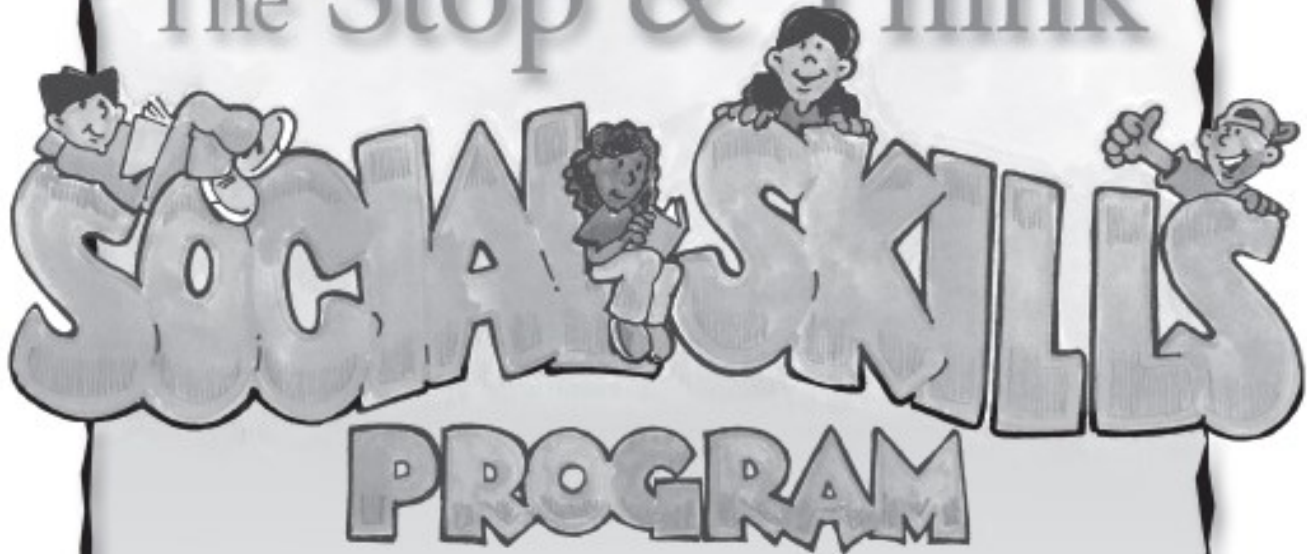


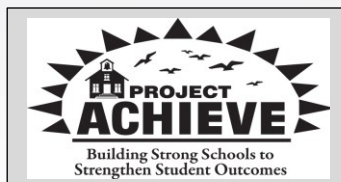


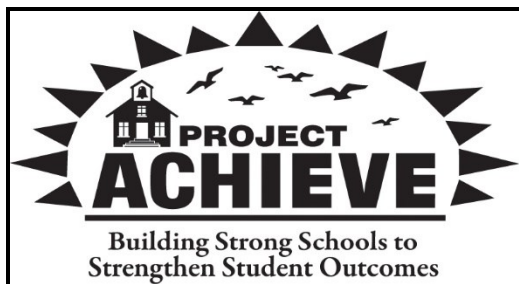
The Stop & Think



Overview of the Curriculum and Science- to-Practice Process

Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D.





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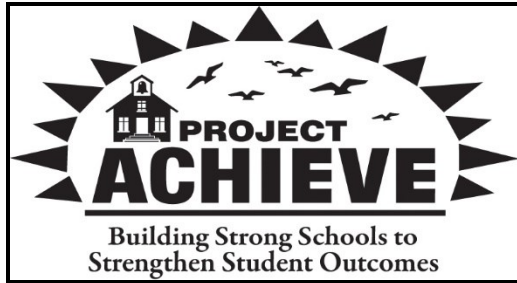
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The Stop & Think Social Skills Program has historical roots in the social skills approaches of Arnold Goldstein and Ellen McGinnis, Gwendolyn Cartledge, and others; ecological approaches of Urie Bronfenbrenner; the cognitive behavioral approaches of Donald Meichenbaum; the social learning theory approaches of Albert Bandura; and the systems change approaches of Evelyn Valentine and William Cook.

About the Author

Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D. is a nationally-known innovator and hands-on practitioner in the following areas:

- School Improvement and Turn-Around, Strategic Planning and Organizational Development
- School Discipline, Classroom Management, and Student Self-Management (SEL/PBIS/PBSS)
- Differentiated Academic Instruction and Academic Interventions for Struggling Students
- Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Instruction and Strategic and Intensive Interventions for Challenging Students
- Multi-tiered (MTSS/RtI) Services, Supports, and Program
- Effective Professional Development and On-Site Consultation and Technical Assistance

Howie is the President of Project ACHIEVE Educational Solutions which has implemented this nationally-known school effectiveness/school improvement program—an evidence-based model prevention program [through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Service’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)]—in thousands of schools or districts over the past 30 years. A national expert on school discipline, classroom management, student engagement, and interventions with behaviorally challenging students, Dr. Knoff has also been a university professor (22 years at the University of South Florida and SUNY-Albany), and the Director of the federally-funded State Personnel Development/State Improvement Grant for the Arkansas Department of Education from 2003 to 2015.

As Director of the Arkansas State Improvement/Personnel Development Grant (SIG/SPDG), Dr. Knoff was directly responsible to the Director of Special Education for the state of Arkansas, and involved in many Departmental policy and procedure discussions and deliberations. In addition to administering the \$12 million received from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs to implement these grants, he and his staff scaled-up critical Project ACHIEVE components across Arkansas focusing on:

- Statewide implementation of Positive Behavioral Support (PBIS) Systems;
- Literacy and mathematics interventions for at-risk, underachieving, and students with disabilities;
- Response-to-Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) and Multi-Tiered Systems (MTSS) of support to help close the achievement gap, reduce disproportionality, and speed essential academic and behavioral interventions to needy students; and
- Sustained and real school improvement for Priority, Focus, and other schools or districts

Significantly, Project ACHIEVE (through the SPDG grant) was written into Arkansas’ approved Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Flexibility process as the school improvement model for all Focus schools in the state of Arkansas from 2010 to 2015.

Dr. Knoff received his Ph.D. degree from Syracuse University in 1980, and has worked as a practitioner, consultant, licensed private psychologist, and university professor since 1978. Dr. Knoff is widely respected for his research and writing on school reform and organizational change, consultation and intervention processes, social skills and behavior management training, Response-to-Intervention, and professional issues. He has authored or co-authored over 25 books, published over 100 articles and book chapters, and delivered over 2,500 papers and workshops nationally—including the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (Preschool through Middle School editions) and the Stop & Think Parent Book: A Guide to Children’s Good Behavior both through Cambium Learning/Sopris West Publishers.

Among his recent books are the following:

- Knoff, H.M. (2019). A multi-tiered service and support implementation guidebook for schools: Closing the achievement gap. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression: Keeping your school, common areas, and students safe. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Teaching students classroom and school routines: From preschool to high school. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Developing school discipline codes that work: Increasing student responsibility while decreasing disproportionate discipline referrals. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Analyzing school resources: The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) assessment guide. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Creating effective school mission statements: Characteristics and analysis. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Shared leadership through school-level committees: Process, preparation, and first-year implementation action plans. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Evaluating school-wide discipline/Positive Behavioral Support Systems: Three years of sequenced implementation activities. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). The school safety audit and emergency/crisis prevention process. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.

- Knoff, H.M. (2018). Conducting Quarterly Student Achievement Review (Q-STAR) meetings. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2018). The Get-Go Process: Transferring students' multi-tiered information and data from one school year to staff and prepare for the next. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.
- Knoff, H.M. (2012). School Discipline, Classroom Management, and Student Self-Management: A Positive Behavioral Support Implementation Guide. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Dr. Knoff has a long history of working with schools, districts, and community and state agencies and organizations. For example, he has consulted with a number of state departments of education, the Department of Defense Dependents School District during Desert Storm, and the Southern Poverty Law Center. He has also served as an expert witness in federal court five times, in addition to working on many other state and local cases—largely for legal advocacy firms who are representing special education and other students in need. Specific to school safety issues, Dr. Knoff was on the writing team that helped produce Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools, the document commissioned by the President that was sent to every school in the country in the Fall of 1998; and he participated in a review capacity on the follow-up document, Safeguarding our Children: An Action Guide.

A recipient of the Lightner Witmer Award from the American Psychological Association's School Psychology Division for early career contributions in 1990, and over \$21 million in external grants during his career, Dr. Knoff is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (School Psychology Division), a Nationally Certified School Psychologist, a Licensed Psychologist in Arkansas, and he has been trained in both crisis intervention and mediation processes. Frequently interviewed in all areas of the media, Dr. Knoff has been on the NBC Nightly News, numerous television and radio talk shows, and he was highlighted on an ABC News' 20/20 program on "Being Teased, Taunted, and Bullied." Finally, Dr. Knoff was the 21st President of the National Association of School Psychologists which now represents more than 25,000 school psychologists nationwide.

Dr. Knoff is constantly sought after for his expertise in a wide variety of school, psychological, and other professional issues. He also has extensive experience as an Expert Witness having testified in many federal and state special education court cases across the US.

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The Stop & Think Social Skills Program

Overview of the Curriculum and Science-to-Practice Process

Introduction: Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills

It is a simple fact that how students feel, feel about themselves, behave, and get along with others strongly predicts their interactions and even their achievement in school. Indeed, if students are feeling pressured, bullied, or unsafe, they focus more on these emotional conditions than on academic instruction and learning. If they are unsure of themselves, lack self-confidence, or are self-conscious, they may not believe that they can succeed. If they do not have the behavioral skills to pay attention, work independently, or organize themselves, their academic work may suffer. If they cannot relate to others, work cooperatively in a group, and prevent or resolve conflicts, they will not socially survive (Knoff, 2012).

We have known for decades that students' social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management in school is essential to their academic and interpersonal success (Cawalti, 1995; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993/1994, Ysseldyke & Christenson, 2002). While a strong academic program with effective instruction and a focus on real-world knowledge and skills is essential to student achievement and understanding, it is evident that (a) a positive and supportive school and classroom climate, (b) with positive and productive student and teacher interactions, and (c) effective classroom management also are necessary. Indeed, these components are among the top six predictors of students' academic achievement (Goodman & Schaughency, 2001; McNeely, Nonemaker, & Blum, 2002; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

More specifically, reviews of over 200 studies of school-based programs (Durlak, et al., 2011; Payton, et al., 2008) revealed that classroom time spent on addressing the social, emotional, and behavioral skills and needs of students helped to significantly increase their academic performance and their social and emotional skills, and that the students involved were better behaved, more socially successful, less anxious, more emotionally well-adjusted, and earned higher grades and test scores.

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2002), all of this contributes to and enhances students' time-on-task and their academic success:

“Improving the social and emotional climate of schools, and the social and emotional soundness of students, advances the academic mission of the schools in important ways. . . Satisfying the social and emotional needs of students does more than prepare them to learn. It actually increases their capacity to learn.” (p. 10)

And so, social skills training is essential for all students in the schools—a primary setting in their lives where they can learn, practice, and master some of the interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict resolution, and emotional coping skills and strategies that become foundational to their physical and mental health and wellness (Knoff, 2000a, 2000b). Critically, these skills also are essential to all teachers as a necessary part of classroom management. And, as noted above, these prosocial skills are needed by students to facilitate both their social and academic progress, development, and proficiency.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program

While there are hundreds of social skill programs available and marketed to educators and schools, an incredibly small percentage of these social skills programs are either evidence-based (e.g., through SAMHSA) or well-researched. One of these programs is the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (Knoff, 2001). Later in this Brief, we summarize the research-to-practice characteristics of successful social skills instruction by using this Program as an exemplar. These characteristics should be used to evaluate other social skills programs relative to their empirical support, efficacy, and impact.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is written for classroom teachers with implementation at the preschool to Grade 1, Grades 2/3, Grades 4/5, and Grades 6 through 8. At the same time, the Program has been implemented strategically at the high school level, in alternative and juvenile justice facilities with students who are 18 years old and beyond, and in residential and day treatment programs for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. There also is a Stop & Think Program for parents—to help guide them on how to teach and reinforce prosocial skills at home from preschool through early adolescence.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program was designated an evidence-based and national model prevention program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2000. It was designated a “Promising Program” relative to its research efficacy and clinical implementation by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2003 (see also Quinn, Osher, Hoffman, & Hanley, 1998).

