

Lessons from the Field:

Monitoring and Revising Three-Tiered Models of Support



This guide was produced by Project Support & Include at Vanderbilt University—one of seven projects across the state funded by the Tennessee Department of Education to provide training and technical assistance to schools as they address the academic, social, and behavioral needs of students. This brief was authored by Benjamin Cabeza, Lauren Magill, Abbie Jenkins, Brooke C. Shuster, & Erik W. Carter. 05/2014

Many schools across Tennessee are implementing three-tiered models of support, such as School-wide Positive Behavior Supports and Interventions (SWPBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI). The goal of these programs is to help students develop academic, behavioral, and social competencies, as well as to meet the needs of students who need additional support. Once a model of support is developed and implemented throughout a school, it should be monitored to ensure it is being implemented as planned, being supported by staff, and having a positive impact. By collecting and

► Comprehensive, integrated, three-tiered models of prevention (CI3T) are a proactive approach to concurrently meeting the academic, behavioral, and social needs and strengths of individual students. For more information about CI3T models of prevention, see *The CI3T Model of Prevention: Supporting Academic, Behavioral, and Social Development of Students* at vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/ci3t/resources/

reviewing data in these three areas, school teams can make meaningful, strategic changes to maximize the program's impact on the school.

Schools implementing three-tiered models are using several formal and informal methods of monitoring. We provide an overview of these tools and practices in this guide with a specific focus on how they can be used to monitor implementation of a SWPBIS program.

IS YOUR PROGRAM BEING IMPLEMENTED AS INTENDED?

One of the most important reasons to monitor your school-wide program is to ensure high **implementation fidelity**. Implementation fidelity is the degree to which the program is being implemented as it was originally designed. School-wide programs often fail when they are implemented partially, incorrectly, or inconsistently throughout a school.¹ Implementation fidelity data can help teams draw conclusions about why student outcomes are or are not improved by identifying how well each aspect of a program is being implemented.² For example, at one Tennessee high school implementing SWPBIS, the leadership team

noticed students were unaware of the school-wide behavior expectations and were not motivated by the ticket system. After looking more closely at how the program was being implemented, they noticed teachers had not explicitly



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taught behavior expectations to students and they were distributing a very small number of tickets each week. By reflecting on implementation of these two components, they were able to determine why student outcomes were not improving and they fixed the problem by aligning implementation more closely with the original plan.

Implementation fidelity can be measured in various ways with varying degrees of objectivity. Monitoring implementation fidelity from multiple perspectives is recommended.³ For example, you might determine the rate of ticket distribution by asking students how many tickets they received in a given week, as well as counting tickets turned in for a school-wide raffle. The following figure displays four tools that can be used to capture

stakeholder views on how your program is being implemented. The most reliable and objective feedback could come from the first three instruments, as self-report methods can be less reliable.⁴

Once your school has collected data on program implementation, these data can be used to make adjustments to the program. For example, a school might seek out easier ways for teachers to distribute tickets to students, make the process of completing behavior screeners more user-friendly, or come up with new ways to teach the program to students, teachers, and staff. You can also use these data to provide school staff with feedback on how to improve their participation with certain program components.⁵

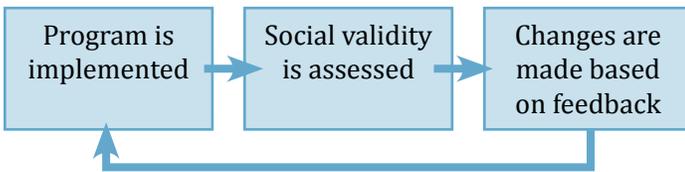
IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY TOOLS

