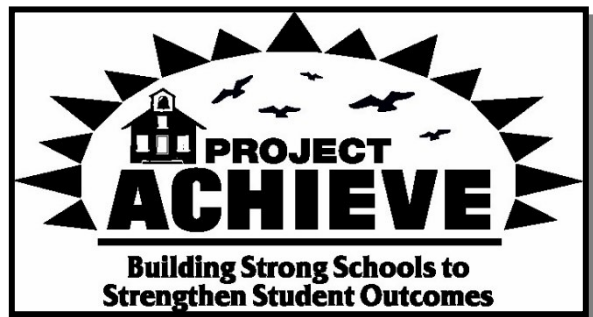

Implementing Project ACHIEVE at the School and District Levels

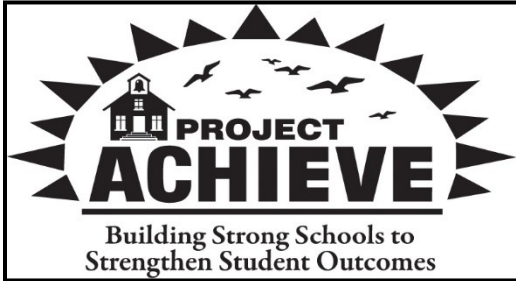
School Improvement through Social-Emotional Learning Systems

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Implementing Project ACHIEVE at the School and District Levels: School Improvement through Social-Emotional Learning Systems

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“Building Strong Schools to Strengthen Student Outcomes”

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Overview of Project ACHIEVE

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.

Project ACHIEVE's Primary School Improvement 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 comprehensive 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

Project ACHIEVE's Seven Sure Solution Model

Over the past 40 years, numerous continuous school improvement initiatives have been developed by thought leaders like Ted Sizer, Larry Lezotte, James Comer, Robert Marzano, Richard DuFour, and others. These frameworks share some key constructs that create a foundation for any school's improvement efforts and processes.

These constructs have been updated and integrated into a field-tested and school-proven, evidence-based continuous improvement model that has been implemented as Project ACHIEVE over the past forty years or more across the country. The core of this model involves the "Seven Sure Solutions" for school improvement success.

These Seven Sure Solutions are (see Figure 1 and the descriptions below):

- Sure Solution 1. Strategic Planning and Organizational Development
- Sure Solution 2. Community and Family Involvement, Training, Support, and Outreach
- Sure Solution 3. Professional Development, Supervision, and Accountability
- Sure Solution 4. Academic Instruction, Intervention, and Achievement
- Sure Solution 5. Behavioral Instruction, Intervention, and Self-Management
- Sure Solution 6. Multi-tiered Problem-Solving and Systems of Support
- Sure Solution 7. Data Management, Evaluation, and Efficacy

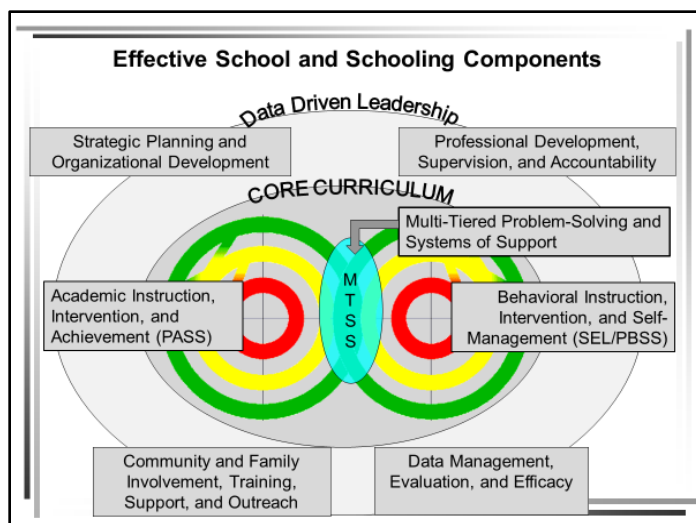


Figure 1. The Seven Sure Solutions for School and Student Success

Sure Solution 1. The Strategic Planning and Organizational Development Component initially focuses on completing needs and gap assessments, and strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) analyses of a school’s organizational and school climate, administrative style and support, staff decision-making and interactions, curriculum and instruction, social-emotional learning and multi-tiered services, and other school and schooling processes.

Activities move into identifying and reinforcing, or establishing and implementing effective organizational policies, procedures, and data management approaches that support the academic and social, emotional, behavioral success of all students. . . and using data-driven decisions to facilitate student, staff, and school success.

An important “product” within this component are annual school improvement Action Plans that integrate all of the Seven Solution areas to help schools build capacity and autonomy; to identify and focus resources; to maintain fidelity, productivity, and sustainability; and to produce cumulative and progressive targeted outcomes.

