Implementing Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in High Schools

Contextual Factors and Stages of Implementation

Jessica Swain-Bradway, Christopher Pinkney, and K. Brigid Flannery

Schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) are an increasingly popular framework for school improvement practices, but many high schools are still lagging behind their elementary counterparts. High school leadership teams can struggle with merging the SWPBIS framework with current operations, and there are limited examples of how schools have overcome the challenges. Implementation does not happen all at once but in stages marked by specific activities. Through a series of case examples, this article details the stages, challenges, and corresponding strategies that eight high schools used to improve implementation of the SWPBIS framework.

Schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) are a systems-level framework used in schools and districts around the country to improve school climate, reduce exclusionary discipline, and improve overall student success (Sugai & Horner, 2009). The SWPBIS framework utilizes a team problem-solving approach in the selection and implementation of a range of evidence-based interventions that meet the needs of the student population. In light of the recent federal announcements supporting discipline practices that keep children in schools (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011), the need for a systematic approach to improving school climate has increased dramatically.

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To improve school climate, SWPBIS align and prioritize systems targeted at three levels of evidence-based behavioral support delivered by school personnel: primary (universal), secondary (selected/targeted), and tertiary (individual). Primary supports are designed to meet the needs of most students (80%–90%) and are provided to all students. Secondary interventions are targeted at those students who are not responsive to primary interventions and who need more specialized interventions (10%–13%); they are most often delivered in small groups. Tertiary interventions are implemented for the approximately 1% to 5% of the school population who have persistent behavioral problems—that is, the school's current primary- and secondary-level interventions are insufficient to support school achievement for these students, who need individually designed, person-centered interventions. Whereas primary, secondary, and tertiary supports are available to all students within a school, the SWPBIS framework also supports staff to implementing evidence-based practices for students with disabilities. IDEA 2004 specifically includes SWPBIS

strategies as viable and preferred supports for students with disabilities (Smith, 2005). The Illinois PBIS Network (2013) has shown that (a) schools implementing primary SWPBIS supports with integrity are able to implement secondary and tertiary interventions to support their students with the highest level of behavioral needs and (b) schools implementing SWPBIS can achieve equitable rates of office referrals and suspensions between students with and without individualized education programs (IEPs), which is unusual given the fact that students with IEPs are typically overrepresented in school discipline (Losen & Gillespie, 2012).

The SWPBIS framework is based on the premise that for students with and without IEPs, academic achievement is often dependent on students engaging in "appropriate" social behaviors: getting along with peers, following directions, asking for help, and so on. To this end, the SWPBIS framework helps school personnel align systems within a school to encourage school-appropriate behaviors by all students. Full implementation of universal SWPBIS is marked by seven key components:

1. schoolwide expectations and rules for appropriate behavior,
2. direct and active teaching of the expectations and rules,
3. acknowledgment of students who engage in appropriate school conduct,
4. consequences for violation of rules,
5. use of data to guide decision making,
6. administrative support at the school level, and
7. support at the district level (Horner et al., 2004).

Implementing SWPBIS takes collaborative action by school and district personnel; it does not happen overnight. Full implementation can take 2 to 4 years as schools move through stages of implementation (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Table 1 provides overview of the stages of implementation.

At each stage, there may be obstacles that have the potential to derail implementation. School administrators and SWPBIS teams should be patient as they move through the stages of implementation. There is a substantial amount of evidence that SWPBIS positively affect school and student-level outcomes. Various studies document reductions in office referrals, increases in academic outcomes, improvements in organizational health at the elementary and middle school levels, and reduction in risk of referrals and suspensions for students with IEPs (Barrett, Bradshaw & Lewis-Palmer, 2008; Bradshaw, Reinke,

Brown, Bevans, & Leaf, 2008; Horner et al., 2009; Illinois PBIS Network, 2013). Currently more than 21,000 elementary, middle, and high schools are implementing SWPBIS (R. Horner, personal communication, March 2014). Documentation of SWPBIS in high schools, however, is limited, with most studies being case studies of a singular high school (Flannery, Frank, Doren, Kato, & Fenning, 2013). None has described strategies that high school teams have used to move through stages of implementation within the high school setting (Flannery, Frank, et al., 2013).