It was also designated a “Select” program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel.org) in 2002. Finally, the Stop & Think Program, as an embedded component to Project ACHIEVE, was originally included in the registry of SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices based on its 2000 SAMHSA status. As the anchor of Project ACHIEVE’s Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; Knoff, 2009, 2012), the Stop & Think Social Skills Program has been implemented in thousands of schools nationwide since 1989 (see Appendix A for an overview of Project ACHIEVE).

Social Competency and Student Self-Management

From a practical perspective, the ultimate goals of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program are the development of students’ social competency and social, emotional, and behavioral self-management. Because of genetic, biological, and developmental factors, students’ social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management look different across the age span. Nonetheless, these two areas are collectively defined as a child or adolescent’s ability to:

- Be socially, emotionally, and behaviorally aware of themselves and others;
- Demonstrate successful social, emotional, and behavioral interactions and skills; and
- Effectively control their own emotions, so that appropriate proactive and/or prosocial behavior independently occurs.

Critically, competency and self-management exist along a continuum from social-emotional competency and self-management (i.e., how students feel) to cognitive-behavioral competency and self-management (i.e., what they think and then what they do). In the former areas, students’ emotional control, as well as positive feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and attributions represent essential goals and outcomes. In the latter areas, these goals and outcomes are extended—both in the classroom and across the common areas of a school—to include students’ positive interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and social-emotional coping skills.

More specifically, on a social level, important self-management skills include those that contribute to effective (a) listening, engagement, and responding; (b) communication and collaboration; (c) social problem-solving and group process; and (d) conflict prevention and resolution. On an emotional level, important self-management skills include (a) the awareness of one’s own and others’ feelings, (b) the ability to manage or control those feelings and other emotions, as well as the ability (c) to use coping skills to minimize the emotional effects of previous situations, and (d) to demonstrate appropriate behavior even under conditions of emotionality. Finally, on a behavioral level, important self-management skills include those that help students to demonstrate appropriate behavior in the classroom and across the common areas of the school, and to be actively engaged in their own learning—whether in the classroom or on a more independent level.

Project ACHIEVE’s Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning Model

Project ACHIEVE’s Behavioral Instruction and Intervention (PBSS/SEL) Component focuses on implementing a comprehensive positive behavioral support and social-emotional learning system within a school. This component is guided by Project ACHIEVE’s evidence-based Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning model (PBSS/SEL).

Many districts and schools are particularly interested in this multi-tiered school-wide model to address the following issues:

- School safety and prevention,
- Positive school culture and classroom climate,
- Classroom discipline and management,
- Student engagement and self-management,
- Teasing, taunting, and bullying,
- Harassment, hazing, and physical aggression,
- Office discipline referrals and suspensions/expulsions,
- Disproportionality and effective approaches to replace zero tolerance policies,
- Strategic and intensive/crisis management services, supports, strategies, and interventions for behaviorally challenging and unresponsive students, and
- Preventing and responding to students’ mental health status and needs.

Implementation here starts by emphasizing (a) effective school discipline, classroom management, and student self-management processes and strategies; that extend to (b) the development of strategic social, emotional, and behavioral interventions for challenging and non-responsive students; and that (c) utilize intensive and crisis management approaches for the most seriously-involved students—approaches that include comprehensive school-based mental health systems of services, supports, strategies, and programs. Overall, the PBSS/SEL model uses a whole-school approach that includes students, staff, administration, and parents to teach and reinforce (a) students’ interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills and interactions; (b) establish positive, safe, supportive, and consistent school climates and settings; and (c) build school and district capacity such that the entire process becomes an inherent part of the district and school’s strategic and continuous improvement process.

Project ACHIEVE’s Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning (PBSS/SEL) Goals

While the ultimate goal of Project ACHIEVE’s PBSS/SEL model is the development of sustained and independent social, emotional, and behavioral competence and self-management for all students, there are a number of complementary student, staff, and school goals.

In total, they involve the following:

Student Goals:

Student social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management as demonstrated by:

- High levels of effective interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills and behaviors by all students;
- High levels of critical thinking, reasoning, and social-emotional application skills and behaviors by all students; and
- High levels of academic engagement and academic achievement for all students.

Staff Goals:

- High levels of effective instruction and classroom management across all teachers and instructional support staff; and
- High levels of teacher knowledge, skill, and confidence relative to analyzing why students are academically and behaviorally underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful, and to implementing strategic or intensive academic or behavioral instruction or intervention to address their needs.

School Goals:

- High levels of positive school and classroom climate, and low levels of school and classroom discipline problems that disrupt the classroom and/or require office discipline referrals, school suspensions or expulsions, or placements in alternative schools or settings;
- High levels of the consultative resources and capacity needed to provide functional assessment leading to strategic and intensive instructional and intervention services, supports, strategies, and programs to academically and behaviorally underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful students;
- High levels of parent and community outreach and involvement in areas and activities that support students' academic and social, emotional, and behavioral learning, mastery, and proficiency; and, ultimately,
- High levels of student success that result in high school graduation and post-secondary school success.

Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning (PBSS/SEL) Components

There are five critical components in Project ACHIEVE's PBSS/SEL that facilitate school discipline, classroom management, and students' social, emotional, and behavioral self-management (see Figure 1 below; Knoff, 2012):

- Positive School and Classroom Climate, and Staff and Peer Relationships;
- Explicit Prosocial Behavioral Expectations in the classrooms and common school areas and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skill Instruction;
- Student Motivation and Accountability
- Consistency relative to the implementation of all of the above components; and
- The Application of the above to all school settings and all peer interactions (including those that prevent teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression)

These components are briefly described below. The implementation of these components is typically guided by the School Discipline or PBSS Committee comprised of teacher representatives from every grade level, as well as others representing the different instructional support groups in the school, related services and special education personnel, the administration, and selected others.

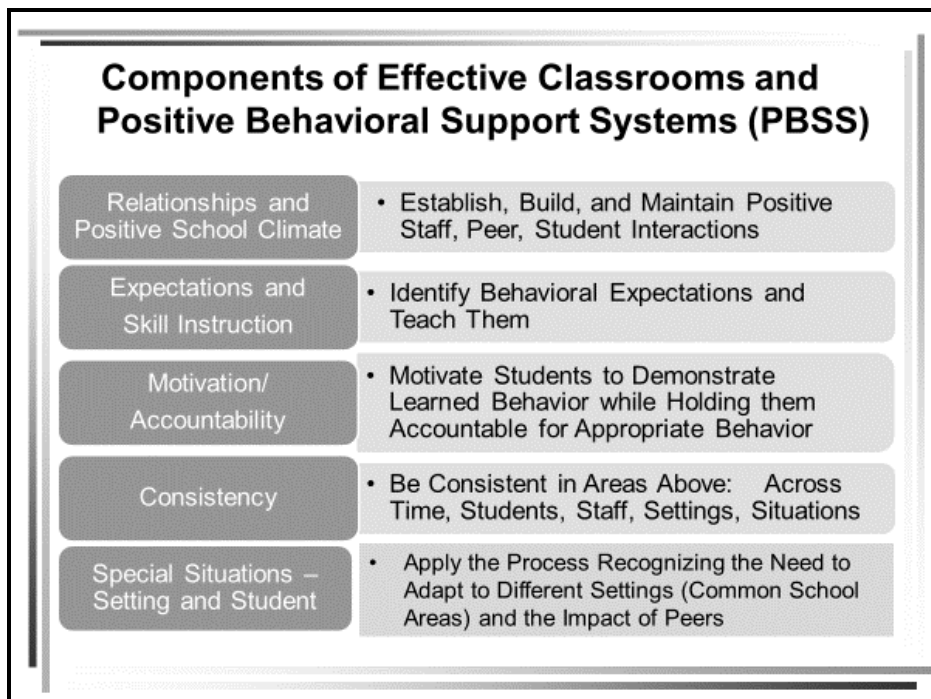


Figure 1. Source: Project ACHIEVE Press, 2011.

Component 1: Positive School and Classroom Climate, and Staff and Peer Relationships

If anyone has lived in or experienced a toxic environment—at home, in the workplace, at school—then you know the impact of climate on learning, behavior, attitudes, social interactions, and your own mental health. Many times, these environments exist because of the relationships within them.

Effective schools work consciously, planfully, and on an on-going basis to develop, reinforce, and sustain positive and productive relationships so that their cross-school and in-classroom climates mirror these relationships.

Critically, however, these relationships include the following: Students to Students, Students to Staff, Staff to Staff, Students to Parents, and Staff to Parents.

But functionally, the collaboration required involves training, implementation, and reinforcement. For example, students need to learn the social and interactional skills needed to build positive relationships with others, and the peer group has to “buy into” the process.

Similarly, teachers need to recognize the importance of committing to effective communication, collaboration, and collegial consultation. But, they also need to have the skills to accomplish these. . . in good times and bad.

Component 2: Explicit Prosocial Behavioral Expectations and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills Instruction

Students—from preschool through high school—need to know the explicit social, emotional, and behavioral expectations in the classrooms and across the common areas of the school. These expectations need to be communicated as “what they need to do,” rather than “what they do not need to do.” More specifically, teachers and administrators need to teach students to (a) walk down the hallway, rather than not run; (b) raise your hand and wait to be called on, rather than don’t blurt out answers; (c) accept a consequence, rather than don’t roll your eyes and give me attitude.

In addition, student expectations need to be behaviorally specific. It is not instructionally helpful to talk to students in constructs—telling students that they need to be “Respectful, Responsible, Polite, Safe, and Trustworthy.” This is because each of these constructs involve a wide range of behaviors, and students do not necessarily know which behaviors different adults want at any particular point in time.

Thus, we need to describe exactly what we want the students to do (e.g., in the hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, and on the bus). And we teach students specific behaviors, rather than constructs (e.g., “Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible”).

Said a different way: You can't teach a behavioral construct; we need to teach the behaviors that **represent** the construct.

But we also must **teach** students the social, emotional, and behavioral skills we expect. This instruction is exactly the same as when we teach a football team, an orchestra, a drama club, or an academic task. Specifically, we need to teach the skills and their steps, demonstrate them, give students opportunities to practice and receive feedback, and then apply their new skills to "real-world" situations.

This all means that we need to communicate our behavioral expectations to students, and then teach them. Functionally, this means that our schools need to consciously and explicitly set aside time for social skills instruction (see below), and then embed the application of this instruction into their classrooms and group activities—for example, during cooperative and project-based instruction.

Social Skills: Implementation and Research. A crucial “anchor” to this component is a preschool through high school social skills curriculum that is taught to all students in their general education classrooms. The ultimate goal of a social skills program is to teach the interpersonal, prosocial problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills that students need to be socially, emotionally, and behaviorally successful. Conversely, when we teach students prosocial skills, they are then unlikely to engage in inappropriate internalizing or externalizing behaviors. Relative to externalizing behaviors, for example, good social skills help students to prevent, respond to, and/or de-escalate situations that might—in their absence—result in serious levels of aggression and/or violence.

Relative to research and practice (Bandura, 1977; Cartledge & Milburn, 1995; Goldstein, 1988; Knoff, 2000; Meichenbaum, 1977), an effective social skills program: (a) is based on a social learning theory model that uses teaching, modeling, role-playing, providing performance feedback, and an active focus on the transfer of training across time, setting, people, places, and circumstances for instruction; (b) uses a core (universal) language that facilitates cognitive behavioral scripting and mediation, and conditions self-control and self-managed behavior; (c) is explicit and developmentally appropriate, yet flexible and adaptive to students' individual language levels, cultures, maturational levels, and needs; (d) provides a defined, progressive, yet flexible, sequence of social skills that recognizes that some prerequisite skills must be mastered before more complex skills are taught; (e) employs an evidence-based pedagogical approach to instruction that sequences instruction, application, and teachable moments; (f) was designed for implementation by regular classroom teachers as the primary instructors; and (g) has been demonstrated to be acceptable, socially valid, and easily implemented with treatment integrity.