From an organizational development perspective, effective schools utilize shared and collaborative leadership processes from administration to instructional and related services staff to “non-certified” support staff. Indeed, by giving all staff a “voice” in how different parts of the school runs and how certain decisions are made, a commitment to shared leadership strategies and approaches help create a positive, “can-do” team atmosphere that facilitates both formal and informal staff interactions.

One exemplar of a shared leadership approach involves how a school organizes and fills the positions on its school-level committees. While discussed in a later chapter, we recommend that (a) every instructional staff person be on at least one school-level committee; (b) the committees meet on at least a monthly basis; (c) each committee’s annual goals and activities are integrated into the school’s school improvement Action Plan, and that (d) committees adhere to agreed-on meeting expectations, group norms, and decision-making procedures.

While modified as needed to a school’s size, needs, and staffing patterns, a shared committee blueprint mirrors the Seven Sure Solutions (see Figure 2). That is, there is a (a) Curriculum and Instruction, (b) School Climate and Student Discipline, (c) Professional Development and Teacher Support, and (d)

Community and Parent Outreach committee that includes teachers from every grade level and other relevant school representatives. Each of these four committees is Co-Chaired by two instructional staff, and these staff members are automatically on the (e) School Leadership Team which is chaired by the building principal.

A separate (f) Building-level Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Team is staffed by the multi-tiered assessment and intervention-related services professionals along with the building principal and selected others (e.g., the school nurse). This is the early assessment and intervention team that identifies why students are demonstrating academic struggles and social, emotional, or behavioral challenges.

Significantly, Data Management, Evaluation, and Efficacy Solution 7 processes are embedded in the functioning and work of all six of the Committees or Teams above.

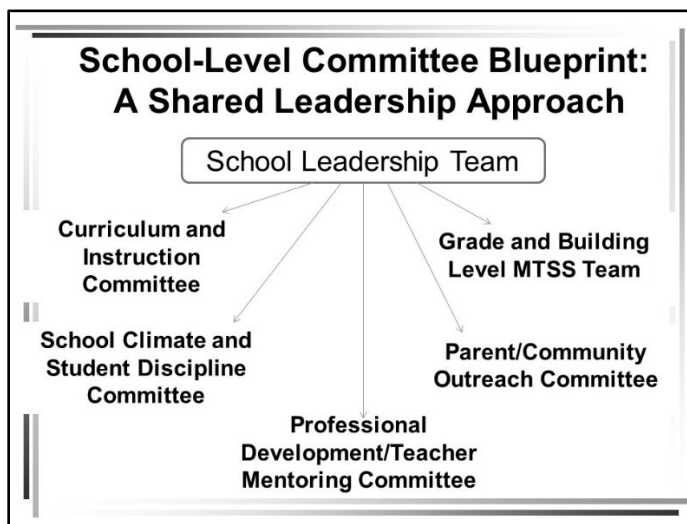


Figure 2. Effective Schools Shared Leadership Committee Blueprint

Sure Solution 2. The Community and Family Involvement, Training, Support, and Outreach Component focuses on increasing the involvement of all parents, but especially the involvement of parents of at-risk, chronically absent, underachieving, and non-performing students.

Unfortunately, parents in these latter four groups tend to be less involved in and supportive of the school and schooling process. This often produces a cycle of student failure that results in students who drop out of school and/or who are unprepared for post-graduation employment.

Relative to the community, many schools do not use, and often are unaware of, the “outside” expertise and resources available to them. In addition, there are times when community agencies (e.g., after school, weekend, or summer programs) provide services that schools could use to complement or extend their instructional, intervention, or other support activities.

Finally, for students with significant, 24/7 academic or social, emotional, behavioral, or 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 the progress, treatment, and success for the students involved.

Among the parent and community activities that effective schools could utilize within this component are:

- Conducting needs assessments to look at the current and desired status of parent involvement and home-school-community collaboration. . . then designing and executing plans that meet identified gaps or 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 or spaces 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 parents as parent mentors who can then share information with other parents about the school's academic and social, emotional, and behavioral programs. . . teaching how to support children and adolescents at home relative to study skills, homework, learning mastery, 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 community resources, formally and informally, to establish the communication, collaboration, and coordination to help integrate services for at-risk, underachieving, and challenging or challenged students.

Sure Solution 3. The Professional Development, Supervision, and Accountability Component focuses on how schools implement effective professional development, clinical supervision and evaluation, coaching and feedback, and instruction and intervention accountability practices—at the school and staff levels.

These practices ensure that (a) differentiated and well-implemented instruction and positive classroom management processes exist in every classroom for every student; and (b) multi-tiered services and interventions are delivered by support and related services staff for students needing strategic (i.e., Tier 2) and intensive (i.e., Tier 3) strategies.