TOOL	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND FREQUENCY	MATERIALS/STEPS TO CONDUCT	SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSED
SCHOOL-WIDE EVALUATION TOOL (SET)⁶	Completed by outside support (such as a SWPBIS coach or a technical assistance team from a local university); conducted at least once a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28-item scoring guide • Documents such as school improvement plan and office discipline referral forms • Implementation materials such as posters and crisis plans present and available • Recording sheets for principal, teacher, and student interviews 	SET Subscales⁷ <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School-wide behavioral expectations are defined 2. School-wide behavioral expectations are taught to all students in the school 3. An on-going system for rewarding students for meeting behavioral expectations is in place 4. A system for responding to behavioral violations is used consistently 5. The program is monitored and data is used in decision-making 6. Management support of the program 7. There is support from the district level on policies, staff training, and data collection
BENCHMARKS OF QUALITY (BOQ)⁸	Completed by the SWPBIS coach and leadership team; conducted once each spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53-item coach scoring guide (completed first) • 53-item team member scoring guide with ratings of “In Place,” “Needs Improvement,” and “Not in Place” • Coach compares answers and looks for areas of strength and areas for improvement 	Ten Critical Elements <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SWPBIS team 2. Faculty commitment 3. Effective procedures for dealing with discipline 4. Data entry and analysis plan established 5. Expectations and rules developed 6. Reward/recognition program established 7. Lesson plans for teaching expectations/rules 8. Implementation plan 9. Classroom systems 10. Evaluation
TEAM IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST (TIC 3.1) AND ACTION PLAN⁹	Completed by the SWPBIS team; conducted once a quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 program elements rated based on status of implementation as “Achieved,” “In Progress,” or “Not Yet Started” • Action Plan helps identify activities that will more fully implement the components rated “In Progress” or “Not Yet Started” 	TIC 3.1 Implementation Categories <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish commitment 2. Establish and maintain team 3. Self-assessment 4. Establish school-wide expectations/prevention systems 5. Classroom behavior support systems 6. Build capacity for function-based support
SELF-REPORTED BEHAVIOR CHECKLISTS	Completed by all participating school staff; conducted at least once a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of participation and ratings based on frequency or agreement 	Varies, but typically includes implementation activities such as distributing rewards/tickets, teaching behavior expectations, completing behavior screenings, etc.

These tools can be found at the following web site: www.pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_tools.aspx

DO STAFF CONSIDER THE PROGRAM TO BE FEASIBLE AND ACCEPTABLE?

The level of buy-in and perception of the program should also be assessed regularly. **Social validity** refers to stakeholder views of the goals, procedures, and outcomes of a particular program or intervention. Social validity can impact implementation fidelity. For example, if staff asked to implement the program disagree with the goals, find the procedures to be too difficult or unreasonable, or do not think the program outcomes will be achieved, implementation will likely be inconsistent or altogether absent. Over time, social validity data can provide a valuable feedback loop to the team:



As with implementation fidelity, multiple approaches exist for assessing social validity. These can include various surveys, interviews, and direct observations of how the program is implemented. Surveys and interviews provide direct feedback, whereas actual

implementation participation indirectly informs judgments of program acceptability.¹⁰

Although many methods of collecting social validity data are informal, formal tools are also available. The Primary Intervention Rating Scale (PIRS) can be used to assess school staff opinions about the (1) significance of the SWPBIS program’s primary intervention goals, (2) acceptability of the primary program’s procedures, and (3) importance of the intended outcomes.¹¹ All school staff are asked to rate a series of statements and to offer written feedback in response to four open-ended questions. See the figure below for more information about the PIRS.

Several schools implementing SWPBIS have come up with creative ways to collect feedback from various stakeholders. One of the simplest ways of gathering feedback is to have an open discussion in a staff meeting, as long as this can be done in a respectful, professional manner. If open discussion would not be productive or feasible, some schools use “parking lots” or comment boxes at staff meetings and have found that more positive feedback can sometimes result from these methods as opposed to the more formal—and anonymous—PIRS survey. Another simple option is to

PRIMARY INTERVENTION RATING SCALE (PIRS)

TOOL	RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND FREQUENCY	MATERIALS/STEPS TO CONDUCT	SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF PROGRAM PERCEPTION ASSESSED
PRIMARY INTERVENTION RATING SCALE (PIRS)	Completed by all participating school staff; conducted pre- and post-implementation (e.g., while the program is being developed and at the end of each year of implementation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 statements rated on a 6-point scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” • Four open-ended questions 	<p>Open-Ended Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you feel is most beneficial about this primary intervention? What is least beneficial? • Do you think that your and your students’ participation in this intervention will cause your students’ behavior problems to improve/decrease? • What would you change about this intervention (components, design, implementation, etc.) to make it more student-friendly and teacher-friendly? • What other information would you like to contribute about this intervention?

encourage staff members to share their opinions directly with SWPBIS team members. The team can be a tool for gathering staff feedback if the group is representative of the school staff, where each team member serves as a mouthpiece for their grade level or department. One school recruited more resistant staff members to serve on the SWPBIS team and used their critical feedback to make the program work for the largest number of stakeholders. Finally, school-created surveys and online feedback forms can be used to get a quick snapshot of opinions on specific components of the program (e.g., rewards and ticket logistics). The following figure displays an example of a quick survey that can be given to all staff members.