While this PBSS/SEL component can use any well-designed, evidence-based social, emotional, and/or behavioral skills program, Project ACHIEVE typically uses the evidence-based Stop & Think Social Skills Program which was designed to address all of the characteristics above. The Stop & Think Social Skills Program will be described in more detail below.

Component 3: Student Motivation and Accountability

Accountability: Implementation and Research. Even when students have mastered their social skills, they still need to be motivated to use them. And when the peer group (who says, “Be cool”) competes against teachers and other educators (who say, “Focus on school”), the importance of school-wide accountable approaches is apparent. School accountability processes consist of meaningful incentives and consequences that motivate students to use their prosocial skills. These processes are important because (a) socially skilled students still need motivation to use their skills, (b) some students (called performance deficit students) lack this motivation, and (c) some students are more reinforced by demonstrating or the outcomes of inappropriate behavior than appropriate behavior.

This PBSS/SEL component helps schools establish and implement grade-level and building-wide accountability systems that include progressively tiered and developmentally-appropriate and meaningful incentives and consequences that motivate and reinforce students’ appropriate interactions. This is accomplished by creating, formalizing, and implementing a “Behavioral Matrix” that establishes a set of behavioral standards and expectations for all students. Created predominantly by staff and students, this matrix explicitly identifies, for all grade levels, behavioral expectations in the classroom and in other common areas of the school (connected with positive responses, incentives, and rewards), and different “intensities” levels of inappropriate student behavior (connected with negative responses, consequences, and interventions as needed). Relative to the latter, Intensity I (Annoying) behaviors involve “routine” discipline problems that teachers handle with corrective prompts; Intensity II (Classroom Disruption) behaviors involve more challenging behaviors that teachers handle with prompts plus classroom-based consequences; Intensity III (Major Disruption/Antisocial) behaviors are more serious, usually involving office referrals and strategic intervention; and Intensity IV (Severe or Dangerous/Code of Conduct) behaviors are the most serious, generally involving office-based consequences and intensive interventions.

Critically, because the behaviors at each intensity level are agreed upon by staff, and then taught and communicated to students, student behavior is evaluated against a set of explicit “standards” (rather than individually or capriciously by teachers or administrators); staff responses to both appropriate and inappropriate student behavior are more consistent and expected; and students know, in advance, what will occur for incidents of, for example, teasing through physical aggression. All of this facilitates an atmosphere that reinforces student responsibility and self-management.

With the Behavioral Matrix as the primary school-wide accountability vehicle, a number of “evidence-based principles” (Kazdin, 2000; Kerr & Nelson, 2002) are fused into staff practice: (a) all students in the school experience five positive interactions (collectively, from adults, peers, or themselves) for every negative interaction; (b) students are largely motivated through positive, proactive, and incentive-oriented means; (c) when consequences are necessary, the mildest possible consequence needed to motivate students’ appropriate behavior is used; (d) consequences, not punishments, are used; (e) when consequences are over, students must still

practice the previously-expected prosocial behavior at least three times under simulated conditions; (f) staff differentiate and respond strategically to skill-deficit versus performance-deficit students; and (g) staff recognize that incentives and consequences must remain stable because previous inconsistencies may have strengthened some students' inappropriate behavior.

All students—at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels—are held accountable to the Behavioral Matrix. However, as students engage in Intensity III and IV behaviors, the need for functional assessment and strategic intervention becomes more apparent.

Too often, schools create “motivational programs” for students that involve incentives and consequences that the students couldn't care less about. Thus, it looks good “on paper,” but it holds no weight in actuality- - from the students' perspectives.

At other times, schools forget that they need to recognize, engage, and activate the peer group in a motivational program. This is because, at times, the peer group is actually undermining the program by negatively reinforcing those members (on the playground, after school, on social media) who are “playing up to the adults” through their appropriate behavior.

On a functional level, both incentives and consequences result in positive and prosocial behavior. The incentives motivate students toward the expected behaviors, and the consequences motivate students away from the inappropriate behaviors (and toward the expected ones).

But critically, educators need to understand that you can only create motivating conditions. That is, we can't force students to meet the behavioral expectations. When we force students to do anything, we are managing their behavior, not facilitating self-management. While we have to do some management to get to self-management. . . if we only manage students' behavior, then they will not (know how to) self-manage when the adults are not present.

Component 4: Consistency

Establishing and sustaining positive school and classroom settings, Stop & Think Social Skills instruction, and the implementation of the Behavioral Matrix and other student motivation and accountability processes are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for effective, safe, and self-managing schools. Interdependently, staff need to establish and maintain positive school and classroom climates; teach, apply, and reinforce their social skills program; and implement meaningful incentives and consequences in a consistent manner.

Thus, in order to be successful, staff need to (a) demonstrate consistent prosocial relationships and interactions—resulting in consistently positive and productive school and classroom environments; (b) communicate consistent behavioral expectations, while consistently teaching them; (c) use consistent incentives and consequences, while holding student consistently accountable for appropriate behavior; and then (d) apply all of these components consistently across all of the settings and peer groups in the school.

When staff are consistent, individual students, and small and large groups of students learn, use, and value the behavioral expectations within a school.

When staff are inconsistent, however, students feel that they have been treated unfairly; they sometimes behave in different ways for different staff or in different settings; they become manipulative—pitting one staff member against another; and they often emotionally react—some getting angry when inconsistency occurs, and others simply withdrawing because they feel powerless to change it.

Thus, staff (perhaps through the School Discipline/PBSS Committee) need to observe and monitor their consistency in real time; evaluate how they are implementing different facets of the PBSS/SEL component; and formally and informally survey staff communication, collaboration, trust, commitment, and cohesion in this regard.

Staff also need to empower students to become part of the process. For example, students need to contribute to their school's prosocial atmosphere of prevention, while also communicating a "no-tolerance" attitude for inappropriate peer behavior. In this way, the students can help their school create conscious and explicit prosocial values, expectations, norms, procedures, and interactions that, for example, can help prevent or respond to such antisocial (but prevalent) behaviors as teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and aggression. This can be done both during the school day, as well as during extracurricular, sports, club, and after-school music and art activities.

Consistency is a process. It can't be downloaded onto a computer, or included in staff's annual flu shots. Instead, it needs to be "grown" experientially over time, and then sustained in an ongoing way. It is grown through effective strategic planning with explicit implementation plans, good communication and collaboration, sound implementation and evaluation, and consensus-building coupled with constructive feedback and change.

It's not easy. . . but it is necessary both for PBSS/SEL and school success.

Component 5: Applying the Process to All Settings and Across Different Peer Groups

The last component of the school PBSS/SEL blueprint focuses on the application of the previous four components across all of the settings and peer interactions in the school. This involves a recognition that the classroom-based PBSS/SEL strategies need to be transferred into the common areas of the school, and that the student-centered strategies need to factor in the significant influence of different peer groups.

Relative to the former area, it is important to understand that the common areas of a school are more complex and dynamic than the classroom settings. Indeed, in the hallways, bathrooms, buses, cafeteria, and on the playground (or playing fields), there typically are more multi-aged or cross-grade students, more interactions, more space or fewer physical limitations, fewer staff and

supervisors, and different social demands. As such, the positive social, emotional, and behavioral interactions that occur in the classroom need a more strategic approach to generalize them into the common school areas.

Accordingly, students need to be taught how to demonstrate their interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills beyond their classrooms and in every common school area. Critically, this training needs to be tailored to the social demands and expectations of these settings.

Relative to the latter area, it is important to understand that the peer group is often a more dominant social and emotional “force” in a school than the adults. As such, the PBSS/SEL blueprint is consciously applied (relative to climate, relationships, expectations, skill instruction, motivation, and accountability) to help prevent peer-to-peer teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression.

This is done by involving the different peer groups in a school in group “prevention and early response” training, and motivating them—across the entire school—to take the lead relative to prosocial interactions. When the peer groups in a school are trained, motivated, and reinforced to do “the heavy prosocial lifting,” the more successful the staff and the school will be relative to maintaining a positive school climate and a consistently safe school.

At times, however, the preventative approach within this component does not work. When this occurs, there are persistent or significant setting-specific problems in the common areas of the school, or across different peer groups relative to teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression.

In order to develop strategic interventions for these situations, the School Discipline/PBSS Committee is taught to how to conduct a “Special Situation Analysis”—a functional and ecological assessment of a specific common area or peer-related situation that investigates the following domains: (a) Student Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (b) Peer Group Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (c) Teacher/Staff Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (d) Environmental Characteristics, Issues, and Factors such as the physical plant and logistics within the specific setting; (e) Staff and Student Incentives and Consequences; and (f) Resources and Resource Utilization. The peer group part of the analysis is especially important as many incidents that occur in the common areas of a school are often peer-mediated (e.g., Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Rigby, 2000), and thus, understanding the presence and potential involvement of student “perpetrators,” “victims,” and “by-standers” becomes essential.

Once the functional assessment is completed, its results are linked to relevant interventions that are resourced, implemented, and evaluated.

The Scientific Foundations of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program

Before any social skills or social emotional learning program is adopted and implemented in a school, it must demonstrate its evidence-based capacity to be successful—relative to objectively measured student outcomes—across a wide variety of settings, students, staff, and implementation conditions. While the Stop & Think Social Skills Program has demonstrated its evidence-based success (hence, its SAMHSA designation), it still is important to clearly identify its scientific foundations. To this end, the research-based characteristics of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program are cross-walked below with the seven primary characteristics of an effective social skills program.

Characteristic 1. Social skills programs teach sensible and pragmatic interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills that are needed by today's students and that can be applied, on a daily basis, by preschool through high school students.

Social skills are behaviors that students learn—just like they learn academic skills. While we often focus on what we don't want students to do ("don't fight," "don't talk back," "don't interrupt," "don't tease or taunt other students"), social skills focus on the behaviors that we want students to do. Significantly, when students perform desired behaviors, they rarely do inappropriate behaviors at the same time.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is organized in four age- and developmentally-sensitive levels: Preschool through Grade 1, Grades 2 and 3, Grades 4 and 5, and Middle School/Grades 6 through 8 (which is often adapted upwards to the high school level). As part of a school-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS) approach, Stop & Think social skills are designed to be taught in ALL regular classroom settings in a school by general education teachers. For students with greater need and more challenging behaviors, the social skills also can be taught in more targeted social skills training groups by special education teachers, related services, and mental health support professionals.

At each school-aged level, the Stop & Think process focuses on ten core skills and ten advanced skills (see below). In addition, the Stop & Think process also helps educators to teach students classroom and building routine skills and other behaviors that increase students' self-management and academic engagement.

At the preschool to the Grade 1 level, the ten primary skills are:

Listening
Following Directions
Using Nice Talk
Asking for Help
Waiting for Your Turn

Waiting for an Adult's Attention-
How to Interrupt
Ignoring
Dealing with Teasing
Dealing with Losing
Dealing with Consequences

At the preschool to the Grade 1 level, the ten advanced skills are:

Ignoring Distractions	Joining an Activity
Rewarding Yourself	Using Brave Talk
Sharing	Dealing with Being Left Out
Deciding What to Do	Dealing with Anger
Asking for Permission	Apologizing

At the Grade 2 through Grade 3 level, the ten primary skills are:

Listening	Waiting for an Adult's Attention-
Following Directions	How to Interrupt
Asking for Help	Dealing with Losing
Ignoring Distractions	Apologizing
Dealing to Teasing	Dealing with Consequences
Contributing to Discussions/ Answering Classroom Questions	

At the Grade 2 through Grade 3 level, the ten advanced skills are:

Deciding What to Do	Avoiding Trouble
Asking for Permission	Dealing with Anger
Joining an Activity	Dealing with Being Rejected or Left Out
Giving/Accepting a Compliment	Dealing with Accusations
Understanding Your/Others' Feelings	Dealing with Peer Pressure

At the Grade 4 through Grade 5 level, the ten primary skills are:

Listening	Apologizing
Following Directions	Dealing with Consequences
Asking for Help	Dealing with Anger
Ignoring (Distractions)	Dealing with Being Rejected or Left Out
Dealing with Teasing	Walking Away from a Fight

At the Grade 4 through Grade 5 level, the ten advanced skills are:

Setting a Goal	Understanding Your/Others' Feelings
Evaluating Yourself	Dealing with Accusations
Responding to Failure	Dealing with Fear
Beginning/Ending a Conversation	Dealing with Peer Pressure
Giving/Accepting a Compliment	Dealing with Another Person's Anger

Finally, at the Middle School/Early Adolescent level, the ten primary skills are:

Listening/Following Directions	Dealing with Consequences
Asking for Help	Understanding Your/Others' Feelings
Ignoring (Distractions)	Dealing with Anger/ Walking Away
Dealing with Teasing, Being Rejected, or Left Out	from a Fight
Apologizing	Dealing with Peer Pressure
	Dealing with Accusations

At the Middle School/Early Adolescent level, the ten advanced skills are:

Setting a Goal	Standing Up for your Rights
Evaluating Yourself	Responding to Failure
Beginning/Ending a Conversation	Avoiding Trouble
Giving/Accepting a Compliment	Dealing with Fear
Being a Good Leader	Dealing with Another Person's Anger

All of the lessons in the Stop & Think process focus on teaching students (a) to stop and think about how they want to handle a situation before acting; (b) to consider whether they want to make a Good Choice or a Bad Choice (before deciding to make a Good Choice); (c) to think about the steps they need to follow or the Good Choices available to enact a Good Choice behavior; (d) to put their plan and skill into action; and finally (e) to positively reinforce themselves for doing a good job.