High schools could benefit tremendously from guidance on implementing the SWPBIS framework to improve school climate and student outcomes. The typical organizational systems within a high school in the United States are characteristically complex and can severely limit the ability of teaching staff to collaboratively support achievement (Bohanon, Fenning, Borgmeier, Flannery, & Malloy, 2009). Administrators and faculty members often have discrete areas of responsibility (e.g., English, algebra, freshman class, discipline, curriculum). Large amounts of academic and social behavior data are generated on a daily basis, often without efficient systems or strategies for integration of this information (Bohanon et al., 2009). With teachers focused on their specific content areas and a lack of support for cross-content collaboration, they may not have information that a student or a group of students is failing multiple classes. Academic success is treated as an isolated variable, disconnected from the development of the whole student and school environment (Bohanon et al., 2009).

Scholars investigating school dropout support the importance of schools providing concurrent supports for academic and social achievements to support graduation (Allensworth & Easton, 2005). This finding is a clear alignment with the SWPBIS framework and highlights the inextricable nature of academic success and social behaviors (McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008). SWPBIS provide the

Table 1. Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: Stages of Implementation and Defining Activities

Stage	Defining activities
Exploration and adoption	District/administrative team evaluates the relevance of SWPBIS to school needs, evidence-based practices, and available resources.
	A majority of staff agree that the SWPBIS is needed to target areas of improvement (e.g., overall climate, discipline, engagement, graduation).
	SWPBIS team is formed.
	Team begins mobilizing teacher participation.
	Team organizes and oversees formal training.
Program installation	Administrators and SWPBIS team review and modify current disciplinary policies.
	Team identifies and organizes data available for identifying pervasive student problem behaviors.
	Team identifies and trains staff on evidence-based practices that would remediate the problem behaviors of concern.
	Team refines communication and training systems to support teachers to implement evidence-based practices.
Initial implementation	Teachers and administrators are using evidence-based practices on a daily basis—may not be fluent or consistent.
	Team uses data for decision making and action planning—may be inconsistent.
Full operation	A majority of school personnel have fully integrated evidence-based practices into daily routines.
	SWPBIS practices are reflected in school policies.
	Team consistently uses data for implementation decisions, accountability, and professional development decisions.
	District is providing secure, accessible funding for implementation.
Innovation and sustainability	Team and district administrators are engaged in process of revisiting data and policies to refine/expand current practices to better meet the changing needs of the students and staff.

Note. SWPBIS = schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports.

framework for building and aligning school systems with the potential to reduce organizational disjunction, support social behaviors as a means to academic achievement, and create consistent aligned practices to support students with and without IEPs.

High Schools and SWPBIS

The lack of documentation of high schools implementing SWPBIS is not dampening the growth and interest in the framework. Nationally, the number of high schools implementing SWPBIS continues to increase year by year. As an example, in Illinois, a state with 45% of all schools implementing SWPBIS, the number of high schools implementing SWPBIS grew from eight in 2006 to 200 in 2013 (Illinois PBIS Network, 2013). Increasing federal and state pressure to decrease dropout rates and increase academic outcomes and college and career readiness has many high schools looking for a model of school reform, such as SWPBIS, that can efficiently and effectively support students' social and academic achievement. To support the implementation of SWPBIS in high schools, we need to consider the challenges that high schools face as they move through the stages of implementation, specifically as they begin exploration and adoption implementation activities that require mobilizing most of the school personnel. We also need documented examples of strategies that high schools have used when faced with obstacles to implementation. The subsequent section presents obstacles and strategies faced by eight high schools implementing the SWPBIS framework.

