INTEGRATING HIGH LEVERAGE PRACTICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WITHIN A PBIS/MTSS FRAMEWORK

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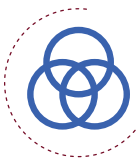
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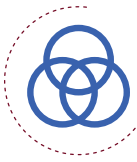
Integrating High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities within a PBIS/MTSS Framework

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Introduction

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that emphasizes social, emotional, and behavioral support. "When schools implement PBIS with fidelity, students with disabilities experience: (a) improved SEB [social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes] and (b) reduced exclusionary discipline" (i.e., office discipline referrals, suspensions, restraint, seclusion; Center on PBIS, 2022, p. 1). The goal of implementing PBIS is to create positive, equitable, and inclusive school cultures to improve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for each and every student (Horner et al, 2017). However, research indicates that typical practice shows students with disabilities are less likely to have access to the full range of PBIS support (Hawken & O'Neill, 2006; Zagona et al., 2021). As well, the majority of students with extensive support needs continue to be educated in separate settings (e.g., self-contained classrooms, private alternative schools; Wehmeyer et al., 2021).

Two common barriers to meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities across all tiers of PBIS include:

- A misperception that because students with disabilities may require extensive and/or individualized supports, they are not likely to benefit from universal (Tier 1) and targeted (Tier 2) support.

- A lack of special education representation on PBIS teams or in professional development on PBIS may limit relevant and effective inclusion of students with extensive support needs in universal PBIS efforts (Walker et al., 2018).
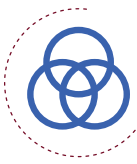
One approach to contending with these barriers and fostering more meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities across the tiers is to intentionally align school-wide systems of support (i.e., PBIS) with systems designed to support individuals with disabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to support implementation of high-leverage practices (HLPs) for students with disabilities within the PBIS framework. The High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities guide,[1] originally developed in 2017 and revised in 2024 (2nd Edition), represents work from a partnership of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center. Integration of HLPs across the full continuum of supports offers a systematic way to meaningfully include students with disabilities.

To support educators with implementing HLPs and to enhance experiences and benefit of students with disabilities, we offer guidance for organizing and implementing HLPs within a PBIS/MTSS framework. This guide is organized using the HLP categories of Collaboration, Data-Driven Planning, Instruction in Behavior and Academics, and Intensify and Intervene as Needed. Within each of the domains, we highlight practices that support students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Some of the HLPs are considered "pillar practices," which are the most important aspect of that domain, and others are considered "embedded practices," which are practices that support the pillars. Each of the domains should not be seen as separate as they act together to support the social, emotional, behavioral, and educational needs of students with or at risk for disabilities.

For this guide, we provide a table with practical examples of how HLPs can be braided across the tiers. We start with the pillar practices for each domain and then include the embedded practices to highlight where schools might want to focus first. Individuals with the ability to influence building and/or district-level systems (e.g., general and special education administrators, special education coordinators, building and/or district leaders) can use the tables and information provided to show how the HLPs can be implemented, leveraging support from PBIS systems, to foster more meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities across the tiers.

Collaboration

Successful implementation of PBIS/MTSS relies on the use of teams and teaming structures for effective collaboration. From the systems level teams at each tier focusing on overall fidelity and impact of supports provided, to a problem-solving team at Tier 2 focusing on interventions for students who may not be making progress, and to the individual student support teams at Tier 3 focusing on a student's unique strengths and needs, diverse groups work together to increase success for all students plus key subgroups of students (e.g., students with disabilities). These collaborative teams provide the foundation for reviewing data, identifying strengths and needs, and implementing practices and/or adjustments to improve outcomes for all students. Table 1 includes examples of collaboration across the tiers.
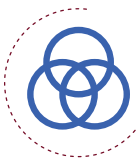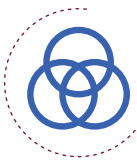
Table 1. High Leverage Practice Area: Professional Collaboration

Pillar Practice: Collaborate with Professionals to Increase Student Success

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students

Teaming
 	
Tier 1 systems are led by a team which includes:
 	
