, specific social recognition. Some schools choose to design a more elaborate system for staff reinforcement, with staff receiving a variety of rewards (e.g., preferred parking, get-out-of-school-early coupon) contingent on specific behaviors.

Finally, after designing the practices, the SWPBS team needs to identify and implement a plan for “roll-out” of primary tier interventions. That is, they need to specify how the expectations will be introduced, where posters will be displayed, when and where social skills lessons will be taught, when and how the schoolwide reinforcement system will be implemented, and other similar steps. This action plan

should be documented, disseminated, and clearly explained to all staff to ensure consistency; implementation should be given high priority.

Collect and Use Data to Make Decisions

While establishing and sustaining the implementation of primary tier interventions, the SWPBS team should actively collect and use data. A school that meets readiness requirements should already have a data system that facilitates data entry (input) and generates meaningful visual displays of data (e.g., graphs), which can be manipulated to answer questions generated by the SWPBS team (e.g., Where are students exhibiting problem behavior?). A system that meets these criteria is the Schoolwide Information System (www.swis.org). To ensure data are being used effectively, the SWPBS team should engage in the following steps (see Figure 4).

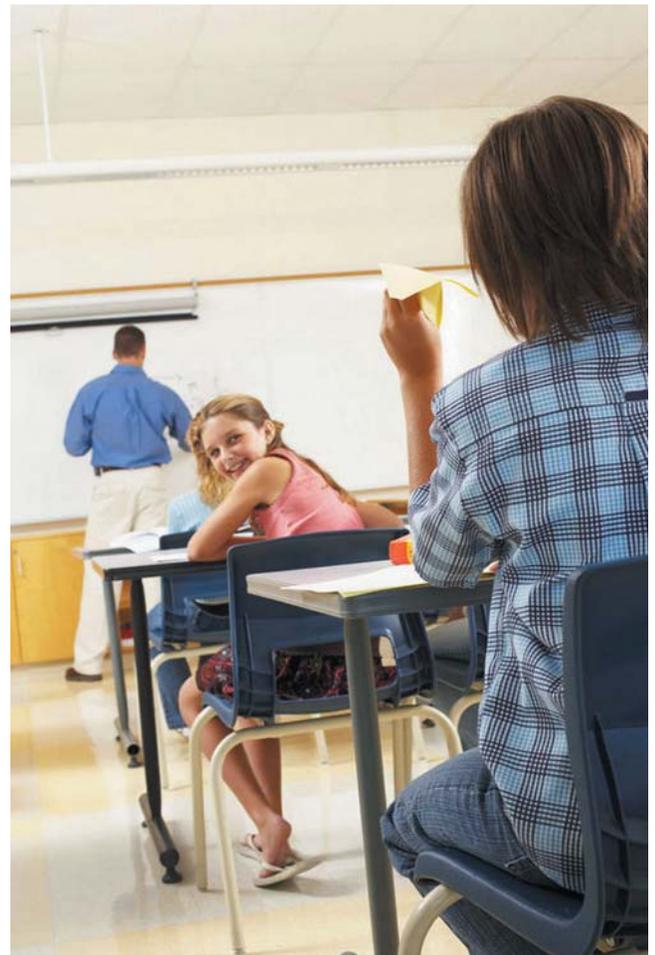


Figure 4. Monitoring Implementation Effectiveness and Fidelity: Data

- ☑ **Review data** at every SWPBS team meeting and **use data to make decisions**.
- ☑ **Share data** with the faculty and model data-based decision making.
- ☑ **Celebrate successes** with students and staff.
- ☑ **Share successes** with parents and other community members.

Step 1: The SWPBS team should make data review a priority at every regular team meeting. At the beginning of each SWPBS team meeting, the coach should facilitate a review and discussion of schoolwide data for the past month. In particular, the team should discuss the (a) overall rates (i.e., number per day) of office discipline referrals (or other schoolwide measures of student behavior), (b) percentage of students who have received multiple (two or more) office discipline referrals for major offenses and potential supports required for those students, (c) typical locations where problems are occurring, (d) time(s) of the day where problems are occurring, and (e) nature or type of behaviors. Based on these data, the SWPBS team can recommend modifications to their current interventions. For example, if a large percentage (e.g., 40%–60%) of students are receiving multiple office discipline referrals, the SWPBS team may decide to re-teach the expectations to all students in the school. Similarly, if the SWPBS team notes that most problem behaviors are happening in one location (e.g., the cafeteria), they may decide to increase prompting, active supervision, and reinforcement of school expectations in that setting. Thus, data are actively used to make decisions during team meetings.