Implementation of SWPBIS in Eight High Schools

As part of a larger project, eight high schools implemented SWPBIS with

Table 2. Demographics of High Schools Participating in SWPBIS Implementation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Students, *n*	1,982	1,149	775	1,907	3,041	2,559	1,976	2,583
Teachers, *n*	82.2	53.4	46.3	89.1	212	137	140	139
Minority, %	14.4	29.2	24.9	27.2	52.6	37.4	53.6	30.7
FRL, %	27.2	23.1	25.8	30.0	33.9	26.2	N/A	14.2
Dropout rate, %	4.4	2.7	2.4	2.5	1.6	0.70	3.2	1.1

Note. FRL = free and reduced-price lunch; N/A = not available.

on-site technical assistance over a 2-year period. The schools were selected in winter of 2009 and received technical assistance in SWPBIS implementation during the 2009–2011 school years (Flannery, Fenning, Kato, & McIntosh, 2013). Table 2 provides demographic information on the participating schools. Documenting the challenges and strategies employed by these eight high schools can provide a roadmap for school personnel interested in adopting SWPBIS at the high school level.

The challenges experienced by the high schools fell into two broad themes: *mobilizing staff perception and behavior* and *managing resources*. Both these areas of challenges are earmarks of the first two stages of implementation: exploration and adoption and program installation. These first two stages of implementation may be the most challenging because schools are undertaking the beginning of major realignment of systems and practices. Successful strategies, however, allowed teams to make progress by addressing minor daily practices as well as major organizational systems within the schools (e.g., data collection, student involvement, professional development).

Challenges in Mobilizing Staff Perception and Behavior

One of the most difficult aspects of implementing SWPBIS in high schools may be changing the way in which established staff members align and integrate their jobs and roles. Moving from isolated content areas to integrated implementation of an initiative can be challenging. Without the presence of systems to promote widespread adoption and maintenance of new practices, staff members' behavior will likely remain unchanged or quickly revert back what is familiar (i.e., established practices). For all challenges identified under the heading *mobilizing staff perception and behavior*, the successful schools were able to strategize ways to support daily staff activities.

Challenge 1: How Do We Agree to SWPBIS Implementation When We Don't Feel As Though Our School Has Any Problems?. The discrete systems operating in most high schools may prevent staff members from forming an accurate view of the entire school's climate. Their observations of student behavior may be specific to their group affiliation or campus location. To facilitate SWPBIS implementation, it may be necessary to use data to first affirm staff members' efforts and commitment prior to introducing them to data that may challenge their preconceptions of school climate. Table 3 lists some successful and unsuccessful strategies used by participating SWPBIS teams and the resulting outcomes.

Lessons Learned: Ongoing data sharing is a way to invite teachers into a conversation that validates their hard work and effort. After reviewing different schoolwide data, one of the SWPBIS facilitators found that the graduation rates for minorities within his school were very high. To introduce schoolwide data with the SWPBIS Leadership Team, he first focused on the graduation rates for students who identified as minorities. He continued to share brief examples of positive student outcome data at staff meetings and at SWPBIS Leadership Team meetings to train school personnel how to use data for decision making. By the time that he introduced office referral data, which were not as positive, the team already had spent several weeks sharing positive data, and it was very receptive to taking a critical look at areas of need. Sharing data is a way to (a) shift organizational practices to "catch" personnel engaged in the behaviors that promote student success and (b) build willingness to commit to participation in the realignment of school organization.