• a representative group of educators including:
  • general and special education
  • grade level or departmental representation
  • certified and non-certified staff
• school administrator
• students
• family members employed outside the district
• relevant community partners (e.g., mental health providers)
• representatives from key subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities or their families)
	Teaming
	
	Tier 2 systems are led by a team (or combined Tier 2 and 3 team) which includes:
	
	• a representative group of educators including:
	  • general and special education
	  • grade level or departmental representation
	  • certified and non-certified staff
	• school administrator
	• relevant community partners (e.g., mental health providers)
	• representatives from key subgroups (e.g., families of students with disabilities)
		Teaming
		
		Tier 3 supports are facilitated by a Tier 3 Systems Team and individual student support teams. Tier 3 Team (or combined Tiers 2 and 3 Team) includes:
		
		• a representative group of educators including:
		  • general and special education
		  • grade level or departmental representation
		  • certified and non-certified staff
		• school administrator
		• relevant community partners
		• representatives from key subgroups (e.g., families of students with disabilities)
		
		Individual student support teams are uniquely constructed with input/approval from the student/family and include:
		
		• a representative group of educators who know the student best including:
		  • general and special education
		• expertise in the relevant area(s) of student need such as:
		  • academics supports
		  • speech and occupational therapy,
		  • mental health and trauma expertise (e.g., counselor, social worker)
		  • applied behavioral expertise (e.g., special educator, school psychologist)
		  • physical health and wellness (e.g., nurse, health teacher)
		  • school administrator

Table 1. High Leverage Practice Area: Professional Collaboration *continued*

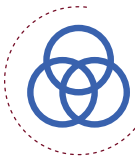| Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students

Communication
• Special education teacher(s) on the Tier 1 Team are consulted to ensure accessibility of schoolwide supports for students with disabilities.
• Tier 1 Team regularly uses (e.g., quarterly) two-way communication with advanced tiers teams to ensure a seamless continuum of support.
	Communication
	• Special education teacher(s) on the Tier 2 Team are consulted to ensure accessibility of targeted supports for students with disabilities matched to function and need.
	• Team members with behavioral expertise are consulted to ensure targeted supports meet a range of student needs (i.e., identifying function of behavior) and have documented evidence of effectiveness
	• Tier 2 Team (or combined Tier 2 and 3 Team).
	  • regularly uses (e.g., quarterly) two-way communication with Tier 1 and Tier 3 Teams to increase consistency in implementation and ensure a seamless continuum of support
	  • regularly uses decision rules and multiple sources of data to identify students with internalizing or externalizing needs who may require Tier 2 supports
	  • works with district/community mental health partners to ensure targeted supports address both externalizing **and** internalizing behavior needs
		Communication
		• Special education teacher(s) on the Tier 2 team are consulted to ensure accessibility of targeted supports for students with disabilities matched to function and need.
		• Individual student support teams work collaboratively to construct, implement, monitor, and adapt the student-specific supports based on student-specific data.
		• Tier 3 Systems Team (or combined Tier 1 and 3 Team):
		  • regularly uses (e.g., quarterly) two-way communication with Tier 1 and Tier 2 Teams to increase consistency in implementation and ensure a seamless continuum of support
		  • regularly uses decision rules and multiple sources of data to identify students with internalizing or externalizing needs who may require Tier 3 supports
		  • works collaboratively to develop systems to guide development of individualized support plans (e.g., brief, comprehensive, wrap-around) based on individualized assessment data
		  • works with district/community mental health partners to ensure targeted supports address both externalizing **and** internalizing behavior needs

Table 1. High Leverage Practice Area: Professional Collaboration *continued*

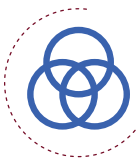| Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
Training • Special education teachers are included in schoolwide PBIS trainings to ensure consistent implementation and increase collaboration across environments. • All staff participate in training on how to meaningfully include students with IEPs in schoolwide and classroom-wide PBIS (e.g., non-classroom settings, general education settings, music, gym, art).	**Training** • All relevant staff (special educators and general educators) participate in training on how to implement and support each Tier 2 intervention that is in place.	**Training** • All relevant staff (special educators and general educators) participate in training on how to implement or support each individualized student intervention plan that is in place.