All of this helps create a school culture where every staff person recognizes that professional development occurs, formally and informally, every day for everyone in a school, and that everyone is a potential consultant for someone else.

Successful staff professional development has three interdependent goals and components:

- The Understanding, Learning, and Mastery of the information, content, and knowledge related to a specific professional development topic or initiative; that transfers over time into. . .
- The effective Skill and Application needed to implement and sustain it successfully with students and/or staff in a classroom or other school setting; that results over time in. . .

- Independent Staff Competence and Confidence, because the skills have been implemented many times, under many conditions, with many different kinds of students.

These three components are essential to maximize the staff interactions needed to successfully accomplish targeted student outcomes. They are so important that they must be part of a district or school's school improvement Action Plan. . . organized and outlined before a professional development initiative is ever begun.

These components, moreover, must be embedded in how professional development is organized, implemented, and evaluated at the district, school, department, or grade level. . . and who leads and facilitates the professional development (PD) process.

More specifically, if a district or school is using an outside expert to guide a professional development initiative, the contract or agreement should include not just the expert's in-service presentations. . . but the follow-up coaching, consultation, and technical assistance needed to fully accomplish the three PD goals and components above.

These post-in-service sessions typically involve extended small group staff trainings that include (a) "master classes" with the in-service expert who demonstrates the initiative's specific, targeted skills; (b) guided staff roleplay or practice sessions of the skills with real-time coaching and critique; (c) additional supervised sessions using skill applications—with informed feedback—that increase in intensity and complexity; and (d) the transfer of the training, for example, with students in staff members' own classrooms or other school settings and additional supervision and evaluation.

The coaching and consultation sessions should be additionally supplemented with administrative supervision and evaluation—all to ensure that staff have the time, resources, support, and feedback needed to attain both competence and confidence.

Embedded in this entire process is staff accountability and, ultimately, the completion of informal and formal professional performance and continuing appointment reviews.

Thus, this Sure Solution includes the staff evaluations that validate the effectiveness of all individual staff members, and—when needed—the use of Professional Development/Competency Plans when staff demonstrate significant or persistent skill gaps in their different school, classroom, or student-support roles.

As noted, PD activities extend beyond those establishing effective classroom practices, to those addressing the coordination and implementation of the school's multi-tiered services, supports, strategies, and interventions for students at the more strategic or intensive levels.

Sure Solution 4. The Academic Instruction, Intervention, and Achievement Component focuses on creating an effective "Instructional Environment" in every classroom within a school. The Instructional Environment consists of the Curriculum, Teacher-Instruction, and Student processes that are present in all classrooms (see Figure 3).

Expanding briefly, the Instructional Environment involves the integration of:

- 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?");

- The teachers who are teaching these curricula, how they create positive learning environments, organize and execute differentiated classroom instruction, and monitor student progress (i.e., “Are appropriate and effective instruction and classroom management strategies being used?”); and
- The students who are (hopefully, fully) engaged in learning, responsive to effective instruction and classroom management, and motivated to apply their skills to master the curricula presented (i.e., “Is each student capable, prepared, motivated, and able to learn, and are they learning?”).

More specifically, as teachers prepare to effectively differentiate their instruction to successfully impact the highest number of students possible, they:

- Analyze the design and organization of the curriculum, its scope and sequence, its materials, and its expectations for and contribution to all students’ understanding, learning, and progress;
- Develop their lesson plans, focusing on their instructional delivery and pace, the facilitation of student engagement and differentiation, and how to accurately assess students’ understanding and mastery of material and skills over time; and
- Create other evaluations of students’ mastery of prerequisite skills, their understanding of their lessons’ instructional goals and directions, and their need for concrete and sequential instruction, positive practice opportunities, and related guidance and feedback.

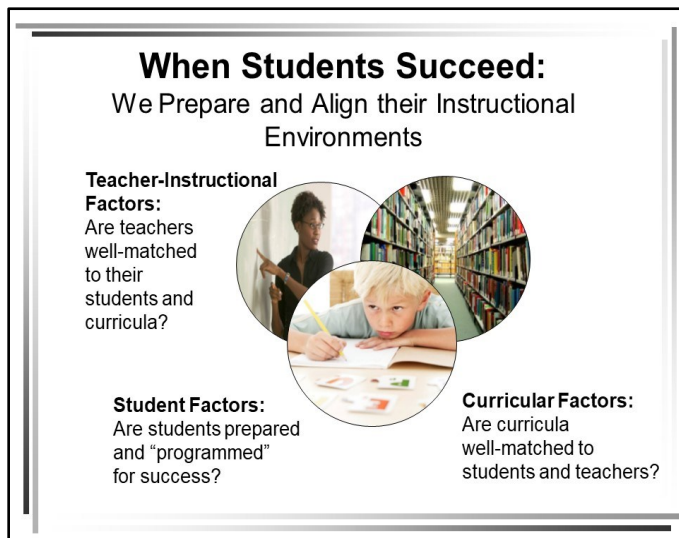


Figure 3. Processes in the Instructional/Classroom Environment

When students are not learning academic material as quickly as other students. . . or not at all. . . teachers typically (a) complete task or error analyses of their work, and ask them to share their perspectives; (b) re-evaluate their mastery of prerequisite skills; (c) provide more small group or individual direct, differentiated instruction and step-by-step guidance; and/or (d) re-teach the material in a different way.