Further, the inaccuracy of problem behavior data resulted in one school team creating "Quick Slips"—an alternative data collection system. The team created a quarter page form (Quick Slip) listing the most common behavioral violations (e.g., tardy, language, dress code violations, defiance). Each week for 4 weeks, teachers were asked to tally the behaviors and the locations where they witnessed these behaviors and whether or not they had intervened on the behavior or had written a disciplinary referral. At the end of each week, the team summarized

Table 3. Strategies to Address Data Accuracy

Unsuccessful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Outside consultant presented data that showed all school areas of weakness and failures to the entire staff without preparation from administrators or SWPBIS team.	No progress in implementation: • Teachers angered by presentation and viewed it as an attack • Teachers stated that the data were not a true reflection of what was happening in school • Teachers unwilling to continue SWPBIS implementation
Successful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Schools shared one type of data at a time, starting with positive outcome data. Schools solicited technical assistance around the utility of data sharing and how data use increases accountability. Schools created alternative systems for gathering school climate data, including "quick steps" for teachers, bullying surveys for students, and student voting in advisory to get a general idea of behaviors.	Increased fidelity of implementation: • Honored concerns around data and process by presenting small amounts of targeted data at a time • Used data to "celebrate" positive outcomes as well as target areas of need • Provided appropriate level of supports for teams acquiring data use skills

Note. SWPBIS = schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports.

those data and shared with the whole staff. The top behavior reported was lateness, followed by mild disruption (talking out). The information easily gathered via the Quick Slips provided a weekly overview of behavioral concerns. This helped the team identify the specific behaviors and locations to include in their action planning. Just as important, the team was able to mobilize staff participation by sharing data and using those data to engage staff in decision making.

Challenge 2: A Few Faculty Members Valued the Idea of Teaching Social Expectations—What About the Rest of the Faculty?. Most systems, data, and practices within a high school are focused on a single area—academic success. For some teachers, the link between achieving academic outcomes for students and fostering their socioemotional skills was not part of their initial teacher training. However, a review of school discipline data and instructional time lost to disciplinary measures often illustrates the need for supporting students' social behaviors. Numerous studies have documented valuable instructional time that is lost to discipline (Rausch, Skiba,

& Simmons 2004). In fact, CalTAC PBIS (pbiscaltac.org) created a matrix for calculating time lost per referrals. Making this link more obvious and transparent may provide teachers the connection that they need to actively participate in SWPBIS implementation. Table 4 provides a list of the challenges and outcomes associated with a lack of teacher "buy-in" for providing socioemotional support for students.

Lessons Learned: Through conversation with teachers, a SWPBIS facilitator at a high-achieving school recognized that his staff would have difficulty supporting social behaviors. School personnel viewed their roles as exclusively for facilitating academic growth. He knew that the link between academic achievement and social behaviors would have to be made clear before any policies or trainings in SWPBIS could be implemented. He planned professional development to initially focus on the integral relationship between academic success and positive social behaviors. In addition to focusing on the connection between social and academic success, the facilitator did not use SWPBIS language but called the realignment of

policies, practices, and systems the "Excellence Campaign." These strategies allowed the teachers to understand the concepts behind SWPBIS as a means to academic and social success and its fit within the culture of their school community.

Challenge 3: How Does the Team Collaborate With an Administrator Who Is Not Supportive and/or Not Actively Engaged in SWPBIS Implementation?. Active administrative involvement in the implementation process has been cited as critical in implementation of SWPBIS (Office of Special Education Programs, 2014). In high schools, the administration often includes multiple administrators. The high school principal can support administrative cohesion in SWPBIS implementation by selecting a primary administrative liaison to the schoolwide leadership team. All administrators need to be informed and understand the linkage between implementation activities and their roles and responsibilities. The successful and unsuccessful strategies employed to address lack of administrator support are provided in Table 5.

Table 4. Strategies to Address "Buy-In" for Teaching Social Expectations

Unsuccessful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Implemented SWPBIS within one department only and hoped that it would "trickle" into other departments and classrooms	No movement in implementation: • The expectations and acknowledgments were used in only the few classrooms. • When students left the select classroom, they were still more likely to have behavior difficulties. • Student behaviors were not powerful enough to have a "trickle" effect on schoolwide implementation.
Successful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Piloted SWPBIS within one department; used lessons learned from the pilot to build and implement a schoolwide action plan. Modified professional development and training system to emphasize the connection between academic success and social "enabler" behaviors to tie SWPBIS to the primary academic goals of the school.	Increased fidelity of implementation: • Pilot provided valuable information and allowed the SWPBIS team to start with "smaller" implementation plan and build fluency. • Linking social behavior to academic successes resonated with teachers who are reinforced by student academic gains. • Honored the idea that school is about and focused on academics.