As is evident above, the interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills that are taught begin with the listening, following directions, asking for help, ignoring distractions, and dealing with teasing skills, and then move to other more complex social interaction skills that your students need to master.

As students learn, master, and use the skills in the Stop & Think Social Skills Program, they make more Good Choices, more easily, and more independently. Over time, they become more effective social, emotional, and behavioral self-managers, demonstrating the skills that help them be successful at school, at home, with their peers, and in the community.

Characteristic 2. Social skills programs address problem situations, as identified by both adults and students, that occur in classrooms and common areas of the school on an almost every day basis (Kerr & Nelson, 2002).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program also provides skills to teach classroom and building routines. In the classroom, these routines help students to be prepared and ready to participate in academic activities. Across the common areas of a school, these routines help students to interact positively and safely, and to manage their behavior more responsibly and independently.

Some of the classroom and building routines in the Stop & Think Social Skills Program include:

Entering class
Hanging coats and backpacks
Walking in line
Bathroom behavior
Getting on the bus
Contributing to discussions
Completing seatwork or independent assignments

Bringing the right materials to class
Lining up to leave school
The Dismissal skill
Walking safely in the hall
Riding on the bus
Answering questions during lessons
Knowing when to tell an adult about a school safety issue

Characteristic 3. Social skills programs provide a defined, progressive, yet flexible, sequence of social skills that recognizes that some prerequisite skills must be mastered before other, more complex skills are taught. The program also must plan for ongoing social skills practice and reinforcement that occurs throughout the school year (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995).

As shown above, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program does have a preferred sequence of ten core skills and ten advanced skills that are field-tested and teacher-friendly. While this sequence is preferred, it is not absolute. As long as teachers are mindful that some social skills prerequisite to later skills, they can re-sequence skills to respond to specific behavioral goals, challenging classroom problems, or desired curricular or character education themes.

Beyond this, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program integrates the learning principles of “massed” and “distributed” practice into its process by reviewing and revisiting many social skills at the preschool to elementary to middle school levels. In doing this, the Program is able to teach the “same” skill with higher, more developmentally appropriate expectations over time, and ensure that the skills are applied in situationally appropriate ways.

Characteristic 4. Social skills programs use a universal language that is easy for students to learn, facilitates cognitive scripting and mediation, and facilitates the conditioning or reconditioning of prosocial behaviors and choices leading to more and more automatic behavior (Ladd & Mize, 1983; Meichenbaum, 1977).

Social skills in the Stop & Think Social Skills Program are taught using two essential processes: (a) a universal language or set of steps that facilitate the cognitive and physical conditioning of new behavior, and (b) a pedagogical approach that uses behavioral/social learning theory strategies to guide effective instruction.

(a) The Stop & Think Social Skills Program uses a universal five-step language whenever a social skill is taught, reinforced, or implemented. The five steps are:

- Stop and Think!
- Are you going to make a Good Choice or Bad Choice?
- What are your Choices or Steps?
- Do It!
- Good Job!

The Stop and Think! step is a self-control, impulse-control, and/or self-management step designed to classically condition students to take the time necessary to calm down and think about how they want to handle a situation.

The Good Choice or Bad Choice? step is an operant conditioning step that motivates students toward the choices they make and the behaviors they exhibit. Typically, teachers prompt students as to the positive outcome(s) or reinforcement(s) that will result when they make a Good Choice. Conversely, students are guided to consider the negative outcome(s) or consequence(s) that will occur if they make a Bad Choice. These potential positive or negative reinforcements are designed to motivate students to “Make a Good Choice.”

The What are your Choices or Steps? step uses cognitive behavioral psychology and mediational learning strategies to help organize, prepare, and guide students to think about appropriate behavior before enacting it. This is where teachers teach the specific “skills scripts” for each Stop & Think skill so that students learn and are able to demonstrate (in the next step of the process) their “Good Choices”—that is, their prosocial skills. There are two types of skill scripts—scripts that teach social skills in a step-by-step sequential fashion (“Step” skills), and scripts where students consider and select one of a number of possible good choices (“Choice” skills).

For example, the Following Directions skill script below is an example of Step skill because there is only one correct sequence that will result in successful behavior:

1. Listen to the Direction.
2. Ask yourself if you Understand the Direction (if not, Ask a question).
3. Repeat the steps of the Direction silently to yourself.
4. Get ready to Follow the Direction.

The Dealing with Teasing skill script below demonstrates the elements of a Choice skill where students learn to evaluate different interpersonal situations so that they can strategically choose the best choice:

1. Take deep breaths and count to five.
2. Think about your good choices. You can:
 - a. Ignore the teasing.
 - b. Ask the person to stop.
 - c. Walk away.
 - d. Find an adult for help.
3. Choose and Act Out your best choice.

Once students have thought about the good social skill choices or steps needed for a particular situation, they then are prepared to behaviorally demonstrate them.

Thus, in the Do It! step, students behaviorally carry out their plan, implement the social skill chosen, and evaluate whether or not it has worked. With younger elementary school-aged students, teachers may need to repeat the skill steps as their students follow them, and they might even need to physically guide students through some skills. Older students, with prompting, will repeat the Stop & Think steps silently to themselves, performing the prosocial behaviors more independently and automatically.

If the Do It! step works, students then are ready to go on to the last step. If a Step Skill doesn't work, students simply go back over the scripts in Step 3 and practice them more carefully. If a Choice Skill doesn't work, students are prompted to identify another possible social skill or to move to another good choice option. For example, if Ignoring does not stop a peer's teasing, then a student might decide to directly ask the peer to stop the teasing, telling how the teasing is making him or her feel. Once successful, it's on to the last step.

The Good Job! step uses the cognitive/behavioral skill of self-reinforcement such that students reinforce themselves for successfully using a social skill, responding appropriately to a situation or request. This step is important because students do not always reinforce each other for making good choices and doing a good job, and thus, they need to learn how to self-reinforce. Indeed, over time, students need to learn how to recognize when they are successful and how to reinforce themselves for a job well done. This is an essential step in the self-management process.

Characteristic 5. Social skills programs systematically use a social learning theory model that includes teaching, modeling, role-playing, and providing performance feedback as part of the instructional process (Bandura, 1977; Goldstein, 1988). Such programs overtly plan and transfer students' use of social skills into different settings, with different people, at different times, and across different situations and circumstances (Stokes & Baer, 1988).

The evidence-based behavioral/social learning teaching process used by the Stop & Think Social Skills Program involves the following five components:

- Teaching the steps of the desired social skill.
- Modeling the steps and the social skills language (or script).
- Roleplaying the steps and the script with students.
- Providing Performance Feedback to the students relative to how accurately they are verbalizing the skill script and how successfully they are behaviorally demonstrating the new skill.
- Applying the skill and its steps as much as possible during the day to reinforce the teaching over time, in different settings, with different people, and in different situations.

When Teaching the steps of a desired social skill, teachers use the Stop & Think Program's universal language. As noted earlier, when they get to the What are your Choices or Steps? step, students are taught the specific choices or steps for the skill they are focusing on.

When Modeling a social skill, teachers verbalize the steps to a particular social skill while showing their students how to perform the associated behavior(s). Typically, this is done by having teachers re-create an actual classroom or school situation where the particular social skill is needed. For example, in modeling the Dealing with Teasing social skill, a teacher would have a student “tease” the teacher in front of the class. The teacher then would “talk through” the “script”—the universal Stop & Think language with the skill steps of the Dealing with Teasing social skill—while performing the appropriate behavior. Thus, during Teaching, teachers provide a context for and instruction in performing social skill behaviors. During Modeling, teachers show how to implement the skill, verbally and behaviorally, in a simulated situation.

After a teacher models a specific social skill, students are given opportunities to Roleplay or act out the social skill in re-created situations that are both relevant to the classroom and the social skill. Roleplays may be done in front of the class or in small or controlled group settings. Similar to directing a scene from a school play, the teacher focuses on having students accurately verbalize the social skill “script” that is being taught and performing the corresponding behavior(s) during every roleplay.

While students are roleplaying their social skills, teachers provide Performance Feedback. This feedback positively reinforces students when they correctly (a) verbalize the social skills steps, (b) demonstrate the appropriate skill or behavior, and (c) review their performance after

the roleplay or practice session is over. This feedback also occurs when roleplays get “off script.” Here, the teacher may “freeze” the actors, provide corrective feedback to bring students back “on script,” and resume the “scene” so that students practice only accurate and appropriate behavior.

After the modeling and roleplay (with performance feedback) steps, teachers provide as many practice (or application) opportunities for students in the classroom so that they transfer the training and master the skill under more realistic circumstances. This occurs as teachers set up situations in the classroom that require students to apply, under controlled and supervised conditions, their new social skills. It also occurs as teachers prompt the use of different social skills as much as possible from day-to-day, hour-to-hour, and minute-to-minute in the classroom.

Over time, all of this teaching, practice, application, and infusion help students to understand the importance of using specific social skills, and to master and use their prosocial skills more quickly and independently.

In summary:

When Teaching and Modeling: Teachers need to make sure that students:

- have the prerequisite skills to be successful
- are taught using language that they can understand
- are taught in simple steps that ensure success
- hear the social skills script as the social skills behavior is demonstrated

When Practicing or Roleplaying: Teachers need to make sure that students:

- verbalize (or repeat or hear) the steps to a particular social skill as they demonstrate its appropriate behavior
- practice only the positive or appropriate social skill behavior
- receive ongoing and consistent practice opportunities
- use relevant practice situations that simulate the “emotional” intensity of the real situations so that they can fully master the social skill and be able to demonstrate it under conditions of emotionality
- practice the skills at a developmental level that they can handle

When Giving Performance Feedback: Teachers need to make sure that the feedback is:

- specific and descriptive
- focused on reinforcing students’ successful use of the social skill, or on correcting an inaccurate or incomplete social skills demonstration
- positive--emphasizing what was done well and what can be done well (or better) next time

When Transferring or Applying Social Skills after Instruction: Teachers need to make sure that they reinforce students' prosocial skills steps and behavior when students:

- have successfully demonstrated an appropriate social skill
- have made a “bad” choice, demonstrating an inappropriate social skill
- are faced with a problem or situation but have not committed to, nor demonstrated, a prosocial skill
- must use the skill in situations that are somewhat different from those used when the skill was originally taught and practiced

Characteristic 6. Social skills training is an integral part of a building- or grade-level positive discipline and behavior management system that holds students accountable for their behavior and provides for consistency and implementation integrity (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Kerr & Nelson, 2002; Knoff, 2000a).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is the anchor of Project ACHIEVE's comprehensive School-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; Knoff, 2002, March; 2012). As discussed previously, the PBSS, one of seven Project ACHIEVE components (see www.projectachieve.net for more information), focuses on the organizational requirements and processes that result in effective building-wide prosocial behavior management processes and positive, skills-oriented student discipline procedures (Dwyer & Osher, 2000; Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Knoff, 2000b, 2012). At a functional level, the desired outcomes of this school-wide approach include: maximizing students' academic achievement, creating safe school environments and positive school climates, building effective teaching and problem solving teams that speed successful interventions to challenging students, increasing and sustaining effective classroom instruction, increasing and sustaining strong parent involvement, developing and implementing effective strategic plans, organizing building committees and student learning clusters, and developing effective data management systems for outcome evaluations.