When students are continuously or persistently struggling to learn and master academic material over time, teachers (a) review the student’s physical or virtual cumulative school records; (b) consult with other teachers and intervention specialists who are currently or have previously taught the student; and (c) begin a data-based, problem-solving process to functionally assess which (combination of) elements within the three Instructional Environment areas are contributing to “the problem.”

Once the reasons are validated, teachers link the “root causes” of the problem to specific services, supports, strategies, or interventions that are delivered as much as possible in the classroom. From a curriculum and instruction perspective, this most often involves (a) using assistive supports, or implementing, respectfully, (b) remediation, (c) accommodation, (d) modification, or (e) intervention strategies.

By way of definition:

- 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 general to special education continuum.
- Remediation involves strategies that teach students specific, usually prerequisite, skills to help prepare them to learn and master broader, current, or grade-level appropriate curricular, scope and sequence, or benchmark objectives.
- Accommodations change conditions that facilitate or 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 classroom teachers to the formal accommodations required by and specified on a 504 Plan (named for the federal statute that covers these services)—that must be implemented by classroom teachers.
- Modifications involve changes in curricular content—its scope, depth, breadth, or complexity. This involves actual changes to what curricula, materials, or lessons are presented to struggling students, and changes to the learning expectations (usually a reduction or narrowing) for that student.
- Interventions are evidence-based strategies to attain specific academic targets (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonetic decoding, fluency skills; calculating addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division problems, manipulating/applying fractions; solving biological, chemistry, or physics solutions). These research-to-practice strategies are implemented individually or in small groups, and they are faded out or discontinued when the students involved show either skill mastery or the ability to independently use a strategy to demonstrate the targeted skill.

Assistive Supports, remediations, accommodations, and modifications are typically implemented by general education classroom teachers with their own students. Interventions may be implemented by the same classroom teachers, and/or they may be assisted by push-in, co-teaching, or pull-out academic intervention specialists or, separately, paraprofessionals or others.

Critically, the five strategies above should not be implemented in a “lock-set” sequence—although some could be used in combination. That is, teachers should not first try assistive supports then, if they “fail,” remediation. . . then accommodations. . . and so on. These strategies are all distinctly different. Each is selected due to the different prevailing reasons determined through the problem-solving process discussed above.

When students demonstrate significant academic gaps, or they do not respond to one or more of the five strategies above, teachers should move more formally into the multi-tiered system of support process involving the school’s MTSS (or the equivalent) Team (i.e., Sure Solution 6).

From a continuous school improvement perspective, schools need to explicitly identify, plan, execute, and evaluate the training, staff, resources, and interactions needed such that teachers and others can immediately implement all of the Sure Solution 4 facets above on behalf of all students.

Sure Solution 5. The Behavioral Instruction, Intervention, and Self-Management Component focuses on helping:

- Students to learn, master, and apply interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional awareness, control, communication, and coping skills to individual, teacher and peer, and small- and large-group interactions;
- Staff to create positive, safe, supportive, well-managed, and consistent classroom climates that engage and motivate students, while holding them accountable for prosocial behavior; and
- Schools to promote safe and well-managed common school areas, interactions that support students from different backgrounds (for example, gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation), and discipline approaches that are educative, measured, equitable, and geared to eliminating future inappropriate behavior, while replacing it with appropriate, prosocial behavior.

These effective school-wide discipline, classroom management, and student self-management processes and strategies also address the following issues:

- Within-school and virtual teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression;
- Disproportionate office discipline referrals and suspensions/ expulsions—especially for students of color and with disabilities;
- The ineffectiveness of zero tolerance policies—compounded by the lack of effective multi-tiered social, emotional, and behavioral services, supports, strategies, and interventions; and
- The lack of professional development and coaching—especially when most novice teachers (and others) have never had appropriate pre-service training in classroom management, student mental health, and social skills training.

Like Solution 5 and its focus on academic instruction, intervention, and achievement, this Solution focuses on supporting general education teachers to teach, motivate, evaluate, and reinforce all students’ social, emotional, and behavioral self-management. This is accomplished through an evidence-based

Social-Emotional Learning/Positive Behavioral Support System (SEL/PBSS) blueprint that includes student behavior in the Common Areas of the school and virtual, out-of-school interactions (see Figure 4).