Step 2: The SWPBS team should share data with the faculty and model data-based decision making. Because buy-in is required to sustain implementation of primary tier interventions over time, all faculty and staff must be informed of the schoolwide data and should receive brief updates from the SWPBS team at regular staff

meetings. In addition, some schools choose to share data with their staff in a school newsletter or a visual display (e.g., bulletin board) in a staff area.

Step 3: The SWPBS team should celebrate successes identified with data. Specifically, when data patterns indicate that progress is being made toward one or more of the desired outcomes, the SWPBS team should work with administration to plan a celebration for the staff and students. Celebrations can range from social recognition at an assembly, staff meeting, or over the morning announcements to a tangible or activity reward (e.g., a party, lunch, fun item, etc.).

Step 4: The SWPBS team should share successes with parents and the broader community. Family involvement is a key ingredient to the success of SWPBS implementation. As mentioned previously, a family member should serve on the SWPBS team, and all school families should be informed about the positive changes being made at the school. Therefore, parents should be invited to celebrate the successes of their students and the staff of the school. Again, sharing the success can range from informing parents during PTA/PTO meetings or via newsletters and asking them to congratulate their student to inviting parents to join a school assembly or event where the staff and students are celebrating the improvement. Similarly, the SWPBS team should share successes with other community members, including administrators in the district office, school board members, and others in the broader community (e.g., members of the Chamber of Commerce, service groups). This positive publicity helps

maintain the momentum of SWPBS and may generate donations that the school can reinvest in its implementation efforts.

Implementing SWPBS in an Urban Middle School

The frustrated administrator described at the beginning of this article, reached the peak of her frustration when she realized that students in her school received 5,367 office discipline referrals in one year. Later that year, the administrator attended a regional conference, and she learned about SWPBS. As she listened to the presentation, she grew increasingly excited about the real possibility of shifting from a reactively driven discipline system to a preventive and positive approach in her school. A new sense of optimism grew as she heard stories about schools reducing their rates of office discipline referrals, reclaiming lost instructional minutes, improving school climate, and increasing academic scores on high-stakes tests because teachers had time to teach. Learning about how to get ready to adopt and implement SWPBS in her school became high priorities for the principal.

She started by working with her district administrator (who also was director of special services) to *contact the PBS coordinator* from her state, which was listed on the national Web site (<http://pbis.org>). Together, they arranged a meeting with school and district administrators, state PBS coordinator, and consultants from the local university. At this meeting, the administrator received information about readiness requirements and upcoming training activities.

After this initial orientation meeting, the administrator worked to *complete the readiness requirements* in time for the training activities. Specifically, she established a SWPBS team that “worked.” She hand picked senior teachers and support personnel who had social influence with their peers and were likely to be supportive of SWPBS. She gathered schoolwide data (i.e., office discipline referrals) that her team would need to guide decisions about outcomes. Initially, she did not