Note. SWPBIS = schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports.

Table 5. Strategies to Promote Administrative Support

Unsuccessful	
Strategies	Outcomes
SWPBIS team did not try to incorporate the principal into any SWPBIS activities; waited for her to get involved on her own accord.	No movement in implementation: • The team was unable to secure permissions and resources for posting signs around the school, realigning staff trainings, and securing funds for acknowledgments. • The administrator did not get involved, and staff at large perceived this as lack of support for SWPBIS initiative.
Successful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Modified data collection system to gather periodic feedback from the teaching staff and shared those data with the principal to show the level of interest and support for SWPBIS in the school. Created a short list of "easy" ways for the principal to be involved. Implemented a practice of explicitly inviting the principal or other administrative personnel to meetings and sharing the accomplishments of the SWPBIS team.	Increased fidelity of implementation: • Administrative personnel saw interest of staff as support for SWPBIS initiative. • Administrator was able to complete quick and brief tasks as part of the implementation plan. • Staff members saw the administrator engaging in the implementation tasks and interpreted this as support for SWPBIS initiative. • Through attending SWPBIS meetings, administrator had a better understanding of the SWPBIS framework and was able to let go of preconceived biases about SWPBIS. • Because all administrators were invited to participate, they were able to take turns attending meetings and were able to apply SWPBIS principles in day-to-day operations.

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Table 6. Strategies to Address the Challenge of Acknowledgment Distribution

Unsuccessful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Distributing paper acknowledgments in teacher mailboxes with instructions on how to use but without training or rationale provided.	No movement in implementation: • Acknowledgments were not implemented. • Teachers unsure of importance, how frequently to distribute, and what students should do with the paper acknowledgments.
Successful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Modified professional development and training system to emphasize the importance of and "how to" for distributing acknowledgments. Created and implemented several acknowledgment systems for teacher and support staff to reinforce their "SWPBIS" behavior. Created an easy-to-read grid of all methods that were available within the school for acknowledging student and staff behaviors. Presented on importance of reinforcement for adolescent brain development.	Increased fidelity of implementation: • Teachers had clear understanding of the concept of reinforcement and how to use the acknowledgments on a day-to-day basis. • Teachers enjoyed the process of being reinforced for distribution of student acknowledgments and continued to distribute. • Grid of acknowledgments made it easy for teachers to understand the various methods for student and staff reinforcement. • Information on adolescent brain development gave the SWPBIS team another tool for convincing staff to distribute acknowledgments.

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One school team found that although the assistant principal participated on the team, he rarely attended or participated in SWPBIS efforts. To support the principal's involvement, the team created and shared a list of easy ways for him to be involved and to demonstrate his support to the other staff:

- *Making weekly loudspeaker SWPBIS announcements for staff, such as kudos for a job well done and regular SWPBIS meeting reminders*
- *Beginning every staff meeting with prewritten SWPBIS updates from the team*
- *Sharing preorganized positive data reports in the middle of each staff meeting*
- *Handing out staff acknowledgments at the end of each staff meeting*

Lessons Learned: The principal was also personally invited to each SWPBIS meeting and training. Following attendance at the SWPBIS meetings, the

team facilitator sent e-mails of appreciation for his active support to the principal as well as to his district supervisor. The step-by-step support and reinforcement of the principal's behaviors encouraged him get more involved while also helping him build fluency in SWPBIS. The visible, "easy" activities provided the staff with a model of involvement, thereby building staff participation in the implementation process.