INFORMAL TEACHER FEEDBACK SURVEY

- What are some ways you distribute SWPBIS tickets to students?
- How do you keep your tickets secure?
- Do you suspect any ticket fraud?
- Are the rewards working?
- Are the ticket “prices” for the rewards appropriate?
- Is there anything that needs tweaking?

Gathering feedback from students is also important. Some schools have sought feedback from their student leadership groups, such as the student council. One school asked the Parent Teacher Organization for in-

sights based on what students were saying about the SWPBIS program at home. Other methods of gathering student feedback include asking about reward preferences through online surveys and getting opinions about needed program improvements through guidance classes. Gathering opinions from students can foster student buy-in and create motivation to continue practicing desirable behaviors and earning tickets and rewards.

Similar to implementation fidelity data, social validity feedback can be used to make the program more socially acceptable and to increase buy-in from all stakeholders. By considering the levels of support for certain program elements alongside the degree to which elements are well implemented (i.e., using implementation fidelity and social validity data together), the team can gain a clear picture of what is going well with implementation and what can and should be changed for improved outcomes.

ARE STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL, AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES AFFECTED BY THE PROGRAM?

A third source of data to monitor is the student-level information most schools already collect. Data on students’ academic performance, behavior incidences, and social skills can provide key indicators of program outcomes. If the ultimate goal of any school-wide intervention program is to have a positive effect on student performance, these student-level measures are essential for determining the program’s success. The following figure offers examples of direct and indirect impacts on student performance that a SWPBIS program might influence if implemented successfully.

POSSIBLE IMPACT TO STUDENT OUTCOMES FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF A SWPBIS PROGRAM

	SHORT-TERM	LONG-TERM
DIRECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in undesirable behaviors • Improvement in classroom management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in office discipline referral and counseling referrals • Reduced behavior risk
INDIRECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in instructional time • Decrease in classroom distractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved academic outcomes • Improved school culture • Reduction in student absences due to behavior

POSSIBLE STUDENT OUTCOME MEASURES

ACADEMIC MEASURES	BEHAVIORAL MEASURES	SOCIAL MEASURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Screenings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Progress Monitoring/Benchmarking -Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBAs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ DIBELS (Good & Kaminski, 2002) ▶ AIMSWeb (Harcourt, 2008) ▶ EasyCBM (Alonzo & Tindal, 2009) • GPA • Course Failures • ACT/SAT Scores • TCAP (norm-referenced assessment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Screeners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) -Student Risk Screening Scale (Drummond, 1994) -Systematic Screening for Behavioral Disorders (Walker & Severson, 1992) • Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) • Suspensions/Expulsions • Attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Screeners • Social Skills Improvement System (Elliot & Gresham, 2008) • Attendance • Counseling Referrals

Depending on the goals of your SWPBIS program, your team must determine which types of student data are most valuable to track. For example, if one goal is to reduce the number of office discipline referrals (ODRs) and days absent due to suspensions and expulsions, data on ODRs, attendance, suspensions, and expulsions should be collected and reviewed regularly throughout each year. The figure above displays examples of data that might be collected as part of a SWPBIS implementation.

Once the goals of your SWPBIS program are established and data needs are determined, a few logistical considerations might be helpful. For example, determining what data are already being collected could eliminate repetitive collection efforts. When necessary data are not available, consider how these data might be collected, who will collect and compile it, and how it will be analyzed and used to inform your work.

Another consideration is whether the team or individual collecting and analyzing student data has adequate time for this task. Data collection and analysis can be time-consuming, especially in the first year or two of program implementation, and schools often report this work falls on administrators, SWPBIS team leaders, or team members who already have a demanding schedule and list of role-specific duties. Another point worth considering on the front end of data collection is how the findings will be communicated back to staff. If a specific data summary is planned, the data collection and analysis process will be more directed

and efficient. Finally, the logistics of data collection can be easily organized and communicated by using a data or assessment schedule that summarizes all the necessary time points for formative assessments, behavior screenings, academic data summaries, and so on. Staff members are less likely to be overwhelmed by the data collection process if the logistics are planned in advance.¹²

MAKING CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM

The ultimate goal of all the monitoring efforts presented in this guide is to help school teams make strategic changes to their SWPBIS program from year-to-year.