While research has addressed many of these issues in a somewhat independent fashion, rarely have these factors been integrated into a unified, multi-dimensional process. When implemented effectively, three levels of self-management are addressed: (a) students are taught the self-management skills (at appropriate developmental levels) that they need for self-control and independent learning, (b) school staff are taught the self-management skills that they need to run positive, effective classrooms that result in student learning and behavioral growth, and (c) school buildings or districts are taught the self-management skills that allow them to identify resources and build capacity such that they can independently sustain a successful building-wide system of prevention, strategic intervention, and intensive needs services for all students and, especially, those with behavioral and mental health concerns.

As noted earlier, there are five primary areas needed for any successful school-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; see, once again, Figure 1): (a) positive school and classroom climates, along with positive relationships across staff, students, and parents; (b) explicit classroom and common area behavioral expectations and social skills training—as recommended here, using the Stop and Think Social Skills Program; (c) the development of teacher, grade-level, and building-wide motivation and accountability processes that provide students meaningful incentives and consequences to motivate students’ interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills, and to hold students accountable when they make “bad choices;” (d) consistency in the implementation and status of all three of the processes; and (e) the application of the four processes above relative to every setting in a school, and peer interactions—which including the prevention of teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and fighting.

Beyond these preventative areas, an effective PBSS extends along a multi-tiered continuum that includes strategic and intensive social, emotional, and/or behavioral interventions, respectively, when students demonstrate either serious or persistent challenges. Anchored by a data-based functional assessment problem-solving process that determines the underlying reasons for the students’ challenges, this continuum includes classroom-based interventions, as well as school-based mental health services, supports, strategies, and programs when necessary.

Critically, these five PBSS areas are interdependent. Thus, the presence of a well-implemented social skills program will not typically result in students’ social, emotional, and behavioral self-management. Indeed, in the absence of a consistent positive school and classroom climate; consistently positive staff, student, and parent relationships; consistent student motivation and accountability; and the consistent application of these areas across all school settings and the various peer groups—it is unlikely that the social skills that are taught will actually be consistently demonstrated.

Characteristic 7. Social skills programs teach specific behaviorally-oriented skills (not constructs of behavior) in explicit and developmentally appropriate ways, and they are able to flexibly adapt to student differences in language, culture, socioeconomic level, and behavioral need (Cartledge & Milburn, 1996).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program has been successfully implemented in rural, urban, and suburban schools elementary through high schools across the country. It has been implemented in schools with diverse, multi-cultural and multi-national groups of students; in a range of communities with students from severe levels of poverty to high levels of affluence; and in schools with significant numbers of students who do not have English as their primary language. In addition, the Program has been used in schools with students who come from largely Native American backgrounds (e.g., Navajo, Shoshoni, Arapaho, Alaskan native); and in schools with students with African-American, African, Asian, and Hispanic backgrounds.

In contrast with character education programs (Knoff, 2005), social skills programs directly teach interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution behaviors using a social learning theory approach. As social skills are taught, they are developmentally and cognitively matched to the age and maturity level of the student. And, they are taught within the context of a PBSS approach that is school wide and continually evaluated. Most character education programs, in contrast, talk about (rather than teach and practice) skills, they discuss constructs of behavior (e.g., respect, responsibility, cooperation) at times (e.g., preschool and at the elementary school level) when students do not have the higher order thinking skills to understand either the constructs or their associated behaviors, and they are not able to vary their “instruction” for diverse learners or learners from diverse backgrounds.

Summary

School-based social skills programs need to be evidence- or scientifically-based. This discussion has described the primary self-management outcomes of a social skills program, and how the Stop & Think Social Skills Program fits into a Positive Behavioral Support System program. In addition, the research-to-practice principles that make social skills programs work were described using the Stop & Think Social Skills Program as an exemplar—demonstrating how these principles result in meaningful outcomes for children and adolescents. In the end, it is critical to begin the journey with an evidence-based program. But, it is more important to demonstrate, with evidence, that the journey was successful—that it reached its intended destination.

National Evidence-based Designations for the Stop & Think Social Skills Program

- The Stop & Think Social Skills Program was designated an evidence-based and national model prevention program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2000.
 - It was designated a “Promising Program” relative to its research efficacy and clinical implementation by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2003.
 - It was designated a “Select” program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel.org) in 2002.
 - The Stop & Think Social Skills Program, as an embedded component to Project ACHIEVE, is now included in SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.
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Stop & Think Social Skills Materials Available

All of the materials below can be found on the Project ACHIEVE website: www.projectachieve.net. Most of the materials are available directly on the website for sale; a few are available from other publishers.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program for Schools (PreK through Middle School)

Four Separate Levels:

Pre-K through Grade 1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, Grades 6-8

Classroom Kits and Individual Support Materials Available

Recognized as an Evidence-Based Prevention Program by:

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (SAMHSA)

U.S. Department of Justice (OJJDP)

Collaborative for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (CASEL)

The nationally-acclaimed, evidence-based Stop and Think Social Skills Program is one of the top social skill/SEL programs in the country! It has been implemented in thousands of schools nationwide (and internationally) since 1990—primarily by classroom teachers (Tier I), and by counselors, psychologists, and other mental health professionals (Tiers II and III).

Focused on teaching students interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills, the four Stop & Think levels (preK through Middle School) ensure that all skills are taught in appropriate, developmentally-sensitive ways.

Each level concentrates on 10 Core and 10 Advanced Skills. These are practical skills that help students to manage their own behavior and to successfully interact with others: Listening, Following Directions, Asking for Help, Ignoring Distractions, Accepting Consequences, Apologizing, Dealing with Teasing, Handling Peer Pressure, How to Set Goals.

The Stop & Think Social Skills kit comes with everything that teachers and support staff need to implement the program—Manual, Reproducible Forms, Posters, Cue Cards, and Stop & Think signs that remind students to use their social skills. An essential part of every teacher's classroom management program, the Stop & Think Program has consistently demonstrated its ability to decrease discipline referrals to the Office, increase positive classroom interactions, and help students and teachers to be more productive and successful.

The Stop & Think Parenting Book and DVD: A Guide to Children's Good Behavior

This book is based on the nationally-acclaimed and evidence-based Stop & Think Social Skills Program. Accompanied by its 75-minute demonstration DVD, this program teaches parents how to teach their children the interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills that will help them succeed in all settings.

Focusing on the preschool to late elementary school age span, this step-by-step book teaches children over 20 important behavioral skills—Listening, Following Directions, How to Interrupt, Accepting Consequences and Apologizing, Dealing with Teasing, How to Handle Peer Pressure—and how to use them in real life.

Teaching Students Classroom and School Routines: From Preschool to High School

There are literally hundreds of social skills that can be taught in a classroom, across a school, or even at home. Many of these are taught in The Stop & Think Social Skills Program (purchased separately) at the preschool through secondary levels. For classroom or school building routines, however, different skills and skill scripts are needed.

Given this, this E-book focuses on: (a) an overview of Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS), (b) an overview of the Stop & Think Social Skills process; and (c) the specific skill scripts needed to teach over 25 Classroom and Building Routines at the prekindergarten to Grade 1, Grades 2 and 3, Grades 4 and 5, and Middle School levels.

The Stop & Think Early Childhood Songbook: Teaching Social Skills through Music

This fun-filled CD has FIFTEEN lively and engaging original songs that help teach your child the most important Stop & Think social skills at the preschool through Grade 1 levels. Designed to reinforce the Stop & Think approach, these memorable songs help children to learn the steps to each social skill in a fun and exciting way. Complete with a children's chorus and talented assortment of musicians, this CD is the perfect way to begin your "Circle Time" at school or to put your children to bed at night.

The Stop & Think Songbook can be used with EITHER the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (for school) or the Stop & Think Parenting Book (for home). Your children will love this CD! (The fact that they are also learning social skills will be "our little secret!")

The Stop & Think Early Childhood Social Skills Posters

These FOURTEEN FULL COLOR posters show pictures of children modeling the fourteen different Stop & Think social skills at the preschool through Grade 1 levels. Complete with the specific steps needed to teach each skill, these posters are printed on durable, coated card stock for years of use in your classroom or home.

As an added BONUS: The back of each poster has the lyrics to the corresponding song on the **The Stop & Think Songbook CD**. This way, both teachers and parents can teach children their Stop & Think social skills while singing along with the CD.

The Core Knowledge Social Skill Posters can be used with EITHER the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (for school) or the Stop & Think Parenting Book (for home). Your children will really “connect” with these pictures !!! This will help them to learn their Stop & Think social skills just that much faster!

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program: Exploring its Research Base and Rationale

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program (published by Voyager/Sopris Learning) is one of the top prekindergarten through middle school social skills curricula in the country today. Designated an evidence-based program by the federal government in 2000, this Document describes the underlying scientific principles that explain why it works, and provides specific examples from the curriculum for each principle. The Document concludes by discussing how school districts should review, evaluate, and select their social skills programs.

References

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Appendix A

Overview of Project ACHIEVE

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is the “anchor” to Project ACHIEVE’s Behavioral Instruction and Intervention (PBSS/SEL) Component which integrates its evidence-based Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning model (PBSS/SEL). In this Appendix, Project ACHIEVE and its seven interdependent components will be described.

Project ACHIEVE is an innovative school reform and school improvement program that has been implemented in schools and school districts across the country since 1990. To date, one or more of its components have been presented to thousands of schools in every state in the country (and internationally)—with the schools ranging from urban to suburban to rural, and from the lowest performing to the highest performing schools in the nation. In 2000, Project ACHIEVE was designated an evidence-based model prevention and intervention program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration’s National Registry of Effective and Promising Practices (SAMHSA; NREPP). The program has also been listed as a “Promising Practice” by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. And, the program has been identified as a “Key Select Program” by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Project ACHIEVE’s ultimate goal is to help design and implement effective school and schooling processes to maximize the academic and social/emotional/behavioral progress and achievement of all students. Project ACHIEVE has also helped schools to implement effective and efficient problem-solving approaches, leading to successful multi-tiered strategic and intensive intervention processes for students with academic and behavioral difficulties. This is done by improving schools’ professional development and effective instruction interactions, while increasing the quality of parent (and community) outreach, involvement, and engagement.

In all, Project ACHIEVE helps schools, communities, and families to develop, strengthen, reinforce, and solidify children and adolescents’ resilience, protective, and effective independent learning and self-management skills such that they (a) learn and move toward academic proficiency; and (b) demonstrate interpersonal, prosocial problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills, while resisting unhealthy and maladaptive behavior patterns.

At its core, Project ACHIEVE uses a field-tested and user-friendly evidence-based blueprint that is based on research-proven and empirically-demonstrated effective practices that have been braided together into an implementation process that works. Using the blueprint, schools complete a needs assessment to determine their current needs, the current approaches they are using that are working, and the gaps that are preventing them from improving further. Project ACHIEVE then employs a whole school improvement process that has professional development and ongoing technical assistance and consultation as its foundation. The professional development process focuses on teaching staff (a) research-based information and effective instructional and educational practices that (b) translate into skills that are successfully implemented in school and classroom settings in a way where (c) staff confidence and autonomy develop over time.

Using its school effectiveness and professional development process, Project ACHIEVE places particular emphasis on increasing students' social and conflict resolution skills, improving student achievement and academic progress, facilitating positive school climates and safe school practices, increasing and sustaining effective school and schooling processes, and increasing community and parental involvement and support. Project ACHIEVE also teaches and reinforces critical instructional skills and intervention approaches that focus on helping staff to strategically plan for and address the immediate and long-term academic and behavioral needs of all students. Finally, Project ACHIEVE teaches staff to use formative and summative evaluations using “real-time” data to help determine whether district, school, and/or Project initiatives and strategies are improving student, staff, school, district, and home/community outcomes.