Table 2. High Leverage Practice Area: Family Collaboration

Pillar Practice: Collaborate With Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services

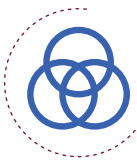| Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
Family and Community Engagement At least twice per year, the Tier 1 Team purposefully engages: • representatives from key subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities or their families) • families representative of the school's demographics • representatives of any marginalized groups The team collaborates on the selection and interpretation of schoolwide and communtiy data to: • enhance and modify school-wide (i.e., universal) supports • provide input on the development or implementation of foundational Tier 1 systems and practices (e.g., classroom practices, responding to unexpected behavior, acknowledging expected behavior, establishing and teaching schoolwide expectations)	**Family and Community Engagement** At least twice per year, Tier 2 Team (or combined Tier 2 and 3 Team) purposefully engages: • representatives from key subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities or their families) • families representative of the school's demographics • representatives of any marginalized groups The team collaborates on the selection and interpretation of schoolwide and community data to: • identify systemic barriers that may contribute to over or under representation of student groups in Tier 2 • enhance and modify the selection and adaptation of Tier 2 interventions and the implementation of Tier 2 foundational practices (e.g., screening, request for assistance, intervention options, data decision rules, access to Tier 1, training)	**Family and Community Engagement** At least twice per year, the Tier 3 Systems Team purposefully engages: • representatives from key subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities or their families) • families representative of the school's demographics • representatives of any marginalized groups The team collaborates on the selection and interpretation of schoolwide and community data to: • identify systemic barriers that may contribute to over or under representation of student groups in Tier 3 • enhance and modify the selection and adaptation of Tier 3 interventions and the implementation of Tier 3 foundational practices (e.g., screening, comprehensive assessment protocols, individual support plan protocols, access to Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports)
		Individual Student Support Teams Individual student support teams meet at least twice a month to collaboratively design and refine strategies specific to one student. The team's goal is always to transition a student to fewer intensive supports.

Table 2. High Leverage Practice Area: Family Collaboration   *continued*

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
All Tiers		
Considering Confidentiality • At each tier, system level teams focus their conversations on general information regarding supports provided and overall effectiveness (e.g., how many students are responding well) rather than specific student concerns. • Assessing global and/or publicly available information data focused on fidelity and outcomes (e.g., rate of behavior incidents by location, total number of students responding to an intervention, total number of students requiring more intensive supports) allows teams to make informed decision regarding improving or fading supports. • Intervention support teams and individual student support teams (at Tiers 2 and 3, respectively), should take care to ensure that personal and confidential information on individual students is shared only with that student's teacher(s), parent(s) or caregiver(s), and/or community partners who are currently supporting the student.		

For more information and resources on including and engaging families in PBIS implementation, see the Family topic page on Center on PBIS website.[2]

For more information and resources on supporting students with disabilities in the classroom and school-wide, check out the following resources from the Center on PBIS:

• Supporting Students with Disabilities in the Classroom within a PBIS Framework[3]

• Questions for Families to Consider when Concerned about their Child's Behavior[4]

• Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders Through School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports[5]

• Providing Access to School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities[6]

For more information and resources on enhancing family participation on individual student support teams, check out the following practice briefs from the Center on PBIS:

• Helping Families Prepare for an IEP Meeting[7]

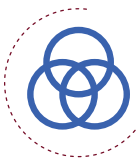• Strengthening Family Participating in Addressing Behavior in an IEP[8]

For more information on, understanding confidentiality across the different types of teams and tiers, check out the resource Addressing Confidentiality While Supporting the Social-Emotional-Behavioral Needs of Students Within School[9] from the Center on PBIS.

Table 3. High Leverage Practice Area: Facilitate Collaboration

Pillar Practice: Organize and Facilitate Effective Meetings With Professionals and Families

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
		Individual Student Support Teams In addition to the above, individual student support teams meet at least twice a month. Before and after meetings, a team member follows up with the family representative(s) to see if they have any questions or priority discussion topics. When there are official documents to be signed, time is allocated for a team member to thoroughly explain the document prior to signing.