“[SWPBIS] is a living and breathing program.”
~Middle School Administrator

Most schools choose to work on these changes over the summer. Some schools report collaborating with other schools implementing SWPBIS as a way to get fresh ideas or to learn from others’ experience. One elementary school found it took the first three years to adequately implement all the components of their program, and they decided to not make any major changes until the end of this time period. According to the administrator, “If you make changes to the program every year, you might not be able to identify what is working and what is not working.”

Some of the most common changes we see schools make during these revisions are:

- Creating new behavior expectation lesson plans from year-to-year to keep the program fresh
- Providing clarity and simplicity to the reactive (i.e., discipline) component of the behavioral program
- Updating the list of desired school-wide student behaviors (such as an expectation matrix)
- Adjusting the program to make it more appropriate and adaptable to all grade levels (e.g., ways to differentiate for a range of ages within the same school)
- Developing creative solutions for ticket logistic concerns, such as methods to help younger students keep track of tickets and ways teachers can more easily access and distribute tickets

SUMMARY

These various monitoring activities can help schools that are implementing SWPBIS to continually assess if the program is appropriate and effective for all stakeholders. Implementation fidelity, social validity, and a review of student data can provide a clear picture of the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and level of success in reaching the overall goal of the program: to help students learn appropriate behavior and achieve academically.

FOR FURTHER READING

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ENDNOTES

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- ⁴*Ibid.*
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- ⁸Kincaid, D., Childs, K., & George, H. (2005). *School-wide benchmarks of quality*. Unpublished instrument, University of South Florida.
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- Lane, K. L., Kalberg, J. R., & Menzies, H. M. (2009).
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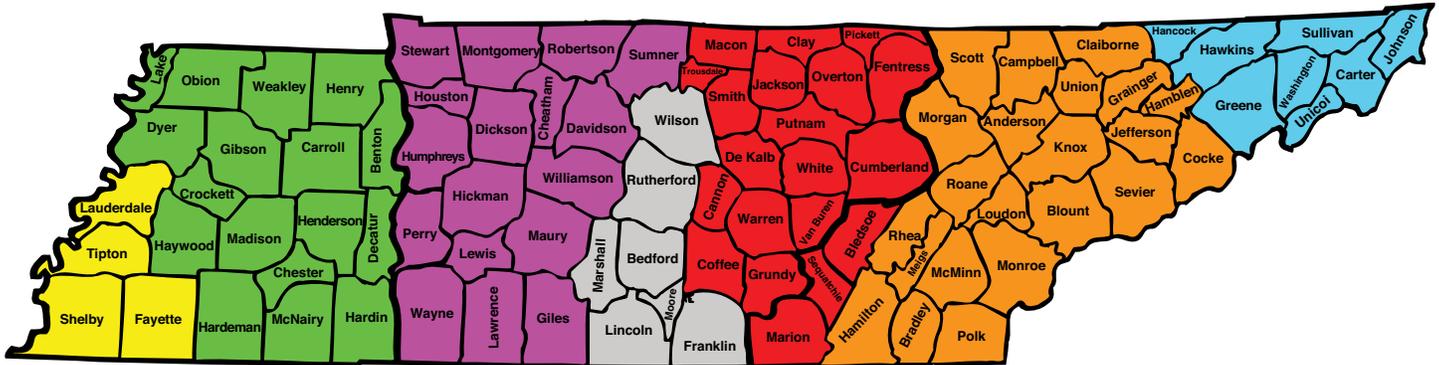


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CI3T TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS BY REGION: 2012-2015

The Tennessee Department of Education has provided funding to seven projects to provide training and technical assistance to schools as they address the academic, social, and behavioral needs of students within comprehensive, integrated, three-tiered (CI3T) models of prevention. To locate the project assigned to your region, see below.



UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS (RISE):

Dr. William Hunter
Email: wchunter@memphis.edu
Phone: 901.678.4932

UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS, LAMBUTH CAMPUS:

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