In summary, Project ACHIEVE is an innovative school reform and school effectiveness program targeting the academic and social development of all students. In doing this, Project ACHIEVE implements preventive programs that focus on the needs of all students. It also develops and implements multi-tiered strategic and intensive intervention programs (as needed) for at-risk, underachieving, resistant, unresponsive, disengaged, and unsuccessful students. Finally, it coordinates comprehensive “wrap-around” services, supports, programs, and interventions for students with intensive needs with school-based, school-linked, and/or community-based mental health service and other social service providers.

Over the past 35+ years, Project ACHIEVE has demonstrated its ability to positively impact schools and districts across the country—at the state, community, district, school, and student levels. Adapting its evidence-based blueprints to diverse settings, Project ACHIEVE also has been implemented in alternative schools, special education centers, psychiatric and juvenile justice facilities, Head Start and other preschool programs, and specialized charter schools.

Across all settings, Project ACHIEVE has truly lived its mission: “Building Strong Schools to Strengthen Student Outcomes.”

Project ACHIEVE's Goals, Constructs, and Components

Goals

Project ACHIEVE is a component-driven school effectiveness and continuous school improvement program that uses an evidence-based whole-school design/school reform process with seven interdependent components that focuses on the following goals:

1. To create a school climate in which every teacher, staff member, and parent believes that everyone is responsible for every student in that building and community.
2. To ensure comprehensive, high quality educational services to all students in the school, and to intervene strategically with those students who are not performing at their expected levels, serving them, as much as possible, in regular classroom settings with equal access to all programs.
3. To improve the classroom and behavior management skills of school personnel and increase the prosocial and self-management skills of students such that safe and disciplined environments are created that increase students' academic engaged time and their positive interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills.
4. To enhance the problem-solving skills of teachers and other educators such that effective interventions for students experiencing or at-risk for academic and/or social-behavioral difficulties are developed and implemented.
5. To increase the social and academic progress of students by increasing the commitment and involvement of parents and community partners in the education of their children. This is accomplished, more specifically, through parents' direct involvement in the schoolwork and schooling of their children, and through their use of effective parenting and supervision skills; and through additional support and wrap-around services by community-based resources and other leaders.
6. To validate the various components, initiatives, and activities implemented during the school's continuous improvement process, and to develop the school's capacity to independently maintain and expand these activities and outcomes as quickly as possible.

To accomplish these goals, it works with schools and school districts to:

- ❖ Maximize Students' Academic Achievement
- ❖ Create Safe School Environments and Positive School Climates
- ❖ Build Effective Teaching and Problem-Solving Teams that Speed Successful Interventions to Challenging Students
- ❖ Increase and Sustain Effective Classroom Instruction
- ❖ Increase and Sustain Strong Parent Involvement

- ❖ Develop and Implement Effective Strategic Plans
- ❖ Organize Building Committees and Student Learning Clusters
- ❖ Develop Effective Data Management Systems for Outcome Evaluations

Constructs and Components

The successful implementation of Project ACHIEVE involves seven interdependent components that are directly connected to the research and practice of continuous school improvement.

The Components of an Effective School. During the past 30 years, a number of evidence-based school effectiveness and continuous improvement models have been developed by thought leaders like Robert Marzano, Bill Daggett, TedSizer, Larry Lezotte, James Comer, Doug Reeves, and others. These models share a number of key constructs that create a foundation for any school's continuous improvement efforts and processes.

These constructs involve a school-wide commitment to:

1. A culture of high and realistic expectations for all students that is supported by a shared mission, vision, values, and goals;
2. Data-driven decision-making that focuses on continuous improvement;
3. Validation, verification, evaluation, and accountability;
4. Articulated and differentiated academic and social, emotional, and behavioral (or health, mental health, and wellness) curricula;
5. Rigorous and relevant instruction delivered through a multi-tiered system of prevention, strategic intervention, and intensive services, supports, strategies, and programs;
6. Personalized learning, resulting in students who are college and career ready;
7. Professional learning communities where cross-disciplinary teaming focuses on effective instruction that results in student learning, mastery, proficiency, and the ability to solve real-world problems;
8. Partnerships that reach out to and actively engage families and community partners;
9. Positive and safe school climates that engage and connect students in sustained, meaningful relationships; and
10. A formal and informal system of shared, multi-leveled leadership.

Beyond these key constructs, these models also have a common core of effective school components. Relative to Project ACHIEVE, seven interdependent components form the foundation of its effective school and school improvement process (see Figure 1; Knoff & Batsche, 1995; Knoff, Finch, & Carlyon, 2004; www.projectachieve.info). Described below, these components are aligned to the constructs underlying an effective school.

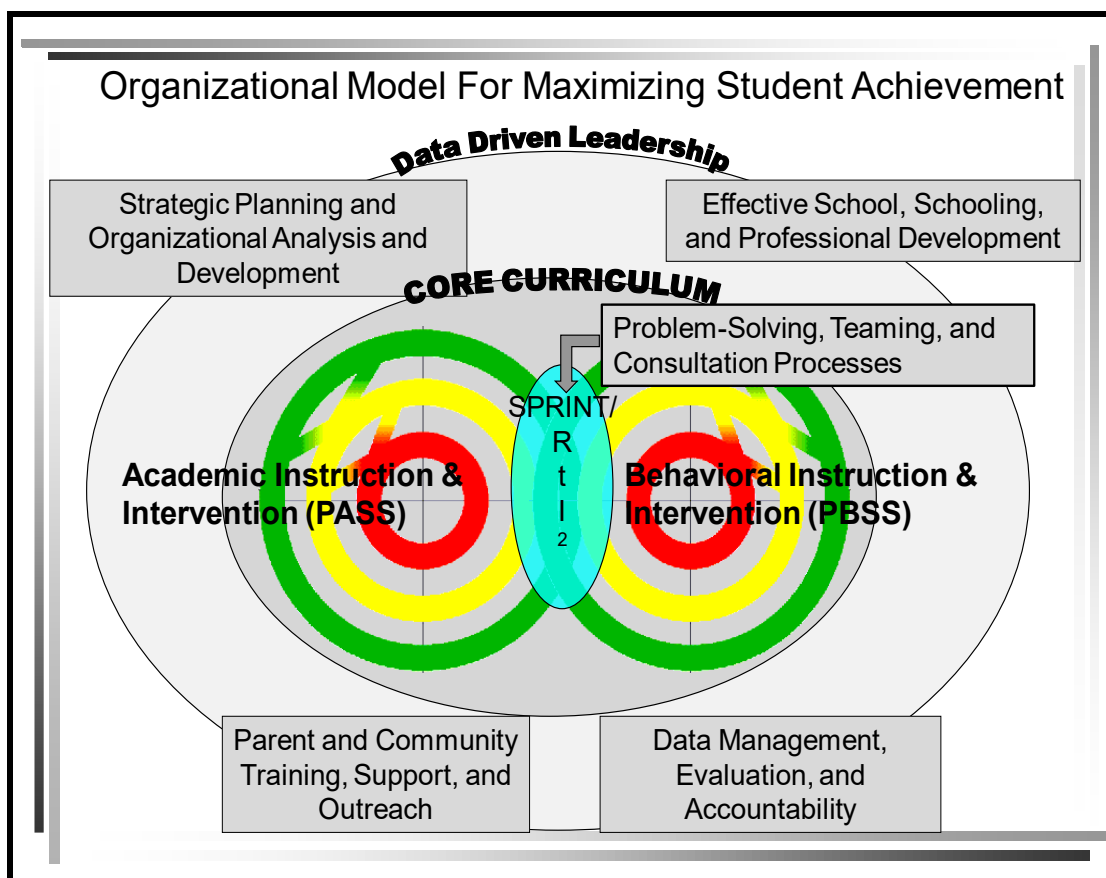


Figure 1. Source: Project ACHIEVE Press, 2009.

Component 1. The Strategic Planning and Organizational Analysis and Development Component initially focuses on completing needs and gap assessments, and resource and option (SWOT) analyses regarding the organizational climate, administrative style, staff decision-making, and other school and schooling processes in and around a school. Activities then move into identifying and reinforcing, or establishing and implementing the organizational policies, procedures, and cyclical approaches that support the academic and social, emotional, behavioral success of all students. The ultimate “product” of this component are three- and one-year School Improvement/Action Plans that help schools build capacity and autonomy, identify and focus resources, facilitate stability and sustainability, and realize student, staff, and system success.

Component 2. The Problem-Solving, Teaming, and Consultation Processes Component focuses on the consistent implementation of data-based, functional assessment, problem-solving approaches that all staff learn and use (a) when implementing effective academic and behavioral instruction in the classroom, and (b) when addressing students who either are not responding to this instruction or are exhibiting serious academic or behavioral concerns. For the latter students, a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) process is used (Knoff, 2009a; Knoff & Dyer, 2010) that integrates problem-solving with consultation and intervention. Rejecting the more “traditional” RTI approach that advocates a universal intervention protocol, this MTSS process emphasizes the importance of linking the data-confirmed reasons why a student is not responding to effective instruction to strategic instructional or intervention approaches. These strategic approaches then are implemented by classroom teachers with consultative support (if needed) from other experts in the school. This MTSS process also recognizes that some students need adapted, differentiated, different, or more intensive instruction to address their needs, while other students need specific, focused, strategic or intensive interventions.

This component also extends problem-solving and consultation beyond the classroom level, to grade-level MTSS teams (or instructional teams, at the secondary level) and building-level MTSS teams, respectively. Project ACHIEVE utilizes grade-level MTSS team meetings to encourage collaborative data-based problem-solving and collegial consultation among teachers at the same or adjacent grade levels. These meetings are especially effective when, for example, one teacher on a teaching team is not having success with a challenging student in a specific area, while another teacher on the same team knows exactly what to do—based on previous training or experience—and can provide consultation and support.

The building-level MTSS team is staffed with the best academic and behavioral intervention specialists in or available to the school, resulting in more multidisciplinary problem-solving and consultation. This team is important because some students are so complex or present such unique or intense challenges that multi- or cross-disciplinary assessment processes and instructional or intervention perspectives are needed to best understand and then address their needs.

Finally, this effective school and schooling component organizes instructional and intervention services, supports, strategies, and programs along a primary (whole-school), secondary (strategic intervention), and tertiary (intensive need or crisis management) continuum to address the academic and behavioral needs of all students—including those who are at-risk, underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful. Critically, the foundation to the entire MTSS process is an effective classroom taught by a highly qualified teacher who uses effective instruction and classroom management techniques. Beyond that, the tiers of the multi-tiered model reflect the intensity of the services and supports needed by students—not where specific interventions are delivered (e.g., inside or outside a general education classroom), or how many students (e.g., all, some, or few) are receiving them (Knoff, Haley, & Gonzales, 2011).

Component 3. The Effective School, Schooling, and Professional Development Component focuses on the evidence-based professional development, clinical supervision, and evaluation practices—at the system, school, staff, classroom, and student levels—that ensure that effective and differentiated instruction and effective and positive behavior management exists in every classroom for every student. This involves creating a culture, and planning and implementing the processes whereby everyone recognizes that professional development occurs, formally and informally, every day for every staff person.

With a goal of increasing staff knowledge, enhancing instructional and intervention skills, and reinforcing confidence and independence, the essential processes radiating from this Component are research and self-study, professional development and in-service instruction, clinical supervision and collegial consultation, and case study practice and application using peer mentoring and professional learning communities. Functionally, instructional and intervention knowledge is systematically linked to the staff members' individual and collective skill, confidence, proficiency, and independence through (a) “master classes” with experts who demonstrate specific, targeted skills; (b) guided staff practice that includes planned applications, supervision, and informed feedback; and (c) the transfer of this training into more challenging settings and situations with additional supervision and evaluation.

As with the other effective school and schooling components, professional development activities extend beyond those establishing effective classroom practices, to those addressing the coordination and implementation of the tiered MTSS services, supports, strategies, and programs needed by students at more strategic or intensive levels.