Challenge 4: It Is Difficult to Get Adults to Do Their Part in Teaching and Handing Out Acknowledgments.
Acknowledging students for positive social behaviors is a shift from the typical high school context in which students are "expected" to behave appropriately and where acknowledgments are limited to academic achievements (e.g., grades, credits, advancement). To support staff distribution of acknowledgments, many of the project high schools focused on educating staff on the rationale for their use and making it easier for staff

to distribute them, by providing clear and practical training and clearly communicating acknowledgment practices (see Table 6).

Lessons Learned: A participating SWPBIS team discovered though informal conversations that teachers felt as if acknowledgments for teenagers were unnecessary and, in fact, counterproductive to life post–high school life, where they would not be acknowledged for their appropriate behavior. The team asked the technical assistance provider to do a brief presentation on the impact and necessity of acknowledgments (rewards) on the adolescent brain. The technical assistance provider was able to summarize findings from the Center on Early Adolescence (earlyadolescence. org) and the Promise Neighborhoods Research Consortium (promiseneighborhoods.org) showing that (a) acknowledging adolescents for appropriate behavior is perhaps more important due to neurologic

Table 7. Strategies to Address the Challenge of Teacher Participation

Unsuccessful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Allowed teachers to write their own lesson plans; did not create a schoolwide plan for lesson development or delivery.	No progress in implementation stages: • Teachers overwhelmed with prepping another area of instruction (social expectations) • Teachers did not write or implement own lesson plans. • Expectations were not taught.
Successful	
Strategies	Outcomes
SWPBIS team/subcommittee created a schedule and lesson plans that included three to five options for teacher and student activities. SWPBIS team created a system to enlist student input and/or active role in writing lesson plans. The student government class was made responsible for creating schoolwide expectation videos and lesson plans.	Increased fidelity of implementation: • Awareness of teacher work load • Student voice present in lesson plans • Teachers given choice • Expectations taught

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development between the ages of 12 to 25 year and (b) adolescent brains require very explicit, frequent acknowledgments to register that a reward has been delivered (National Institutes of Health, 2004). Following this presentation, the staff members increased delivery of acknowledgments from 10 distributed in October before the presentation to 80 in November and 150 in December. Providing staff with multiple perspectives on the importance of acknowledgments was helpful in securing staff participation.

Challenges in Managing Resources

Managing resources during implementation of SWPBIS is best supported by the active leadership of administrative personnel, policies prioritizing SWPBIS implementation, and the systematic training and support for the daily SWPBIS practices (e.g., acknowledgments, classroom management strategies, data sharing). Without systematic support, implementation efforts remain vulnerable to competing priorities and initiatives as well as budgetary reductions. The participating high schools that successfully advanced through the initial stages of implementation created or modified

systems to reduce teacher preparation time, improve data evaluation, and secure additional resources.

Challenge 5: Teachers Are Resistant to Adding Additional Responsibilities to Their Already Full Workloads—How Do We Get Consistency in Teaching Social Expectations?. Budget cuts and preparation for new curriculum standards have left many high school teachers faced with the challenge of doing more work with fewer resources. As a result, teachers must be thoughtful in how they prioritize their instructional preparation time. Within the SWPBIS framework, teams can provide support to teachers by working to reduce the time demands for implementation activities while supporting consistency in the delivery of lessons on school-appropriate social behaviors central to academic success. The team can do this by providing training on the most critical elements of teaching social expectations and by creating lesson plans for all staff to use for teaching social expectations (see Table 7).

Lessons Learned: In several of the schools, SWPBIS teams created ways to solicit student input and had students actively participate in the creation and delivery of lesson plans

on school-appropriate social behaviors. Enlisting student involvement and participation reduced teacher preparation time for developing and presenting lesson plans for social expectations. This strategy increased inclusion of the students' voice and presented a developmentally appropriate venue for students to practice decision making. The students involved in the lesson development were tasked with decisions relevant to how staff and students would receive the information and the best ways to encourage the entire school community to participate in the SWPBIS initiative.