This blueprint involves the following proven, interdependent science-to-practice areas:

- Positive School and Classroom Climates, and Staff and Peer Relationships

This area focuses on building strong, positive relationships across same-grade and cross-grade students, across teachers and other staff and administrators in the school, across students and staff, and across students and staff and parents and others in the community. It also includes activities and expectations that build and sustain support for students from different backgrounds (relative, for example, to gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation).

- Explicit Prosocial Behavioral Expectations in the classrooms and common school areas, and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skill Instruction

This area is anchored by The Stop & Think Social Skills Program, an evidence-based (through SAMHSA and CASEL) social skills program taught by classroom teachers at every grade level, and that focuses on teaching, modeling, practicing, and applying social and behavioral skills (e.g., Listening, Following Direction, Asking for Help, Ignoring Distractions, Dealing with Teasing, Accepting Consequences). It also includes student training in emotional awareness, control, communication, and coping so that students can demonstrate or perform their social skills even under conditions of emotionality.

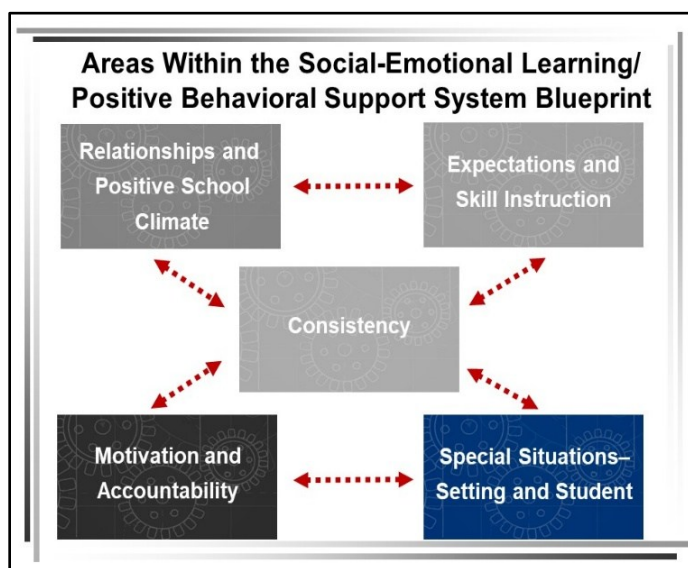


Figure 4. Science-to-Practice SEL/PBSS Areas

- Student Motivation and Accountability

This area focuses on the developmentally-appropriate incentives and consequences, respectfully, that motivate appropriate, prosocial student behavior, and the differential responses needed to hold students accountable for inappropriate, anti-social behavior. This area includes the

development (if needed) of a progressive, tiered school Behavioral Code of Conduct, and how to implement it in equitable ways so as to eliminate disproportionality—especially for students of color and with disabilities.

- Consistency and Fidelity

This area focuses on how to train and reinforce staff and students in the consistent implementation of all Sure Solution 5 instructional and interactive activities and processes so that they are used and applied as empirically designed and with fidelity. Clearly, if evidence-based processes are not implemented with the consistency (across, for example, time, people, settings, and situations), integrity, and intensity needed to facilitate or change behavior, then they (a) will not work or (b) will take longer to work, and (c) this may create a resistance or distrust of the change process that potentially undermines future change efforts.

- Special Situations

This area addresses the more complex, multi-dimensional behaviors related to (a) the school's Common Areas; (b) peer-driven psychosocial interactions (including teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression); and (c) the multi-tiered services, supports, and interventions needed by students who—once again—are not responding to effective school discipline and classroom management approaches. This includes the preventative systems that keep schools, staff, and students safe and secure, all the way to the crisis response, management, and post-event processes needed when extreme situations occur.

This Solution includes the classroom-based modifications, accommodations, and interventions needed by students who are not responding to effective classroom management strategies, and the involvement of related service and mental health professionals (e.g., behavioral interventionists, counselors, social workers) when further student support is required.

As in Solution 5, the five areas above are not implemented in a “lock-set” sequence—they are interdependent. Each area contributes an essential “piece” to the success of this Solution.

When students demonstrate significant social, emotional, behavioral, or mental health gaps, and/or they are not responding to classroom-based intervention and supports, teachers should move more formally into the multi-tiered system of support process through the school's MTSS (or the equivalent) Team (i.e., Sure Solution 6).

Finally, and once again, from a continuous school improvement perspective, schools need to explicitly identify, plan, execute, and evaluate the training, staff, resources, and interactions needed such that teachers and others can immediately implement all of the Sure Solution 5 facets above on behalf of all students.

