



**Guidance for Leading Inclusive  
Special Education Programs:  
Positive Behavior Intervention Supports**



MAY 2022



# Guidance for Leading Inclusive Special Education Programs

All students deserve equitable access to high quality instruction. Yet, school systems often face unique and complex challenges in improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Addressing these challenges is multifaceted and requires strong leaders who can effectively coordinate programming within and across departments and schools to increase equitable access to inclusive learning opportunities for students with disabilities.

To support the increased effectiveness of special education programming through effective and inclusive system-wide planning, the department will release seven guidance documents to school systems in 2022. The guidance will cover the highest impact areas of special education programming to most effectively improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Each guidance document will be accompanied by an hour long webinar to support implementation.

In partnership with and alongside school and school system leaders, special education leaders are encouraged to review the guidance documents and attend webinars. Please note: release dates and topics are subject to change.

TOPICS FOR 2021-2022 GUIDANCE FOR LEADING INCLUSIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS	
Month	Topic
January	<a href="#"><u>Leveraging Data to Align Budgets and Spending to Priorities</u></a>
February	Creating Compliant Systems for Student Success <a href="#"><u>Webinar: February 22 at 1 pm</u></a>
March	Educator and Staff Well-Being <a href="#"><u>Webinar: April 8</u></a>
April	Student Well-Being and Trauma Informed Supports <a href="#"><u>Webinar: May 3 at 1pm</u></a>
May	Positive Behavior Intervention <a href="#"><u>Webinar: June 7 at 1pm</u></a>
June	Cultivating a Student-Centered Vision of Teaching and Learning Aligned to Louisiana's Vision for Student Success
July	Identifying, Engaging, and Managing Key Stakeholders





## Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

*"Behaviorally challenging kids are challenging because they're lacking the skills to not be challenging."*

[Source: Dr. Ross Greene]

### Purpose

The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework provides a positive (non-punitive) and effective alternative to traditional methods of discipline. PBIS guides educators to not only respond to student behavior with the goal of keeping learning on track but also to proactively support students to avoid challenging behaviors in the first place. At its core, [PBIS](#) focuses on student skill development rather than punishment, asking, "How can we change the system, setting, or structure to help this student exhibit appropriate behavior and learn to be academically and socially successful?" rather than, "What can I do to make this student stop exhibiting this challenging behavior?"

Figure 3: This figure shows how PBIS focuses on the behavioral components of MTSS

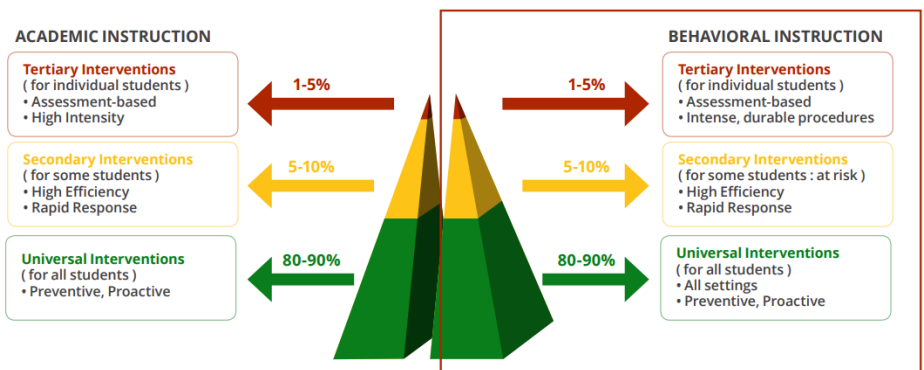


Image adapted from: [pbis.org/school/mtss](https://pbis.org/school/mtss)

PBIS methods are research-based and align directly to supporting the behavioral

components of [MTSS](#). PBIS has been proven to significantly reduce the occurrence of problem behaviors in the school, resulting in a more positive school climate and increased academic performance. PBIS is consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Act 1225, Juvenile Justice Reform Act (R.S. 17:252), which advocates the use of 1) positive behavior interventions and supports and 2) school-based disciplinary strategies that reduce or eliminate the need to use suspension and expulsion as disciplinary options.

### Digging Deeper

Effective PBIS implementation is grounded in first determining the underlying needs of students through a [universal screening](#) process. Best practice and federal education policy call for schools to routinely monitor all students' progress in a variety of domains, including academic skills, physical health, and mental health. Universal behavior screening helps proactively identify students who might benefit from behavior intervention. Further, a complete PBIS framework takes into consideration the environmental factors that influence both academics and behavior. The goal is to prevent factors that negatively affect student behavior through universal screening, data-based decision-making, and implementing integrated evidence-based interventions with fidelity.