In one school, the co-teachers of the Community Service class (history and math teachers) were on the SWPBIS team. As part of the community service requirements, the class was given the collective task of creating new lesson plans (paper-and-pencil lesson or videos) for the schoolwide expectations. To accomplish this task they had to (a) survey the student body to determine if the previous lessons on schoolwide expectations had been relevant and effective, (b) refine the definitions, (c) list examples and nonexamples, (d) create activities for student engagement, and (e) create an action plan for

Table 8. Strategies to Address Data Access Challenges

Unsuccessful	
Strategies	**Outcomes**
Waited for district to adopt a new data system that would accommodate all needs.	No movement in implementation: • The SWPBIS team was unable to use data for decision making. • Implementation of data practices and systems were put on hold for two years. • SWPBIS teams had limited activities to work on without access to data
Successful	
Strategies	**Outcomes**
Have personnel responsible for each database generate top two to three graphs of interest every month. Focused on one type of data per semester (e.g., attendance, F's and incompletes, credits) and assigned other personnel to create the graphs as part of their job.	Increased fidelity of implementation: • Disseminated data tasks • Considered how data collection / organization fit into current jobs (attendance reports from secretary) • Collected "new" data • Collected succinct data types

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recording and teaching with the videos. The bulk of the responsibilities to develop the lessons were placed on the students. Thus, teachers did not have the additional responsibility of planning the lessons.

Challenge 6: How Does Our Team Get Data for Decisions Making When Data Are in So Many Places and Are Not Easy to Access?. There are many sources of data at the high school level that are often accessible only to specific school personnel. It can take considerable time and fluency in the various data systems to gather the data necessary for decision making. For example, the discipline dean manages office disciplinary referrals and suspensions and expulsions in a specific database; the curriculum dean manages the state achievement tests, grade point averages and course grades, assignment completion, and proficiency testing in different databases; the attendance support staff manages the daily attendance and truancy of students; and the district maintains an archival database. These databases are often developed for the singular purpose of

accountability—not decision making. Data housed in multiple databases can hamper not only efficient integration of information but instructional and support decisions as well. The schools successful in using data for decision making were able to strategize ways to be efficient in accessing data to inform action planning (see Table 8).

Lessons Learned: One school team focused its data review on one or two sources of data that would give them the best picture of student success term by term. It first focused on students per grade level who were failing one or more content classes, knowing that this was a risk factor for dropout. It used this list to prioritize students who needed immediate assistance, and it enrolled those students into a study skills seminar to target specific academic skills.

Another school team streamlined its data evaluation system by identifying the type of data needed for a decision and the person in the district who was responsible for maintaining those data. Next it had these personnel create two or three graphic displays of these prioritized data for use in

monthly decision making. The data were requested on a schedule about a week ahead of team meetings. At the same time, the team continued to explore alternative data systems that would allow it to be able obtain access to data on a "real-time" basis. This parallel problem-solving approach allowed the teams to achieve the short-term goal of accessing real-time data while working on long-term goal of developing more accessible, easy-to-use data systems.

Challenge 7: Lack of Resources for Acknowledgments—High School Students Want "Big" Prizes. Finding resources (e.g., funding, tangibles) to support acknowledgments in large high schools can be a daunting task, especially in years of dwindling school and district resources. Social acknowledgments or rewards that are free, such as providing student choices, can be strong motivators and allow a team to begin acknowledging student behaviors without waiting for additional funding. To provide students with valued acknowledgments, SWPBIS teams may actively seek out flexible funding sources, identify free or low-cost items and activities, and solicit

Table 9. Strategies to Address the Issue of Resources for Acknowledgments

Unsuccessful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Waited for money to become available (through district)	No movement in implementation: • The team was unable to implement student acknowledgments.
Successful	
Strategies	Outcomes
Modified funding system by having principal move discretionary funds into SWPBIS account. Modified funding system by reallocating some student funds. Created a system to promote community support of implementation efforts. Created a resource review process that resulted in a list of "freebies" within the school or community.	Increased fidelity of implementation: • Principal was able to reallocate some funds to begin the process of purchasing acknowledgments. • Canvassing the community for contributions set up precedent with community members, who began to expect and reciprocate requests for contributions and see them as opportunities to advertise. • List of freebies allowed team to begin to implement acknowledgments immediately and not rely on funds.