All Tiers

Organization and Facilitation

All tiers are coordinated and led by a team (e.g., Tier 1 team, Tier 2 team, Tier 3 Systems Team, combined Tier 2 and 3 Team) that meets at least monthly and:

- sets up regular meeting format/agenda provided before and during the meeting that prompts the regular review of the tiers practices, systems, and data
- shares meeting summaries and minutes available to all partners (e.g., staff, families, school community) using accessible language(s) with the goal of ensuring meeting summaries accurately reflect the discussions had
- establishes and regularly use team norms for effective collaboration
- uses meeting roles (e.g., time keeper, facilitator, recorder)
- communicates regularly (e.g.., quarterly) through two-way communication with teams at other tiers
- creates a current action plan

Enhancing Collaboration / Engaging Partners

Each team:

- assesses the fidelity of team operating procedures at least once a semester
- solicits team member feedback (e.g., survey) to monitor the impact of team norms and meeting processes to ensure all team members, especially representatives from families and key subgroups, have voice and influence as equal partners

For more information and examples on conducting meetings with a team-based decision-making process, see the Data-based Decision Making topic page and the Team Initiated Problem Solving (TIPS) videos from the Center on PBIS. [10]

Data-Driven Planning

At each tier, diverse and representative teams collect and organize implementation fidelity data and student outcome data for all students (school-wide) plus key subgroups of students (e.g., students with disabilities). Teams review and analyze the data to compare expected performance and actual performance to better understand strengths and areas for improvement for both students and staff. Teams then use their collaborative structures to share data and work together on data-based adjustments to systems and practices across the tiers. This collaborative assessment process helps teams make decisions that maximize the benefit for all students and staff and facilitate more meaningful consideration of students with disabilities across the tiers.

Table 4. High Leverage Practice Area: Data-Driven Planning, Make Adjustments

Pillar Practice: Use Student Assessment Data, Analyze Instructional Practices, and Make Necessary Adjustments That Improve Student Outcomes

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
Tier 1 team continues to collect: • systems data • fidelity data • outcome data • feedback data Team regularly meets (at least once per month) to use data: • to better understand current impact and progress of Tier 1 systems and practices • to guide necessary adjustments to school-wide systems and practices to maximize benefit for all students and adults	**Tier 2 team** (or a combined Tier 2/3 team) continues to collect: • system data • intervention fidelity data • intervention progress data • feedback data Team regularly meets (at least once per month) to use data: • to better understand current impact and progress of Tier 2 systems and interventions • to guide necessary adjustments to Tier 2 systems and individual interventions to maximize benefit for each student being served and all adults	**Tier 3 systems** team continues to collect: • systems data • support plan fidelity data • feedback data Team regularly meets (at least once per month) to use data: • to better understand current impact and progress of Tier 3 systems • to guide necessary adjustments to Tier 3 systems and supports to maximize benefit for each student being served and all adults
		Individual Student Support Teams continue to collect: • support plan fidelity data • assessment data • outcome data Teams regularly meet (at least twice per month) to use data.
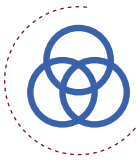
For more information and resources on Tier 3 systems and supports, check out the following resources from the Center on PBIS:
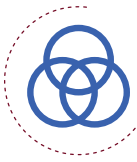
- Tier 3 District-level Systems Guide[11]

- Tier 3 School-level Systems Guide[12]

- Tier 3 Student-level Systems Guide[13]

For more information, check out the Data-based Decision Making topic page from the Center on PBIS.[14]

Table 5. High Leverage Practice Area: Data-Driven Planning, Understand Strengths and Needs

Pillar Practice: Use Multiple Sources of Information to Develop a Comprehensive Understanding of a Student's Strengths and Needs