Figure 5. A Sample Matrix of Expectations Within Routines and Settings

	Hallway/ Stairway	All Classrooms	Café	Bathroom/ Water Fountain	Bus/Bus Stop/ Walkers	Locker Room	Auditorium	Media Center
PRIDE	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice <input type="checkbox"/> Enter room quietly <input type="checkbox"/> Be considerate of other people's belongings <input type="checkbox"/> Be an active listener	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice <input type="checkbox"/> Enter and exit in an orderly manner <input type="checkbox"/> Be considerate of other people's belongings <input type="checkbox"/> Stand in line as directed	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice <input type="checkbox"/> Allow others their privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Wait your turn at the sink or fountain <input type="checkbox"/> Take care of school property	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice <input type="checkbox"/> Be considerate of the bus driver and the bus <input type="checkbox"/> Wait patiently to get on or off the bus <input type="checkbox"/> Share your seat	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice <input type="checkbox"/> Be considerate of other people's belongings	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice <input type="checkbox"/> Stay seated until directed otherwise <input type="checkbox"/> Respond to the speaker appropriately <input type="checkbox"/> Listen with eyes on speaker	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Use a quiet voice <input type="checkbox"/> Enter room quietly <input type="checkbox"/> Use media center materials and equipment appropriately
RESPONSIBILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk facing forward, staying to the right <input type="checkbox"/> Follow rules without adult reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Walk directly to destination using appropriate route <input type="checkbox"/> Have hall passes available <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Respond to quiet signal immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Be on time and be prepared <input type="checkbox"/> Follow classroom procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Sit in designated areas <input type="checkbox"/> Respond to quiet signal immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk directly to destination using appropriate route <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> Wash and dry hands <input type="checkbox"/> Return to class immediately	<input type="checkbox"/> Have belongings ready to enter and exit <input type="checkbox"/> Remain seated at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> Follow bus rules at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Get on and off bus at correct stop <input type="checkbox"/> Stay off private property	<input type="checkbox"/> Be prepared for gym class <input type="checkbox"/> Respond to quiet signal immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Respond to quiet signal immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Sit in designated areas <input type="checkbox"/> Enter and exit in an orderly manner <input type="checkbox"/> Be prompt <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/> Respond to quiet signal immediately <input type="checkbox"/> Follow media center procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Report all unsafe behavior and vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> Return materials on time
RESPECT	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Keep hallways and stairways clean	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Do your own work <input type="checkbox"/> Do your best work at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Keep work areas clean	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Keep table and floor clean and place trash into barrels <input type="checkbox"/> Leave area as you found it or better	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Keep area clean <input type="checkbox"/> Throw paper towels in trash cans <input type="checkbox"/> Flush appropriately <input type="checkbox"/> Keep water fountains clean	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Throw trash in waste basket	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Leave area as you found it or better	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Treat speaker as a welcome guest <input type="checkbox"/> Treat furniture appropriately <input type="checkbox"/> Leave area as you found it or better	<input type="checkbox"/> Use polite language <input type="checkbox"/> Keep your work area clean <input type="checkbox"/> Leave area as you found it or better

have district support to invest in a new data system (e.g., *Schoolwide Information System*); therefore, she worked with her existing system and generated the information she would need to help her team move forward. After the SWPBS team attended an initial training activity where they received a basic overview of SWPBS, team members presented the idea of SWPBS to the rest of the faculty and staff during grade level team meetings. Following the presentations, the SWPBS team conducted a staff vote, which resulted in greater than 80% buy-in. Thus, all readiness requirements were met, and

the SWPBS team continued to attend training events throughout the year.

During the course of the training year, the SWPBS team *designed their primary tier intervention*, and all implementation steps were documented in a detailed action plan, which was reviewed and updated at each regular team meeting. Team members, with input from the faculty, identified three positive expectations for their school—Respect, Responsibility, and Pride—that they called the “Keys to Success.” The team then identified all of the relevant settings/routines in their school and created a matrix that defined each

“key” within each setting/routine (see Figure 5). The team then created lesson plans for each box in the matrix (i.e., each expectation within each routine). The matrix, lesson plans, reinforcement system, plan for implementation, and other relevant information were assembled in a PBS notebook, which was distributed to all faculty and staff prior to implementation.

To increase the likelihood of students following the rules, the PBS team developed a two-part schoolwide reinforcement system. First, they created behavior tickets that staff members were to give to students who demon-

strated one of the Keys to Success. The tickets were preprinted with check boxes that allowed staff to indicate which key the student followed in which location. Second the team felt it was important to recognize students for both social and academic excellence, so they developed a card system. Students who received one or fewer discipline referrals were eligible for a yellow card; students who made the honor role but had multiple office discipline referrals were eligible for a silver card; and students who made the honor role and had one or fewer discipline referrals received the coveted gold card. Each card gave the students access to privileges in the school (e.g., sitting next to a friend at lunch) and the community (e.g., a free slice of pizza at a local restaurant and other donated items from local establishments). The school-wide reinforcement was also documented in the PBS notebook.

