

The Complete School Leader's Guide to PBIS

Fall Checklist: Is Your PBIS Framework in Place?

Why This Checklist Matters

Student behavior and safety consistently rank as the #1 concern among educators today. While there are no quick fixes, research shows that a well-implemented PBIS framework can dramatically improve school climate, reduce disciplinary incidents, and increase instructional time.

This **"Fall Checklist"** involves a school-wide plan for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), focusing on establishing clear expectations, teaching routines, and creating systems for active supervision and positive acknowledgement at the start of the school year. Key elements include teaching school and classroom procedures, arranging the physical environment to prevent issues, using a consistent 3:1 ratio of positive to corrective feedback.

BehaviorInSchools' Core Beliefs:

- Students and staff need to work together in a safe and caring environment
- Behavioral intervention and academic intervention are equally important
- Prevention is the key in establishing productive learning environments
- Educators need tools and strategies that provide the biggest impact

Use this checklist to guide your implementation, track your progress, and ensure no critical elements are overlooked.



7 Big Ideas Guiding Implementation of PBIS



Define School-Wide Expectations



Teaching Expectations & Procedures



Acknowledgement Systems



Responses to Undesireable Behavior



Data-Based Decision Making



Tiered Levels of Support



Cultural & Contextual Responsiveness





Define School-Wide Expectations

School-wide expectations represent a set of skills, traits and/or attitudes that **EVERYONE** in the school strives to demonstrate. School-wide expectations are **NOT** rules...but rather lifelong values that the school wants to support and emphasis.

Main Points to Consider

- ☐ Define 3–5 positively stated school wide behavioral expectations (e.g., Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, Character Traits, Pledges, etc.)
- ☐ Expectations are simple, consistent, and apply across all settings.
- ☐ How will they be taught, emphasised and celebrated?
- ☐ How will they be visible and kept “alive” throughout the year?



Teaching Expectations and Procedures

Teaching school-wide and classroom expectations is crucial and can lead to better student behavior, a safer and more structured learning environment, increased academic success, and the development of essential life skills such as self-discipline and responsibility. When students know what is expected of them, they are more likely to adhere to guidelines, stay on task, and engage positively with their peers and teaching staff.

Main Points to Consider

- ☐ Teaching matrix/common area expectations are created, taught and posted so all students and staff know what observable behavior needs to be demonstrated in specific common areas (e.g. What does it mean to be Safe in the hallway?, cafeteria?, restroom?, etc.)
- ☐ Common area lesson plans are created and used as teaching tools to establish common behaviors, vocabulary and consistency.
- ☐ Staff continues to teach/reteach/remind students of common area and classroom expectations. Staff is suggested to review common area lesson plans quarterly or as needed.
- ☐ Staff continue to model expected behavior.



Acknowledgement Systems

Research consistently indicates that using positive reinforcement strategies is highly effective in encouraging expected student behaviors, leading to increased engagement, improved academic performance, and a more positive school/classroom environment; essentially, when students are positively reinforced for desired behaviors, they are more likely to repeat those actions in the future

Main Points to Consider

- ☐ Staff delivers non contingent and behavior specific praise and attention referencing the school-wide expectations striving for a 3:1 ratio of positive interactions to corrective procedures.
- ☐ Staff delivers positive greetings when welcoming students back into their classrooms and common areas
- ☐ Educators continue to foster student connections through student voice where all students are seen, heard and celebrated
- ☐ School wide incentives are kept novel and high interest for both students and staff



Responses to Undesirable Behaviors

Establish preventative measures as well as consistently enforce a continuum of corrective procedures for problem behavior.

Main Points to Consider

- ☐ Train staff in supervision skills so they can move around the environment unpredictably, scan for early warning signs of trouble, and provide frequent positive contacts to individuals and groups.
- ☐ Create a “menu” of corrective procedures for “mild behaviors” demonstrated in classrooms and common areas.
- ☐ Creating a “menu” of corrective procedures gives staff flexibility and autonomy when interacting with students that doesn’t require administrative input.
- ☐ Staff and administration decide and agree on common corrective procedures for more moderate to severe misbehavior.
- ☐ Staff strive to correct students calmly, consistently and respectfully.



Data-Based Decision Making

Data-based decision-making provides objective insights into student and staff behavior, allowing for the identification of strengths and areas needing improvement to create more effective and equitable academic and behavioral support systems. It enables schools to tailor interventions, monitor their effectiveness, adapt strategies, and ultimately improve social and academic outcomes for all students by moving beyond assumptions and using facts to guide actions.

Main Points to Consider

- ☐ Collect and analyze discipline, attendance, and other student outcome data.
- ☐ Use data to identify patterns, guide interventions, and monitor progress.
- ☐ Use multiple data sources to identify improvement priorities such as common area observations; staff, student and parent surveys; incident referral data; attendance and tardy data; referrals to special education; summaries of universal screenings, etc.



Tiered Levels of Support

Tiered levels of support is a framework, most commonly seen as Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS), that provides varying degrees of assistance based on an individual's needs. This framework consists of three main tiers: Tier 1 provides universal, high-quality support for all individuals; Tier 2 offers targeted, small-group interventions for those who need more focused help; and Tier 3 delivers intensive, individualized support for individuals with significant and persistent need

Main Points to Consider

- ☐ Tier 1 (Universal): School-wide expectations, proactive teaching, reinforcement for ALL students.
- ☐ Tier 2 (Targeted): Small group interventions for students at risk (e.g., Check-In/Check-Out, social skills groups).
- ☐ Tier 3 (Intensive): Individualized supports for students with significant behavioral needs (e.g., functional behavior assessment, behavior intervention plans).



Cultural & Contextual Responsiveness

Cultural and contextual responsiveness is an approach that recognizes, respects, and incorporates an individual's cultural background, diverse experiences, and social context into practices, such as teaching, counseling, and programming. It involves self-reflection and a willingness to learn about different cultures, going beyond just one's own perspective to build partnerships and create inclusive environments where everyone feels valued and understood.

Main Points to Consider

- ☐ Ensure expectations, teaching methods, and acknowledgements are inclusive and culturally responsive.
- ☐ Avoid bias in discipline practices.
- ☐ Continually analyze student and building data in relation to subgroups

Ready to Strengthen Your Implementation?

Having a checklist is just the first step. Behavior in Schools can help you:

- Assess your current implementation
- Identify key areas for improvement
- Develop actionable strategies
- Provide ongoing support and coaching

By continually investing in behavior professional development, your school demonstrates its commitment to meeting the evolving needs of students and staff, ensuring that even schools already doing great things can achieve greater outcomes for their communities.

We want to really get to know you, your school and all your educators and how we can make it better each school year.

Contact us for a free consultation: info@BehaviorInSchools.com



About the Author

Hi, I'm Tom Stacho, Ed.S. I am an educational consultant and trainer with www.BehaviorInSchools.com and I specialize in supporting schools and districts with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

For over 30 years, I've been in the education field working as a teacher with students who have behavior disorders, as a school psychologist in a large urban district and as an administrator coordinating school improvement, specifically with the PBIS framework.