Note. SWPBIS = schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports.

community support via partnerships and donations (see Table 9).

Lessons Learned: One of the project schools decided to not let the lack of extra funds stand in the way of implementing acknowledgments. Through collaboration with technical assistance providers, it created a list of "freebies" within the school—including raffle items such as:

• *student choice of where he or she sits in one class (including the teacher's chair);*
• *access to a reserved SWPBIS parking spot (for upperclassmen and teachers);*
• *free entrance to any school-based event (e.g., sports, dances, prom, homecoming, concerts, plays);*
• *"spirit display case" (for the grade with the most schoolwide acknowledgments);*
• *game day for students with grades of A, B, or C in content area classes;*
• *lunch with a preferred teacher and friend; and*
• *a"Quick Pass" to the front of the lunch line.*

The team was also able to secure "buy one–get one free" coupons for a

variety of businesses, student-discounted or free tickets to local sports events, and even some electronic goods (e.g., iPod, laptop, television) for the end-of-the-year attendance award. The free school-based social acknowledgments allowed the team to begin distributing them right away while they solicited community contributions and secured district SWPBIS funds. The school-based acknowledgments also provided opportunities for the students to have positive interactions with school-based adults. The range in types of rewards secured by using social and tangible rewards increased interest by the student population; that is, there were multiple options that appealed to different students.

Summary and Next Steps

Mobilizing staff participation and managing resources are earmarks of the first two stages of implementation: exploration and adoption and program installation. Active involvement by all staff is necessary for implementation. Without active staff participation, SWPBIS live only in documents and have little chance to positively affect student outcomes. Without careful

management of available resources, implementation efforts remain vulnerable and may be halted by seemingly minor challenges in funding or administrative priorities. All participating schools encountered challenges in implementing SWPBIS. The schools that were able to progress through the stages of implementation of SWPBIS had several commonalities—foremost was a focus on supporting the day-to-day activities of the implementers.

Understanding the concept of implementation stages and seeing examples of how high schools have met the challenges associated with SWPBIS implementation may provide a positive starting point for school teams.

Implementation of SWPBIS can require realignment of long-standing organizational structures and practices. It takes time and consistent effort. This is particularly true in a complex system such as a high school. Although there

may be a push for teams to move ahead with visible practices, such as expectations and acknowledgments, schools may falter in implementation without first supporting the critical system needs (e.g., training staff, data-based decision making). Many of the challenges experienced by these representative high schools illustrate one thing clearly—without systems to support the daily activities of staff members, SWPBIS implementation will falter. Understanding the concept of implementation stages and seeing examples of how high schools have met the challenges associated with SWPBIS implementation may provide a positive starting point for school teams. The field of education has a great deal of work to do to facilitate more widespread implementation of SWPBIS in high schools, but the strategies employed by these eight schools can provide a starting point for practitioners looking to improve the outcomes of secondary students with and without disabilities.

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Jessica Swain-Bradway, *Research and Evaluation Director, MidWest PBIS, Eugene, OR;* **Christopher Pinkney**, *Assistant professor, Department of Special Education, Portland State University, Portland, OR;* **K. Brigid Flannery**, *Senior Research Associate/Assistant Professor, Special Education and Clinical Sciences, University of Oregon, Eugene.*

Address correspondence concerning this article to Jessica Swain-Bradway, MidWest PBIS, 2912 Riverview St., Eugene, OR 97403 (e-mail: jessica.swainbradway@midwestpbis.org).