Misconception: PBIS means...	True PBIS means...
...handing out rewards and having parties.	...changing your focus from being reactive and punitive (by responding to what students do wrong), to being proactive and positive (by teaching skills and recognizing students when they engage in appropriate behavior).
...not addressing inappropriate or disruptive behaviors.	...implementing related consequences (not “punishment”) <i>while also focusing on <a href="#">development of skills</a> and appropriate replacement behaviors.</i>
...just another initiative for us to implement.	...maximizing efficacy by <a href="#">aligning with initiatives and frameworks</a> that are already in place.
...less time spent on academics.	...decreasing problem behaviors that interrupt instructional time. Teachers can embed <a href="#">proactive, evidence-based strategies</a> in everyday academic lessons.
...all students’ behavioral needs are being addressed.	...different students will need different things, and not all necessary supports can be provided through a PBIS framework. Some students will still need access to <a href="#">trauma-informed strategies and supports</a> that address the specific impacts of trauma on the body and brain.

### PBIS in Louisiana

The goals of PBIS align closely to Louisiana’s four [Well-Being Pillars](#) as well as the intended outcomes of the [LDOE PBIS Implementation Plan](#):

1. Create local systems that support and sustain implementation of PBIS in school and community settings.
2. Create awareness and shared language for addressing the social/behavioral needs of children and youth.
3. Create school environments where appropriate behavior is shaped through teaching, modeling, practice, and positive feedback.
4. Use a data collection/management system that provides reliable and easily accessible data to assist in evaluation and decision-making.
5. Develop a statewide system of professional development (including trainers and coaches) to support the implementation of PBIS.

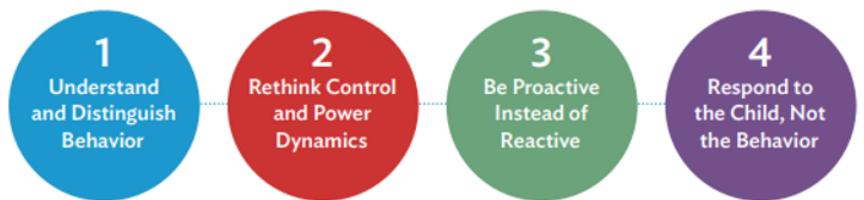


Image source: [Reframing Classroom Management: A Toolkit for Educators](#) (Learning for Justice)





### Self-Assessment

To what degree are the following statements true regarding your school or district and its focus on student behavior?

- My school/district has a comprehensive data system for monitoring academic progress, behavioral incidents, attendance, and other critical indicators across classrooms.
- My school/district has a continuum of behavior supports that is data-informed and addresses the needs of all students.
- My school/district has resources to support PBIS implementation.
- My school/district maintains fidelity of implementation in our PBIS programming and strategies.
- My school/district clearly communicates behavioral expectations to families and caregivers and involves them as partners in supporting positive student behaviors.

\*View [A Leader's Inventory for Action](#) for suggestions on actionable next steps regarding your answers to the questions above.

### Additional Resources

Resource	Description & Source
<a href="#">Systematic Screening Tools: Universal Behavior Screeners</a> & <a href="#">Selecting a Universal Behavior Screener</a>	List of universal behavior screeners and descriptions of each, plus questions to consider when choosing a universal screener. <i>(Center on PBIS)</i>
<a href="#">Teaching Appropriate Behavior</a>	Eight steps to systematically promote behavior change. <i>(Project IDEAL)</i>
<a href="#">Connecting Schoolwide SEL with Other School-Based Frameworks</a>	Guidance document that defines and describes the connections between MTSS, SEL, and PBIS. <i>(CASEL)</i>
<a href="#">Supporting and Responding to Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs</a>	Reference guide with specific evidence-based practices, including using data to actively promote social, emotional, and behavioral growth. <i>(Center on PBIS)</i>
<a href="#">Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies</a>	Eight strategies for applying trauma-informed practices in the classroom. <i>(ASCD)</i>
<a href="#">interventioncentral.org</a>	Free resources to address academics and behavior via RTI/MTSS implementation
<a href="#">Forward Together: A School Leader's Guide to Creating Inclusive Schools</a>	P. 67-79 - Creating an Inclusive Culture: Positive Behavior Strategies <i>(NCLD)</i>

**Feedback:** In order to continually improve the effectiveness of these guidance documents, please complete the [feedback form](#) for this PBIS guidance document.