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
System Data • number of students being served school-wide • percentage of all and key-subgroups are showing a positive response	**System Data** Number of students: • participating in Tier 2 interventions • demonstrating a positive response • who have graduated from Tier 2 interventions this year • who have participated in the intervention(s) this year but required more intensive support	**System Data** Number of students: • receiving individualized supports • demonstrating a positive response • who have graduated from Tier 3 plans this year • who have participated in Tier 3 plans this year but required more intensive support
Fidelity Data • Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) • Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) • observations of class-wide systems and practices (i.e., classroom management)	**Fidelity Data** • Tier 1 sources • intervention fidelity checklists and observations	**Fidelity Data** • Tier 1 and Tier 2 sources • structured review of behavior support plans
Outcome Data • discipline incidents (Majors and Minors) • risk indicators from universal screenings for externalizing and internalizing behavior concerns • health room visits • attendance and/or tardies • academic performance • School climate • perceptions of inclusion from both students and families • teacher surveys of perceptions and/or social validity	**Outcome Data** • Tier 1 sources • student motivation data • intervention daily progress reports (DPR) • social validity tools • student and/or family perceptions of progress	**Outcome Data** • Tier 1 and Tier 2 sources • Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA; brief and/or complex) • direct observations of student behavior • Behavior Support Plan (BSP) or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) progress reports • student and/or family interviews regarding external supports received

For more information and resources on collecting and using fidelity and outcome data to support and sustain implementation across the tiers, check out the following resources from the Center on PBIS:

- Collecting Fidelity Data to Support and Sustain PBIS/MTSS in Schools[15]

- Measuring Fidelity of Core Features of Tier 2 Systems and Practices in Schools[16]

- Tier 3 Brief Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) Guide[17]

- Tier 3 Comprehensive Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) Guide[18]

- Considerations for Conducting Virtual Functional Behavior Assessments & Behavior Intervention Plans (FBAs & BIPs)[19]

For more information and resources on systematic screening to identify and support students' needs, check out the following resources from the Center on PBIS:

- Systematic Screening in Tiered Systems: Lessons Learned at the Elementary School Level[20]

- Lessons Learned from District and School-site Leaders Conducting Systematic Screening[21]

- School-based Screening for Student Substance Misuse[22]

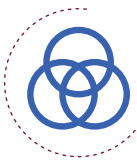- Systematic Screening: Practicalities & Considerations[23]

Table 6. High Leverage Practice Area: Data-Driven Planning, Interpret and Communicate

Pillar Practice: Interpret and Communicate Assessment Information With Partners (e.g., Staff, Families, Students to Collaboratively Design and Implement Educational Programs

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
Interpret Tier 1 team analyzes: • systems data • fidelity data • outcome data for all students (school-wide) plus key subgroups of students (e.g., students with disabilities) to illuminate schoolwide trends, patterns, accomplishments, and improvement areas.	**Interpret** Tier 2 team (or a combined Tier 2 and 3 team) analyzes: • systems data • intervention fidelity data • intervention progress data for all students receiving targeted supports plus subgroups of participating students (e.g., students with disabilities) to determine what (if any) additional modifications, skills, time, structure, and/or resources are needed to enhance progress for both students and staff.	**Interpret** Tier 3 systems team analyzes: • systems data • support plan fidelity data Individual student support teams analyze: • assessment data • support plan fidelity data • student outcome data
Communicate Team regularly shares with staff, families, and students: • school-wide accomplishments • system-level information • school-wide data in multiple formats (e.g., written, verbal, visual) using accessible language(s) with the goal of helping to better understand the Tier 1 system, practices, and the resulting data.	**Communicate** Team regularly shares: • intervention progress monitoring data and achievements with relevant students, staff, and families • system-level accomplishments and general information about available Tier 2 supports with all staff and families in multiple formats (e.g., written, verbal, visual) and accessible language(s) with the goal of helping to better understand the Tier 2 system, interventions, and the resulting data.	**Communicate** Tier 3 systems team shares: • systems data Individual student support team shares: • assessment data • support plan progress and outcome data • atudent accomplishments regularly with participating students, associated staff, and family members in multiple formats (e.g., written, verbal, visual) using accessible language(s) with the goal of helping to better understand the assessment process, the Tier 3 system, the supports provided, and the resulting data. *The same content is shared in advance of an IEP or individual student planning meeting to provide opportunity for reflection, questions, and clarifications and to encourage regular two-way communication between home and school.*

Table 6. High Leverage Practice Area: Data-Driven Planning, Interpret and Communicate *continued*