Component 4. The Academic Instruction and Intervention (or Positive Academic Supports and Services—PASS) Component focuses on creating an effective “Instructional Environment” in every classroom within a school. The Instructional Environment consists of the interdependent interactions among Teacher-Instructional, Student, and Curricular processes in all classrooms. Expanding briefly, the Instructional Environment involves the integration of (a) the different academic curricula being taught in a classroom, as well as their connection to state standards and benchmarks, and district scope and sequence objectives (i.e., “What needs to be learned?”); (b) the teachers who are teaching these curricula, and how they organize and execute their classroom instruction (i.e., “Are appropriate instructional and management strategies being used?”); and (c) the students who are engaged in learning, their ability and motivation to master the instructional material, and their response to effective instruction and sound curricula (i.e., “Is each student capable, prepared, motivated, and able to learn, and are they learning?”).

Critically, the data-based, functional assessment, problem-solving process and effective school and schooling practices, described earlier, work implicitly within this component. This occurs as the three facets of the Instructional Environment are analyzed proactively to determine how to design and implement the most effective instruction so that the highest numbers of students are academically successful. For those students who are unsuccessful, however, specific characteristics or processes within the three Instructional Environment components are analyzed to determine the reasons, individually or collectively, for their lack of success. Using

the data-based, functional assessment, problem-solving process, for example, for a student with ongoing difficulties in third grade mathematics, a classroom teacher—independently or with the grade- or building-level MTSS team, might:

- Analyze the design and organization of the curriculum, its scope and sequence, its materials, and its contribution to the student’s understanding, learning, and progress;
- Evaluate his or her lesson plans, instructional delivery and pace, sensitivity and differentiation with the student, and accuracy in evaluating the student’s understanding and mastery of material and skills over time; and
- Assess the student’s specific mastery of prerequisite skills, understanding of the instructional goals and directions, and progress when more concrete and sequential instruction, positive practice opportunities, or specific guidance and feedback are provided.

Once the reasons for a student’s lack of success are validated, the results are linked to needed instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, and programs. Here is where Project ACHIEVE’s academic service-delivery blueprint, the Positive Academic Supports and Services (PASS) model, is used (see Figure 2).

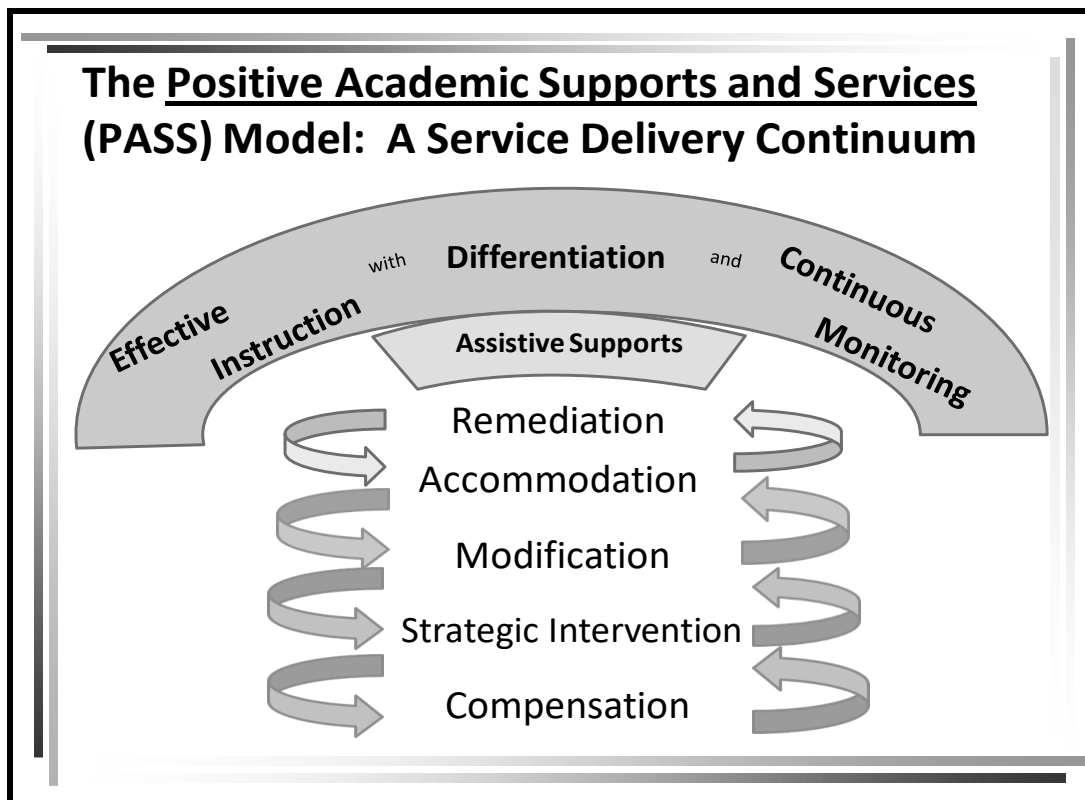


Figure 2. Source: Project ACHIEVE Press, 2011.

The PASS blueprint involves a continuum of academically-focused instructional and intervention supports and services that are strategically implemented, across a multi-tiered system, at different levels of intensity. The foundation to the PASS blueprint is effective and differentiated classroom instruction where teachers use and continuously evaluate (or progress monitor) evidence-based curricular materials and approaches that are matched to students' learning styles and needs. As noted above, after a reasonable period of instruction, practice, and support, if students still have not mastered academic materials that are presented in effective ways, the data-based, functional assessment, problem-solving process is used. Results then are linked to different instructional or intervention approaches that are organized along the PASS continuum as follows:

- Assistive Supports involve specialized equipment, technologies, medical/physical devices, and other resources that help students, especially those with significant disabilities, to learn and function—for example, physically, behaviorally, academically, and in all areas of communication. Assistive supports can be used anywhere along the PASS continuum.
- Remediation involves strategies that teach students specific, usually prerequisite, skills to help them master broader curricular, scope and sequence, or benchmark objectives.
- Accommodations change conditions that support student learning—such as the classroom setting or set-up, how and where instruction is presented, the length of instruction, the length or timeframe for assignments, or how students are expected to respond to questions or complete assignments. Accommodations can range from the informal ones implemented by a classroom teacher, to the formal accommodations required by and specified on a 504 Plan (named for the federal statute that covers these services).
- Modifications involve changes in curricular content—its scope, depth, breadth, or complexity.

Remediations, accommodations, and modifications typically are implemented in general education classrooms by general education teachers, although they may involve consultations with other colleagues or specialists to facilitate effective implementation. At times, these strategies may be implemented in “pull-out,” “pull-in,” or co-taught instructional skill groups so that larger groups of students with the same needs can be helped. If target students do not respond to the strategically-chosen approaches within these three areas, or if their needs are more significant or complex, approaches from the next three PASS areas may be needed:

- Strategic Interventions focus on changing students' specific academic skills or strategies, their motivation, or their ability to comprehend, apply, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate academic content and material. Strategic Interventions typically involve multidisciplinary assessments, as well as formal Academic Intervention or Individualized Education plans (AIPs or IEPs).

- Compensatory Approaches help students to compensate for disabilities that cannot be changed or overcome (e.g., being deaf, blind, or having physical or central nervous system/neurological disabilities). Often combined with assistive supports, compensatory approaches help students to accomplish learning outcomes, even though they cannot learn or demonstrate specific skills within those outcomes. For example, for students who will never learn to decode sounds and words due to neurological dysfunctions, the compensatory use of audio or web-based instruction and (electronic) books can still help them to access information from text and become knowledgeable and literate. Both assistive supports and compensatory approaches are “positive academic supports” that typically are provided through IEPs.

While there is a sequential nature to the components within the PASS continuum, it is a strategic and fluid—not a lock-step—blueprint. That is, the supports and services are utilized based on students’ needs and the intensity of these needs. For example, if reliable and valid assessments indicate that a student needs immediate accommodations to be successful in the classroom, then there is no need to implement remediations or modifications just to “prove” that they were not successful. In addition, there are times when students will receive different supports or services on the continuum simultaneously. For example, some students will need both modifications and assistive supports in order to be successful. Thus, the supports and services within the PASS are strategically applied to individual students. Moreover, while it is most advantageous to deliver needed supports and services within the general education classroom (i.e., the least restrictive environment), other instructional options could include co-teaching (e.g., by general and special education teachers in a general education classroom), pull-in services (e.g., by instructional support or special education teachers in a general education classroom), short-term pull-out services (e.g., by instructional support teachers focusing on specific academic skills and outcomes), or more intensive pull-out services (e.g., by instructional support or special education teachers).

All of these staff and setting decisions are based on the intensity of students’ skill-specific needs, their response to previous instructional or intervention supports and services, and the level of instructional or intervention expertise needed. Ultimately, the goal of this Project ACHIEVE component, and the PASS model, is to provide students with early, intensive, and successful supports and services that are identified through the problem-solving process, and implemented with integrity and needed intensity.

Component 5. The Behavioral Instruction and Intervention (PBSS/SEL) Component focuses on implementing a comprehensive positive behavioral support, social-emotional learning, and positive behavioral supports system within a school. Using Project ACHIEVE’s evidence-based Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning model (PBSS/SEL), this whole school approach involves helping (a) students learn, master, and apply interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills and interactions; (b) staff to create positive, safe, supportive, and consistent classroom climates and school settings that hold students accountable for their behavior; (c) schools to implement the strategic and intensive behavioral instruction or intervention needed to address students with

non-responsive, resistant, challenging, or extreme behavior; and (d) communities to reinforce these goals in home and other community settings.

Like the Academic Instruction and Intervention (PASS) component, this component and its PBSS/SEL model are focused on and implemented primarily in the Instructional Environment. Indeed, when students do not respond to effective social, emotional, and behavioral instruction, the data-based, functional assessment, problem-solving process is used at the student, classroom, grade, and building levels (the latter two through the early intervention SPRINT—School Prevention, Review, and Intervention Teams—our name for a school’s Child Study Team or Student Assistance Team) to determine why the situation is occurring and what instructional and/or intervention approaches are needed.

Ultimately, the primary goals of the PBSS/SEL system are to teach students who are socially competent and skilled in self-management, staff who can competently, confidently, and independently teach social skills and implement effective classroom management strategies; and schools that can respond to students’ strategic and intensive social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Thus, “Self-Management” in the PBSS/SEL model occurs at three levels: student, staff, and school.

Component 6. The Parent and Community Training, Support, and Outreach Component focuses on increasing the involvement of all parents, but especially the involvement of parents of at-risk, underachieving, and chronically non-performing students (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999). Unfortunately, parents in these latter three groups tend to be less involved in and supportive of the school and schooling process, and thus, parent involvement often discriminates achieving from underachieving students (Christensen, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992; Dunst, Trivette, & Johanson, 1994). Relative to the community, many schools do not use, and often are unaware of, the expertise and resources available to them. In addition, there are times when community agencies (e.g., after school programs) are providing services that schools could use to reinforce or extend their instructional, intervention, or other support activities. Finally, for students with significant, 24/7 academic or behavioral/mental health challenges, the need to coordinate and integrate school and community-based professionals and their services, supports, strategies, or programs is essential to the integrity of these approaches and the success of the students.

Among the parent and community activities that effective schools could demonstrate in this component are:

- Conducting needs assessments to look at the current and desired status of parent involvement and home-school-community collaboration, and then designing and executing plans that meet identified needs;
- Organizing building staff around collaboration and community outreach, and establishing a school-level committee to specifically focus on more formal initiatives;

- Creating parent drop-in centers to help parents see the school as a community resource for information and life-long learning, increase their positive relationships and comfort levels with school staff, and encourage their participation in school activities;
- Training parent mentors who then can share information with other parents about the school's academic and social, emotional, and behavioral programs, and teach them how to support their children and adolescents at home relative to study skills, homework, academic proficiency, and social-behavioral success;
- Completing community resource surveys resulting in resource directories that identify important organizations, agencies, and professional programs, and important professionals with their specific skills and areas of educational, health and mental health, and related expertise; and
- Reaching out to these community resources, formally and informally, to establish the communication, collaboration, and coordination that is especially needed relative to integrating services for at-risk, underachieving, and challenging students.

Component 7. The Data Management, Evaluation, and Accountability Component focuses on actively evaluating, formatively and summatively, the status and progress of students' academic and behavioral mastery of information and skills, as well as the processes and activities that support the other instructional, staff, and service components (see above) of an effective school. Part of this process involves collecting formative and summative data to validate the impact of a school's strategic planning and school improvement efforts; its professional development and capacity-building efforts; its selection, preparation, and implementation of academic and behavioral curricula and instruction; and its problem-solving, consultation, and multi-tiered MTSS services and supports for students not making appropriate academic or behavioral progress.