Sure Solution 6. The Multi-tiered Problem-Solving and Systems of Support Component focuses on the continuum of academic and/or social, emotional, and behavioral services, supports, and interventions (a) for all students in their general education classrooms (Tier I); to (b) the need to deliver strategic approaches for some students (Tier II); to (c) the need to deliver the most intensive approaches for other students (Tier III; see Figure 5).

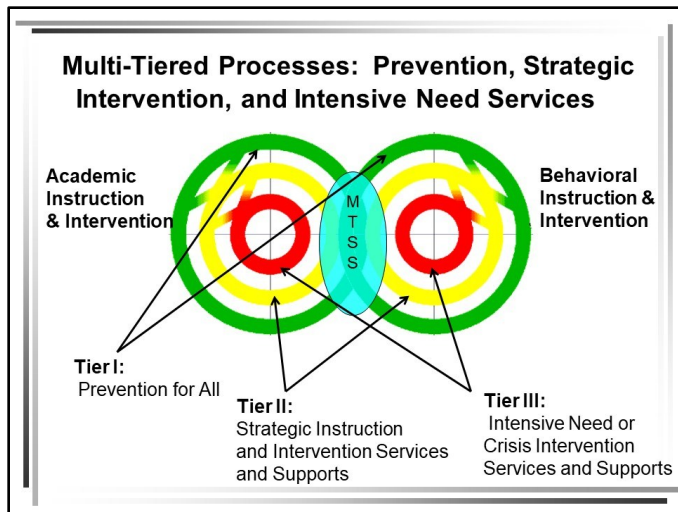


Figure 5. The Multi-tiered Problem-Solving and Systems of Support Continuum

Critically, districts are required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to have multi-tiered systems of support that conform to that Act's definition.

As described in Sure Solutions 4 and 5, Tier I begins with (a) effective and differentiated classroom instruction, complemented with (b) positive and successful classroom management, that (c) is delivered by highly qualified teachers who have (d) administrators, instructional support and related services staff, and other consultants available to support classrooms, grade-levels or departments, and other school programs and processes.

When students are unsuccessful in Tier I, teachers—at times with consultative or administrative support—complete a series of data-based problem-solving activities that may result in re-teaching, remediation, accommodations, modifications, or classroom-based interventions.

When students demonstrate significant academic or social, emotional, or behavioral gaps, or they do not respond to the approaches immediately above, teachers (a) move more formally into the multi-tiered system of support process; (b) involve the school's MTSS Team that collaboratively completes—with the teacher and student—additional multi-disciplinary assessments to determine the root causes of the problem; and then (c) link the data-based results to Tier II and/or Tier III strategies.

Tier II and Tier III strategies should be organized by the intensity of the approaches needed by a specific student, as well as their availability in a school or district. Indeed, in some schools, the strategies in these respective Tiers are organized by their availability within the school or district (Tier II) versus outside of the school or district (Tier III).

Most critically, the services in the Tiers should not be organized by who is delivering the services, where the services are delivered, or whether the students receive the services in a small group or individual format. These conditions represent illogical and unverified “MTSS Myths.”

Other MTSS Myths include (a) the need to sequentially tier the strategies provided to a struggling student; (b) that there are “ideal” percentages of students in a school receiving Tier I vs. Tier II vs. Tier III services; (c) that special education services are Tier III services; and (d) that a student “qualifies” for Tier

II or Tier III services only after a specific number of interventions have been implemented for a specific period of time.

Expanding briefly. . . there are no data to validate that:

- Students who are unsuccessful, academically or behaviorally, in Tier I should automatically receive Tier II services and, if unsuccessful in Tier II, they then “qualify” for Tier III services.

Students should receive the intensity of services that they need to be successful. If a home-schooled student enrolls in a school two years behind academically, they should receive immediate Tier III services and supports if this is what they require.

- 80% of the students in a school should be “functioning” at Tier I, 15% of the students should be receiving Tier II services, and 5% of the students should be receiving Tier III services.

This myth was created many years ago by a Director at a National Technical Assistance Center funded by the U.S. Department of Education. These data have no validity, and they should not be used as a criterion for a “successful” versus “unsuccessful” school.

At the same time, these percentages in a school may be diagnostic. For example, if a school has 40% of its students in Tier II academic support, it probably needs to (a) determine if there are curriculum and instruction gaps in the Tier I general education program; (b) look at the efficacy of its “strategic” Tier II interventions; and/or (c) increase its Tier II personnel and resources.

- Special education services are delivered, based on federal law, to students with one (or more) of thirteen different disabilities—that range in intensity themselves. The academic or behavioral needs of some of these students with a disability may be met by 30 to 60 minutes of special education or related services per week. Thus, these students are almost fully educated in their general education classrooms.