To improve the reliability of discipline referral data, the team modified their office discipline referral form by defining behaviors and splitting them into two categories (major and minor) that corresponded to office and classroom managed behaviors, respectively. They also included a possible motivation (i.e., function) section on the form, which asked staff to identify what they believed the student was trying to access or escape by engaging in the problem behavior. In addition to modifying the form, the SWPBS team enhanced their discipline procedures and documented the new procedures in the PBS notebook. Specifically, they identified how teachers should respond to the problem behaviors now defined as classroom managed, and they articulated how administrators should respond to the behaviors classified as office managed.

The SWPBS team also designed a staff reinforcement system, which delineated a variety of ways in which staff would be recognized (e.g., lunch with administrator, doughnuts for a grade-level team) contingent on specified behaviors (e.g., exceeding expectations for delivering coupons). They also established opportunities for all staff to be recognized when the school

met certain benchmarks. For example, they brought in cookies when they achieved 80% buy-in.

After documenting the various systems in the PBS notebook, the SWPBS team *designed a plan for roll-out* at the beginning of the next school year. At this school, SWPBS was a top priority, and the team decided that they would dedicate the first four days of the school year entirely to SWPBS. They developed a schedule to facilitate activities, and they clearly communicated that all teachers would teach social

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skills lesson plans to all students in the natural settings. They created a “passport” so that each student could receive a stamp for participating in each lesson. For example, a teacher would take his class out to the busses, which came back to the school in the middle of the day so that the lesson could occur on the bus, deliver a lesson on how to follow the keys to success on the bus, and stamp each student’s passport once they had demonstrated each key on the bus. This plan was communicated to staff, and the team provided training in how to implement the plan (i.e., how to teach lessons, how to use the reinforcement systems, etc.) during a series of professional development activities. Thus, all staff members were ready for the roll-out of SWPBS on the first day of the school year; they even had t-shirts that stated the keys to success.

The SWPBS team *monitored implementation* of their action plan, and *reviewed schoolwide data* at their regular team meetings. When they noticed an area for improvement, they made a data-based decision. For example, the school administrators noted that they were receiving multiple reports of students fighting on one staircase during a particular passing period. Rather than

increasing punishment for those students, a “get tough” approach that may have been used in the past, the administrators increased active supervision. Specifically, the principal and two vice principals each positioned themselves at the top, middle, and bottom of the stairs; the fighting was prevented. By taking 5 minutes of their day to supervise a transition, they saved hours in processing discipline referrals and suspensions for students fighting.

As a result of implementing SWPBS, the administrator can now allocate her

time to more proactive and preventative approaches and be an instructional leader, rather than a disciplinarian. Within one year, the school was implementing SWPBS with high fidelity (i.e., they achieved a score of 98% of the Schoolwide Evaluation Tool, a measure of implementation fidelity). As a result, they experienced a decrease in the number of office discipline referrals, and the students and staff reported that they enjoyed the reinforcement systems. The school staff has now shifted focus to adopting other initiatives to improve academics, is continuing to provide their staff with professional development to continue to enhance their skills, and is shifting their attention to improving their practices and systems for students whose behaviors are nonresponsive to primary tier interventions. In other words, because the school adopted a proactive and efficient approach to intervention, they have been able to pursue other initiatives and further improve the quality of education provided to students.

Concluding Comments

This article describes the essential practices and systems of a schoolwide primary tier intervention. Specifically, we emphasized the importance of six

key elements: (a) common vision and approach to schoolwide discipline, (b) small number of schoolwide expectations that are operationalized into observable or behavioral terms, (c) formal procedures or lesson plans for teaching these behavioral expectations across real school settings, (d) continuum of practices for acknowledging students who display these behavioral expectations, (e) continuum of consequences for rule violations (both classroom and office managed), and (f) systems for collecting and reviewing data for decision making.

We emphasized the importance of systems that establish and sustain consistent accurate implementation across all staff, students, and settings, including for example, team-based leadership and coordination; documented staff commitments and agreements; district-level endorsements and supports (e.g., coordination, coaching, initiative integration); and investments in useable and efficient data storage and output systems.

When done consistently and accurately, school staff can experience improved disciplinary climate, more available instructional minutes, enhanced academic achievement, greater family and community relations, and improved capacity to address the needs of students who need more intensive behavior and/or academic supports to be successful.

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