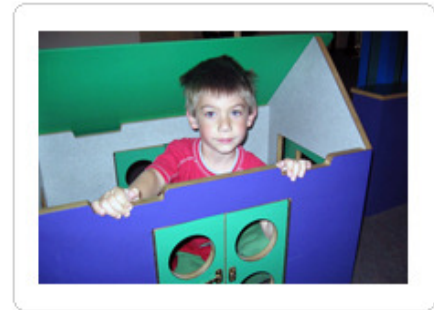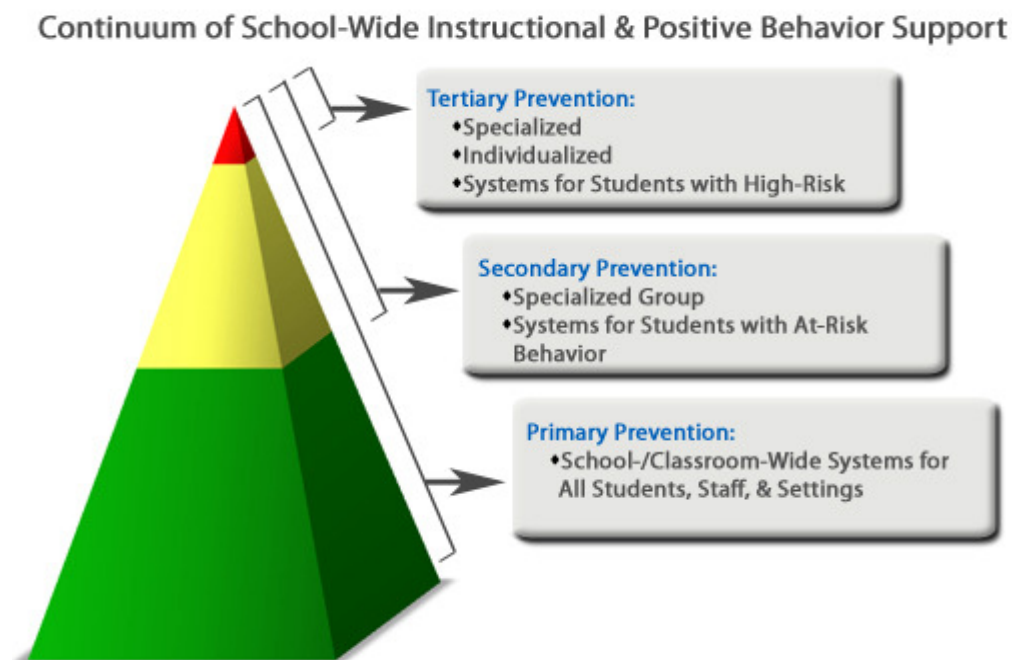# School-wide PBS

What is School-wide PBS?

Numerous products are available for school personnel, parents, and care-providers, all with the promise of erasing targeted behaviors. Unfortunately, no magic wand single-handedly works to remove the barriers to learning that occur when behaviors are disrupting the learning community. The climate of each learning community is different; therefore, a one size fits all approach is less effective than interventions based on the needs of each school.

One of the foremost advances in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Instead of using a piecemeal approach of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, buses, and restrooms). Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occurs. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining primary (school-wide), secondary (classroom), and tertiary (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making targeted behaviors less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

The following diagram illustrates the multi-level approach offered to all students in the school. These group depictions represent systems of support not children:

Continuum of School-Wide Instructional & Positive Behavior Support

Tertiary Prevention:
- Specialized
- Individualized
- Systems for Students with High-Risk

Secondary Prevention:
- Specialized Group
- Systems for Students with At-Risk Behavior

Primary Prevention:
- School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

Why is it so important to focus on teaching positive social behaviors?

Frequently, the question is asked, "Why should I have to teach kids to be good? They already know what they are supposed to do. Why can I not just expect good behavior?" In the infamous words of a TV personality, "How is that working out for you?"

In the past, school-wide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important step of a student's educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide PBS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

What is a systems approach in school-wide PBS?

An organization is a group of individuals who behave together to achieve a common goal. Systems are needed to support the collective use of best practices by individuals within the organization. The school-wide PBS process emphasizes the creation of systems that support the adoption and durable implementation of evidence-based practices and procedures, and fit within on-going school reform efforts. An interactive approach that includes opportunities to correct and improve four key elements is used in school-wide PBS focusing on: 1) Outcomes, 2) Data, 3) Practices, and 4) Systems. The diagram below illustrates how these key elements work together to build a sustainable
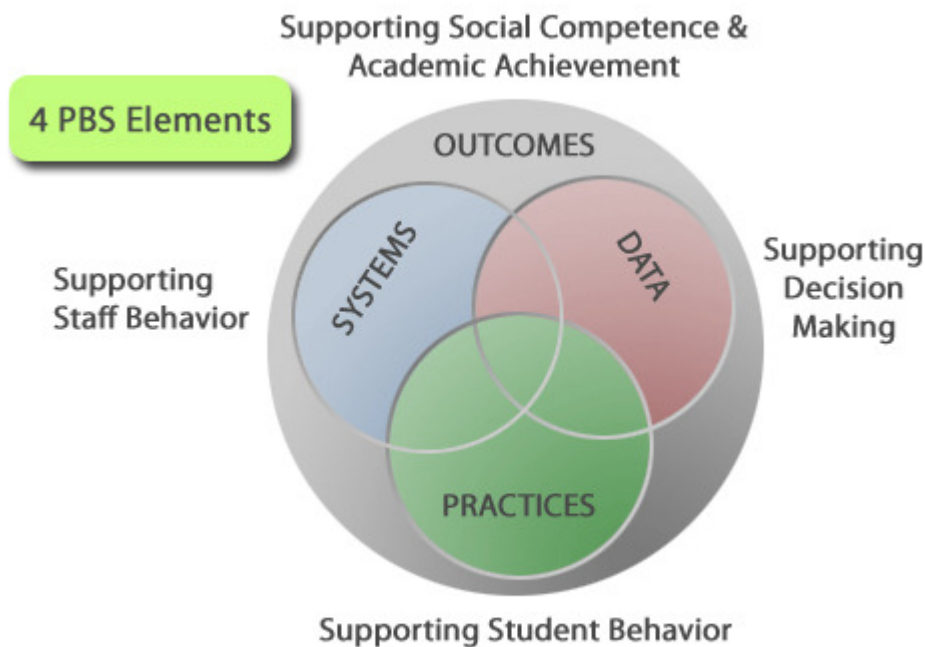
system:

- Outcomes: academic and behavior targets that are endorsed and emphasized by students, families, and educators. (What is important to each particular learning community?)
- Practices: interventions and strategies that are evidence based. (How will you reach the goals?)
- Data: information that is used to identify status, need for change, and effects of interventions. (What data will you use to support your success or barriers?)
- Systems: supports that are needed to enable the accurate and durable implementation of the practices of PBS. (What durable systems can be implemented that will sustain this over the long haul?)