To establish special education services as a “Tier III” service simply does not make sense. This is why the federal special education law requires a continuum of services and education for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

- Finally, there is no law or regulation in the country that requires students to receive—and not make progress after receiving—a specific number of interventions for specific periods of time in order to move from Tier to Tier. If practiced, this actually delays more intensive services for some students in need, and forces them to experience additional, unnecessary layers of failure. . . that potentially increase their resistance to future interventions.

As noted above, students who need a specific intensity level of intervention should receive that level immediately. To practice otherwise represents, figuratively, “educational malpractice.”

The foundation to this Sure Solution’s success is a “Problem-Solving, Consultation, Intervention” mode of operation. . . as opposed to a “Wait for the Student to Fail, then Test and Place him or her.” In addition, multi-tiered services, supports, and/or interventions should not be strategies designed to delay the assessments a student may need in order to qualify for special education services.

Critically, multi-tiered services and interventions should be the strategies that the teacher and MTSS Team believe will most benefit a student and facilitate his or her academic or social, emotional, or behavioral progress and proficiency.

Moreover, federal special education law and regulation do not allow schools to delay special education eligibility assessments—with a multi-tiered intervention process—if school personnel or the parents believe that the student’s difficulties are due to a disability.

Ultimately, most of the “checks and balances” relative to the points immediately above occur within the MTSS Team. As noted in Sure Solution 1, the MTSS Team is staffed by the best assessment and intervention-related services professionals in or available to a school, along with the building principal and selected others (e.g., the school nurse).

Sure Solution 7. The Data Management, Evaluation, and Efficacy Component focuses on actively evaluating, formatively and summatively, the status and progress of students’ academic and social, emotional, and behavioral mastery of information and skills, as well as the efficacy of the Seven Sure Solution processes and activities that support the instructional, staff, and service components of an effective school. To accomplish this, districts and schools need to have sound and flexible Student Information or Data Management Systems with the hardware and software that facilitates quick and efficient data collection, storage, analysis, and output.

Relative to efficacy evaluations, formative and summative data are collected to validate the impact of a school’s activities and efforts relative to (a) strategic planning and continuous school improvement; (b) professional development and organizational development; (c) selection, preparation, and implementation of academic and behavioral curricula and planning; (d) actual teacher instruction, classroom management, problem-solving, and intervention; and (e) MTSS problem-solving, consultation, and intervention 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.

And a final part of this process involves quarterly evaluation of all students’ progress, and the transfer of information, data, and “lessons learned” from every student from year to year and (as relevant) school to school.

In this regard, too often, comprehensive instruction, achievement, intervention, and proficiency data—relative to all students’ academic and social, emotional, and behavioral status and school-year journeys—are not systematically shared with the next year’s teachers, support staff, and administrators such that every school. . . on the first day of every new school year. . . is fully prepared to educate every student.

Ultimately, the school’s annual school improvement Action Plan identifies both the outcomes that need to be evaluated, as well as the evaluation activities, measures, and timeframes to be used—and what staff will be involved and responsible. While the formative evaluations help keep students, staff, and schools “on track,” the summative evaluations frame the needed activities and approaches for the next year as schools “live” the continuous improvement process.

Project ACHIEVE's School and Schooling Outcomes

Over a 40-year period, Project ACHIEVE schools have demonstrated impressive results. Indeed, across thousands of schools, positive results have been documented in the areas below.

Student:

- Academic Achievement
- Academic Engagement in the Classroom
- Discipline Referrals to the Principal's Office
- Suspension/Expulsion
 - Disproportionality
- Attendance
- Special Education Referrals/Placements
- Grade Retention/Promotion
- High School Graduation (Regular Diploma)
- Special Education:
 - Least Restrictive Environment Placements/FAPE
 - Academic Progress and Achievement
 - Graduation/Drop-Out
 - Due Process Litigation
 - Disproportionality
- MTSS/Early Intervention Success (Academic and Behavioral)
- Independent Learning and Self-Management
- Self-Efficacy and Evidence of Protective Factors
- The Behavioral Matrix/School Accountability Forms
- The Special Situation Analysis Forms
- The Stop & Think Social Skills Program Implementation, Observation, and Evaluation Forms
- The MTSS Team Process and Outcome Survey
- The MTSS Consultation Referral Audit
- The Academic Achievement Audit
- The Student Articulation Process Forms

School:

- Positive and Safe School Environments
- Parent Involvement and Community Support
- Staff Satisfaction and Collaboration
- Completion of School Improvement Plan Goals
- ESEA and IDEA Success
- Increased Building Capacity—Professional Development Success and Instructional and Intervention Autonomy

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

Project ACHIEVE's Behavioral Instruction and Intervention (SEL/PBSS) 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 Social-Emotional Learning/Positive Behavioral Support System model (SEL/PBSS).

