



Positive Behavior Supports

PBS Levels

Many students attending public schools exhibit discipline problems, such as disruptive classroom behavior, vandalism, bullying, and violence. Establishing effective discipline practices is critical to ensure academic success and to provide a safe learning environment. School-wide PBS is a broad range of systems-change and individual-change strategies that are developed and implemented with individual students, groups of students, and the entire student body to achieve valued social/behavioral and academic/learning outcomes, while preventing or reducing the likelihood that disruptive problem behaviors will occur. School-wide PBS is really most simply described as a unified approach to supporting the needs of all students who have behavioral challenges.

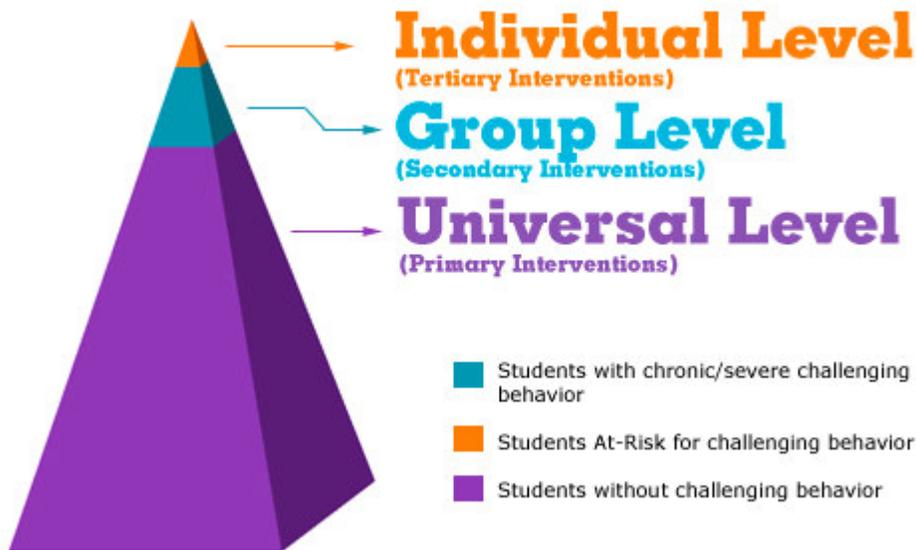
Unfortunately, schools typically *respond reactively* to problem behaviors, rather than addressing them *proactively*. Numerous research studies suggest that exclusionary disciplinary practices are just *not* effective in changing student behavior. The use of suspensions as the primary disciplinary strategy is escalating in response to increases in behavior problems, yet there is really very little research to support this practice as an effective method of disciplining students. We also know that suspension and expulsion do not lead to positive educational outcomes for students, nor do they result in a safer school climate.

Schools that have actively been involved in the implementation of school-wide PBS have found significant decreases in office disciplinary referrals (ODRs), with as much as 50-60% reductions over the course of a couple of years. Improvements have also been reported in the research in areas of:

- Teacher behavior
- Student behavior
- School suspensions
- Hallway decibel levels
- Academic engagement
- Bus suspensions
- Vandalism
- Substance abuse
- In-school suspensions
- Short-term suspensions

Many studies have also documented that students with problem behavior are more likely to have academic deficits. Because disruptive classroom behavior typically compromises learning, resulting in lost instructional time, PBS interventions that (1) prevent, recover, and/or maximize instructional time by keeping students engaged with materials and instruction that keep them in class, and also (2) reduce the need for students to engage in disciplinary problems that result in removal or suspension from class, will be much more likely to produce improvements in academic achievement.

School-wide PBS is conceptualized as three interrelated systems of behavioral supports that are typically developed and implemented over a 2-3 year period. The purpose of the three-tiered PBS implementation model is to effectively address the behavior support needs of all students in a school with the appropriate degree of intervention intensity.



1. *Universal system of support:* Behavioral support is provided for ALL students at the whole school level.
2. *Group systems of support:* Additional behavioral support is provided across specific school settings (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground) for SOME selected groups of students who are at-risk for challenging behavior, as well as at the classroom level to address the social-behavioral needs of SOME students in classroom settings.
3. *Individual student systems:* Additional, more intensive, individualized supports is provided for a FEW individual students with serious or chronic/severe problem behaviors for whom universal and group/classroom supports have not been fully effective in teaching expected social-interpersonal behaviors in all school settings.

Sometimes these three systems of support are also referred to as: (1) *Primary interventions* (universal support); (2) *Secondary interventions* (group/classroom supports); and (3) *Tertiary interventions* (individual supports).