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
Collaborate Tier 1 team solicits feedback and input from students, staff, and family members on their experiences with the building's Tier 1 systems and practices (e.g., expectations and lessons, acknowledgement system, consequences system) to determine and enhance: • wffectiveness • wquity • wfficiency • relevance • fidelity of implementation	**Collaborate** Tier 2 team solicits feedback and input (i.e., social validity data) from participating students, staff, and families on current Tier 2 systems and interventions to determine and enhance: • effectiveness • equity • efficiency • contextual fit • fidelity of implementation	**Collaborate** Perspectives from individual student support teams, individual students, participating family members, and associated staff are gathered and incorporated (to the extent possible) into the: • assessment • support plan development • goal identification • data collection processes

Instruction in Behavior and Academics

Establishing a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment helps all students feel comfortable in the classroom and ready to learn. This type of environment creates an effective platform for teaching social behaviors, providing positive and constructive feedback to guide learning and behavior, and implementing practices and/or interventions to maximize student success. This guide highlights a few key practices from this area that more explicitly address behavioral challenges. For more information and examples on these practices and others from this domain, review the Supporting and Responding to Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs guide[24] and MTSS in the Classroom brief.[25]

Table 7. High Leverage Practice Area: Instruction in Behavior and Academics, Establish Envronment

Pillar Practice: Establish a Consistent, Organized, and Respectful Learning Environment

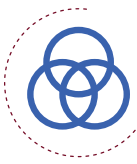| Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
• make posted schoolwide and classwide expectations accessible for all students, including students with disabilities and emerging bilingual students (e.g., visual supports/pictures, braille, placement at varying heights) • provide professional learning and resources for ALL staff focused on implementing culturally responsive PBIS practices for students with diverse learning and behavioral needs • create intentional partnerships between Tier 1/schoolwide teams and Tier 2/3 teams to foster a focus on meaningful inclusion and belonging for students with disabilities within schoolwide systems and supports • include special education representation on schoolwide teams	• systematically provide additional prompts and precorrections for expected behavior for students with targeted needs	• focus on meaningful inclusion and belonging for students with disabilities and Tier 3 needs in general education settings • structure learning environments to meet individual needs of each child/youth in the classroom and make sure they are accessible via universal design for learning, accommodations, and modifications • include special education staff in professional learning opportunities related to Tier 1 supports and classroom systems • ensure Tier 1 PBIS practices are being implemented across ALL school contexts (including separate classrooms)

Table 8. High Leverage Practice Area: Instruction in Behavior and Academics, Provide Feedback

Embedded Practices for How to Teach: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students' Learning and Behavior

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
• make schoolwide acknowledgement systems accessible and meaningful for all students and staff	• modify schoolwide language, expectations, and acknowledgement systems to provide more frequent positive feedback and rewards for reaching expected learning and improvement in behaviors	• explicitly link individual reinforcement systems to schoolwide language, expectations, and acknowledgement systems • ensure that students with disabilities receive specific positive feedback for engaging in schoolwide expectations

Table 9. High Leverage Practice Area: Instruction in Behavior and Academics, Social Behaviors

Embedded Practices for How to Teach: Teach Social Behaviors

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
• explicitly teach all students and staff (and make part of schoolwide and classwide expectations) how to meaningfully include and be respectful to students with diverse needs and abilities	• ensure students goals at Tier 2 are explicitly linked to Tier 1 language and expectations • make explicit linkages between Tier 3 goals and Tier 2 goals for students who are transitioning to lower levels of support	• ensure that accessible schoolwide expectations and language are taught in ALL school contexts (this can help to foster generalization of new skills for students with disabilities)

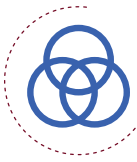# Intensity and intervene as Needed

Consistent with a multi-tiered approach, interventions can be matched to the level of the student need. Most students, including students with disabilities, benefit from Tier 1 universal approaches. Some require Tier 2 support that includes additional instruction, often in a small group setting, with increasing intensification of interventions and more frequent monitoring. For a few students, Tier 3, or individualized supports are the best fit to reach more individualized needs and the most frequent amount of monitoring. It is important to note that Tier 3 supports are not in replacement of special education and its mandate for specialized instruction based on the student's individual need, but can be done in conjunction with such need, especially when aligned with IEP related goals and services.