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 SEL/PBSS 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 SEL/PBSS Goals

While the ultimate goal of Project ACHIEVE's SEL/PBSS 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 SEL/PBSS Components

There are five critical components in Project ACHIEVE's SEL/PBSS that facilitate school discipline, classroom management, and students' social, emotional, and behavioral self-management (see Figure 6 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 SEL/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.

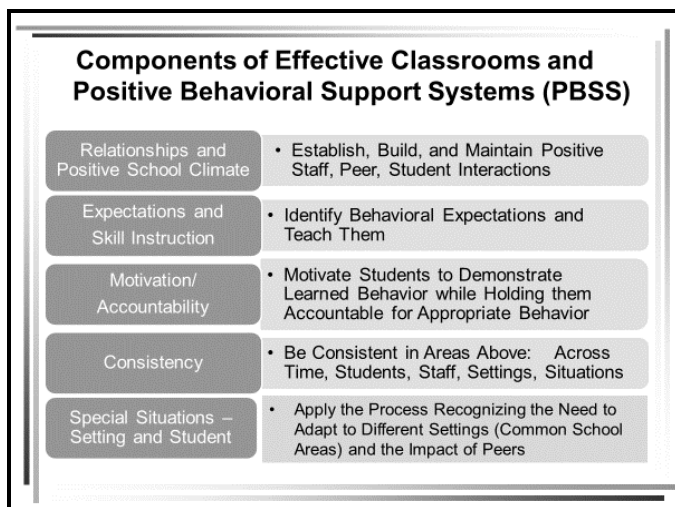


Figure 6. Source: Project ACHIEVE Press, 2011.

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 SEL/PBSS 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. Organized in four age- and developmentally-sensitive levels (from Preschool through High School), this program is ready-made for this multi-tiered SEL/PBSS component. More specifically, at a primary prevention level, the Stop & Think Social Skills are taught to all students focusing on practical skills that help all students to be successful in most situations and settings. Among these skills are: Listening, Following Directions,

Asking for Help, Ignoring Distractions, Dealing with Teasing, Accepting a Consequence, Dealing with an Accusation, Setting a Goal, and Understanding Your Own or Someone Else's Feelings.

At the secondary and tertiary prevention levels, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program is used more strategically, and it is connected to other needed behavioral interventions, self-control and anger management strategies, and behavior therapy interventions. For example, for situations where there is significant bullying and aggression, the social skills can be organized into strategic skill clusters (a) for aggressive and violent students: Relationship skills (e.g., Asking for Help, Apologizing, Dealing with Peer Pressure), Emotional Control skills (e.g., Understanding your Feelings, Dealing with Anger, Avoiding Trouble), and Consequence/ Response skills (e.g., Dealing with Fear, Failure, and Accusations); (b) for victims: Prevention skills (e.g., Avoiding Trouble, Evaluating Yourself), Problem-Solving skills (e.g., Asking for Help, Dealing with Peer Pressure), and Protection skills (e.g., Dealing with Fear, Standing Up for Your Rights, and Walking away from a Fight); and (c) for peer on-lookers or by-standers: Recognition skills (e.g., Understanding your Feelings, Evaluating Yourself), Response skills (e.g., Being a Good Leader, Dealing with Peer Pressure), and Resolution skills (e.g., Problem Solving, Dealing with Consequences).

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 SEL/PBSS 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/SEL/PBSS Committee) need to observe and monitor their consistency in real time; evaluate how they are implementing different facets of the SEL/PBSS 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 SEL/PBSS and school success.

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

The last component of the school SEL/PBSS 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 SEL/PBSS 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 SEL/PBSS 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.

Project ACHIEVE’s SEL/PBSS Outcomes

Over a 40-year period, Project ACHIEVE schools have demonstrated impressive results. Indeed, across thousands of schools, positive results have been documented in the areas below.

Student:

- Academic Achievement
- Academic Engagement in the Classroom
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- Special Education:
 - Least Restrictive Environment Placements/FAPE
 - Academic Progress and Achievement
 - Graduation/Drop-Out
 - Due Process Litigation

- Disproportionality
- MTSS/Early Intervention Success (Academic and Behavioral)
- Independent Learning and Self-Management
- Self-Efficacy and Evidence of Protective Factors
- The Behavioral Matrix/School Accountability Forms
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- The Academic Achievement Audit
- The Student Articulation Process Forms

School:

- Positive and Safe School Environments
- Parent Involvement and Community Support
- Staff Satisfaction and Collaboration
- Completion of School Improvement Plan Goals
- ESEA and IDEA Success
- Increased Building Capacity—Professional Development Success and Instructional and Intervention Autonomy

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