Another part of this process involves evaluating the interpersonal and inter-professional success of a school's shared leadership and committee and team processes, as well as the contributions of administrative, related services, and instructional support personnel to system, staff, and student success. Relative to interpersonal and inter-professional relationships, evaluations should consider "staff to staff, staff to parent and community, staff to student, and student and student" interactions. All of these interactions collectively contribute to the climate and functioning of a school.

An Overview of Project ACHIEVE's Three-Year Implementation Blueprint

As noted above, Project ACHIEVE's shared leadership and continuous improvement process involves an integrated school-wide initiative that blends strategic planning and organizational development with professional development and effective leadership. In a broad sense, all of the professional development steps are designed: (a) to maximize staff acceptance and understanding of the Project, its components, and its strategies/activities; (b) to provide skill training where prerequisite skills are taught before more complex skills; (c) to insure the existence of classroom-based technical support and consultation; and (d) to facilitate accurate data collection to measure outcomes and demonstrate accountability.

Supported by district leaders and facilitators, the implementation of Project ACHIEVE's school-wide continuous improvement process involves a series of specific activities that are organized around an evidence-based blueprint and implementation sequence. Significantly, as part of this blueprint, there is a well-organized Logic Chart that structures the planned sequence and component parts of our work (see Figure 3 below). The Chart and its components are integrated into the Implementation Timelines and Sequences that are tailored to each school, district, or organization.

Implementation Timelines and Sequences

Guided by its seven interdependent components and the Logic Chart, Project ACHIEVE is implemented in a series of carefully sequenced activities that typically occur over a four-year period that includes a preparatory Pre-Implementation Year.

The four-year blueprint is summarized as follows:

- Pre-Implementation Planning Year (Exploration and Installation)
- Implementation Years 1 and 2 (Installation and Initial Implementation)
- Implementation Year 3 (Full Implementation)

The sequenced activities are summarized in a planning document called the PRAIISE (Project ACHIEVE Implementation Integrity Self-Evaluation). And implementation is guided by a document called the APPRAISE (Action Plan for Project ACHIEVE Implementation Success and Evaluation). Critically, the PRAIISE is initially used as part of a comprehensive needs assessment, and later to evaluate implementation integrity.

Below are brief descriptions of the major activities that occur during the four prototypical years of Project ACHIEVE implementation.

Critically, the activity outlines below represent only a blueprint. The actual activities are determined by the needs assessment and strategic planning process. Indeed, the sequence of some steps can be modified—especially if a school or district has already accomplished some of them, or needs to accomplish certain ones first. In addition, some districts or schools accomplish some steps in less time, while others may require more time.

Pre-Implementation Year [Exploration and Installation]

When the school's Project ACHIEVE application is accepted and the Plan for Planning process begins, the "Pre-Implementation Year" has formally begun. As noted above, the Plan for Planning process results in a formal Action Plan which represents an agreement relative to how the school will build the infrastructure for the resulting Year I Project ACHIEVE implementation activities.

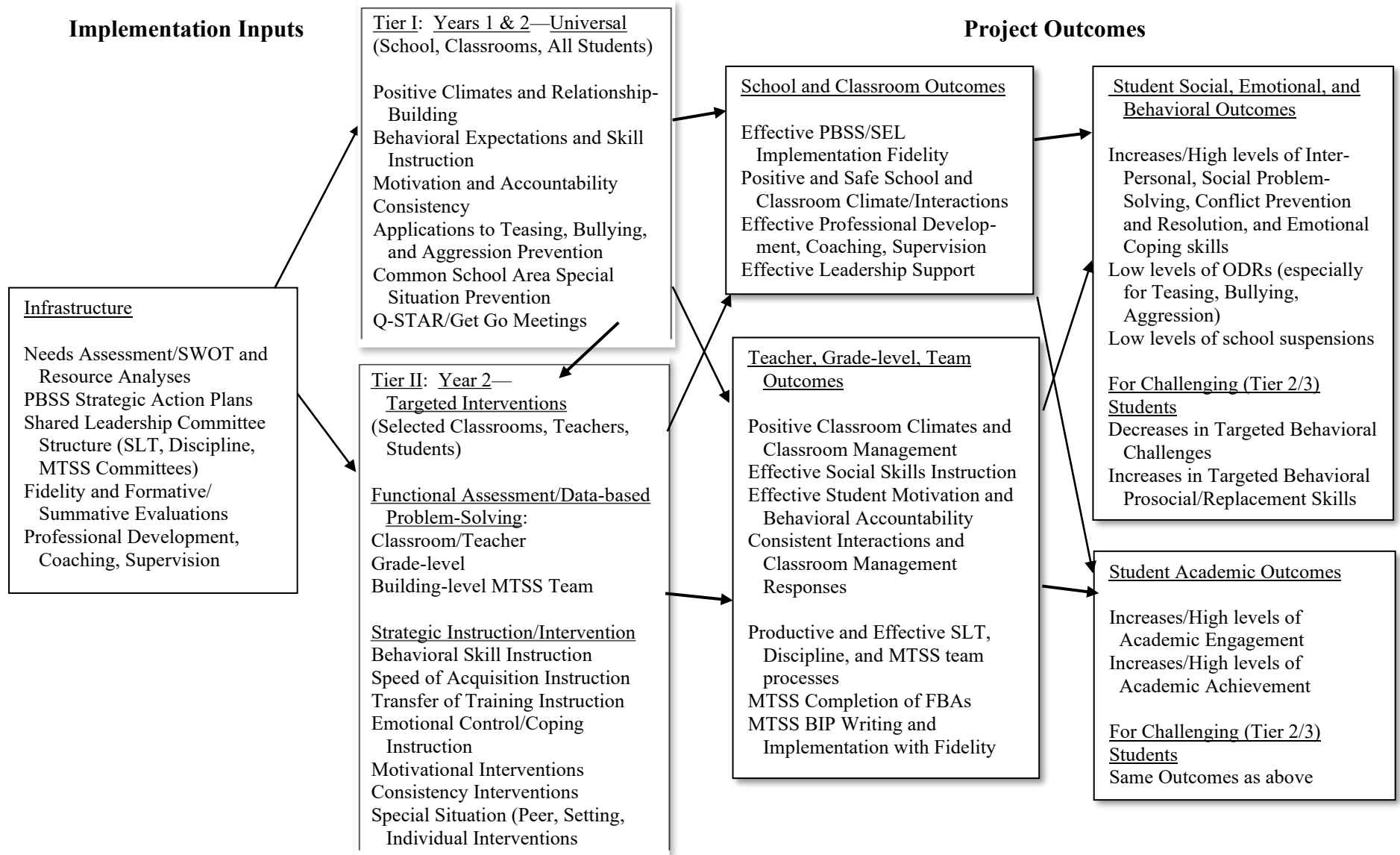
Under prototypical circumstances, application approval and initial readiness activities occur in the Fall, while Pre-Implementation activities proceed from November through July.

Prototypical Pre-Implementation Year Activities [Exploration and Installation]

- ❖ Collect three years of school status and improvement data
- ❖ Complete school status and longitudinal history self-study
- ❖ Hold Plan for Planning Meeting
- ❖ Form School-level Shared Leadership Committees
- ❖ Select Committee Co-chairs and members
- ❖ Create committee mission, role and function documents for each Committee
- ❖ Complete comprehensive needs assessment and resource analysis
- ❖ Create Staff, Consultant, and Community Resource Directories
- ❖ Complete surveys of staff academic and behavioral instruction and intervention skills
- ❖ Complete surveys of staff cohesion, instruction, classroom management, school safety
- ❖ Create committee implementation plans
- ❖ Review and align school/district policies with Project ACHIEVE plans and directions
- ❖ Review and align school vision, mission, and value statements as needed
- ❖ Review and redesigned existing multi-tiered system of services and supports
- ❖ Review data collection and management system
- ❖ Review curriculum and instruction system and outcomes
- ❖ Review social, emotional, and behavioral instruction system and outcomes
- ❖ Review mentoring, consultation, supervision, and evaluation systems and outcomes
- ❖ Complete student behavioral accountability
- ❖ Complete social skills curriculum and staff instruction preparation
- ❖ Complete the "Get-Go" process and students briefing reports
- ❖ Complete any needed Special Situation Analyses

Figure 3

Project ACHIEVE Logic Chart/Theory of Action



Year 1 [Installation and Initial Implementation]

- ❖ Hold, monitor, and evaluate Committee activities, including the School Leadership Team
- ❖ Roll-out of the Positive Behavioral Support and Social, Emotional Learning System (PBSS/SEL), along with the Behavioral Matrix, and their supporting processes
- ❖ Stop & Think Social Skills training, implementation, and evaluation
- ❖ Time-Out/Office Discipline Referral and Removal training, implementation, and evaluation
- ❖ Parent Outreach and Involvement relative to the Stop & Think Social Skills Program
- ❖ Special Situations Analyses of Setting-specific and Peer Group-specific problems in the school—for those identified, analysis, planning, and implementation
- ❖ Audit of the curriculum and instruction program in all academic areas, along with audits of the progress monitoring assessments and processes used in the school, as well as the instructional and intervention resources in and available to the school
- ❖ Design, training of the staff, and beginning implementation of the MTSS/Response-to-Instruction-and-Intervention/Early Intervention process, including the MTSS Operations Handbook
- ❖ Training of the Building-level MTSS team in the data-based functional assessment problem-solving process
- ❖ Eventually, training of the Grade- or Instructional-level MTSS teams in the data-based functional assessment problem-solving process, and establishment of the weekly/ bimonthly Grade-level MTSS meetings
- ❖ Establishment of the Quarterly Student Achievement Review (Q-STAR) Meetings
- ❖ Parent and community involvement needs assessment, and action plan development and implementation
- ❖ Analyses of needed formative and summative program evaluation and accountability procedures, strategies, and activities along with the creation of functional, interactive, real time data-bases
- ❖ End-of-Year Articulation training and implementation at the school, staff, and student levels (the “Get-Go” process)

Year 2 [Installation and Initial Implementation]

Continuation and Evolvment of All Year 1 Activities and Activities written by the School-level Committees into the School Improvement Plan

In addition:

- ❖ Analysis of the school’s available Strategic (Tier II) academic and behavioral assessment processes and interventions, with resulting planning, development, training, and implementation with both intervention staff and all staff
- ❖ Special Situations Analyses of Setting-specific and Peer Group-specific problems in the school—for those identified, analysis, planning, and implementation

- ❖ Crisis prevention, intervention, and response planning and implementation
- ❖ Full implementation of the MTSS/Response-to-Instruction-and-Intervention/Early Intervention process, including the Building-level and Grade-level MTSS teams in the data-based functional assessment problem-solving process
- ❖ Parent and Community positive behavioral support system and school safety outreach and involvement activities
- ❖ Regular and Special Education inclusion, integration, and effective instruction procedures, strategies, and approaches
- ❖ Training, differentiated by staff roles and groups, in the areas of consultation, clinical supervision, and peer- or co-teaching strategies and procedures
- ❖ Continued development, implementation, and evaluation of needed formative and summative program evaluation and accountability procedures, strategies, and activities along with the creation of functional, interactive, real time data-bases
- ❖ Training of Trainers programming in selected areas implemented during Year 1
- ❖ End-of-Year Articulation training and implementation at the school, staff, and student levels

Year 3 [Full Implementation]

Continuation and Evolvment of All Year 1 and 2 Activities and Activities written by the School-level Committees into the School Improvement Plan

In addition:

- ❖ Analysis of the school's available Strategic (Tier III) academic and behavioral assessment processes and interventions, with resulting planning, development, training, and implementation with both intervention staff and all staff
- ❖ Special Situations Analyses of Setting-specific and Peer Group-specific problems in the school—for those identified, analysis, planning, and implementation
- ❖ Continued development, implementation, and evaluation of needed formative and summative program evaluation and accountability procedures, strategies, and activities along with the creation of functional, interactive, real time data-bases
- ❖ Training of Trainers programming in selected areas implemented during Years 1 and 2
- ❖ End-of-Year Articulation training and implementation at the school, staff, and student levels