This guide offers strategies for how to embed the Pillar Practice to provide Intensive support for academics and behavior with many examples of how to intensify support using a tiered framework. In addition, some students with more significant behavior challenges might need a functional behavior assessment that is used to develop behavioral support plans.

Table 10. High Leverage Practice Area: Provide Intensive Instruction for Academics and Behavior
Embedded Practice: Conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments to Develop Individual Student Behavior Support Plans

Tier 1 Examples Universal, Primary Prevention: All Students	Tier 2 Examples Targeted, Secondary Prevention: Some Students	Tier 3 Examples Individualized, Intensive Prevention: Few Students
• provide all staff ongoing PD on function-based thinking to help build a seamless continuum of support, promote generalization of new skills, prevent and efficiently address challenging behavior for all students, and improve implementation of targeted and Tier 3 support plans in inclusive settings • provide training and ongoing coaching for general educators who support students with Tier 3 behavior support needs in inclusive settings	• train ALL school staff in Tier 2 supports and implementation (including how to consider student motivation at Tier 2)	• promote, foster, and support intentional partnerships between general and special educators to improve fidelity of implementation of individualized support and student success across school contexts and settings • include general educators on individual student support teams • train and coach special educators on how to create and implement systematic fading procedures to move students to less intensive supports (e.g., from Tier 3 to Tier 2) as they are ready

Conclusion

It is important to highlight the intentional alignment of school-wide systems of support (i.e., PBIS) with systems designed to support students with disabilities and the high leverage practices that have shown have positive impact. All too often, these systems are siloed and separate. When implemented school-wide, the tiered framework of PBIS benefits all students across key subgroups. Student with disabilities are best served when their specialized supports are aligned with the larger school-wide system and when they have access to supports across the tiers.

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Embedded Hyperlinks

1. https://highleveragepractices.org/

2. https://www.pbis.org/topics/family

3. https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-students-with-disabilities-in-the-classroom-within-a-pbis-framework

4. https://www.pbis.org/resource/questions-for-families-to-consider-when-concerned-about-their-childs-behavior

5. https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-students-with-autism-spectrum-disorders-through-school-wide-positive-behavior-interventions-and-supports

6. https://www.pbis.org/resource/providing-access-to-school-wide-positive-behavioral-interventions-and-supports-for-students-with-significant-cognitive-disabilities

7. https://www.pbis.org/resource/helping-families-prepare-for-an-iep-meeting

8. https://www.pbis.org/resource/strengthening-family-participation-in-addressing-behavior-in-an-iep

9. https://www.pbis.org/resource/addressing-confidentiality-while-supporting-the-social-emotional-behavioral-needs-of-students-within-schools

10. https://www.pbis.org/topics/data-based-decision-making

11. https://www.pbis.org/resource/tier-3-district-level-systems-guide

12. https://www.pbis.org/resource/tier-3-school-level-systems-guide

13. https://www.pbis.org/resource/tier-3-student-level-systems-guide

14. https://www.pbis.org/topics/data-based-decision-making

15. https://www.pbis.org/resource/collecting-fidelity-data-to-support-and-sustain-pbis-mtss-in-schools

16. https://www.pbis.org/resource/measuring-fidelity-of-core-features-of-tier-2-systems-and-practices-in-schools

17. https://www.pbis.org/resource/tier-3-brief-functional-behavior-assessment-fba-guide

18. https://www.pbis.org/resource/tier-3-comprehensive-functional-behavior-assessment-fba-guide

19. https://www.pbis.org/resource/considerations-for-conducting-virtual-functional-behavior-assessments-behavior-intervention-plans-fbas-bips

20. https://www.pbis.org/resource/systematic-screening-in-tiered-systems-lessons-learned-at-the-elementary-school-level

21. https://www.pbis.org/resource/lessons-learned-from-district-and-school-site-leaders-conducting-systematic-screening

22. https://www.pbis.org/resource/school-based-screening-for-student-substance-misuse

23. https://www.pbis.org/resource/systematic-screening-practicalities-considerations

24. https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-and-responding-to-behavior-evidence-based-classroom-strategies-for-teachers

25. https://www.pbis.org/resource/multi-tiered-system-of-supports-mtss-in-the-classroom