



## Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Learn how effective behavior support at school leads  
to better education for all students.

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CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

All parents want their children to succeed in school. When a child feels safe and understands what is expected, more time and energy can be spent on learning.

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) is a system that helps *all* children improve their behavior at school, at home, and in the community. Applied schoolwide, it defines, teaches, and supports appropriate student behavior to create positive school environments. When children are in a positive, predictable, consistent environment, they have better grades, better behavior, higher self-esteem, better school attendance, greater motivation, and more success in life.

In 2005, the Minnesota Department of Education launched a statewide initiative called School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS). The goal of this initiative is to enhance the capacity of schools to provide the best behavioral supports for all students.

This presentation will describe SW-PBIS, its benefit to students and schools, and how parents can be involved.

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PACER Center  
8161 Normandale Blvd  
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044  
Phone: 952.838.9000  
Fax: 952.838.0199  
Toll free: 888.248.0822  
[pacer@PACER.org](mailto:pacer@PACER.org)  
[www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org)

Executive Director: Paula Goldberg

Special thanks to Renelle Nelson and Marcia Kelly for their work in preparing this publication.  
This publication is funded through a grant from the MN Dept of Education

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## SW-PBIS Goals

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- Reduce the incidence of problem behaviors, office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions
- Establish a learning environment that is positive and predictable.
- Create an approach to discipline that is instructional and positively reinforced.
- Increase academic instruction time and reduce class management time.
- Increase students' commitment to school.

SW-PBIS is a research-based approach that improves educational outcomes for all students by creating a learning environment that is positive and predictable. By creating a schoolwide system of instruction and support that emphasizes appropriate behavioral expectations, teachers can spend more time in academic instruction and reduce the time spent on classroom management. Children feel safe at a school when educators have a consistent response to problem behaviors as well as to teaching and recognizing appropriate behaviors.

A student is more likely to feel welcomed and committed to a school when the school climate is positive and when academic success is a direct result of increased instructional time.

## What Is SW-PBIS?

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- A schoolwide or districtwide system of support that includes:
  - Proactive strategies to define, teach, and support appropriate behaviors
  - A positive school environment where all children feel safe and can learn

SW-PBIS is based on the belief that appropriate behaviors can be taught.

Adopted by an entire school or district, SW-PBIS is a system of interventions that define, teach, and support appropriate behaviors. The result is a positive school environment where all children can feel safe and learn. It is based on the assumption that behavior can be taught like academics can be taught.

## Why Should Schools Use SW-PBIS?

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- **To increase academic success!** Research shows that teachers spend more time on classroom management than on teaching.
- **To promote a safe, predictable learning environment!** Research shows that when behaviors are taught and enforced consistently, students feel safe and are more interested in learning.

Research shows that students feel safer when they have positive, predictable school environments. When students understand the rules and have been taught the expectations, there is less guesswork about how to behave. As a result, they have more time and energy to spend on increasing their academic performance. Increased academic instruction and more time spent on learning contributes to the likelihood of achieving higher test results.

## Why Should Schools Use SW-PBIS?

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- **To reduce the incidence of problem behaviors!** Punishment may stop misbehavior, but it does not teach children how to meet their needs in a positive way.
- **Children's behaviors can change through instruction!** Behaviors can be taught like any other skill.

Research also shows that while punishment may temporarily stop misbehavior, it does not teach children how to get their needs met. By teaching students a replacement behavior, they will have more appropriately ways to get their needs met.

## In a Traditional School Environment...

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- Discipline strategies vary among classrooms.
- School safety is based on reacting to problem behaviors.
- Academic skills are taught; behavior is controlled.

In a traditional school environment, classroom management styles and discipline strategies vary from teacher to teacher. School safety typically is based on either individual reactions to behavior problems or implementation of a broad set of discipline policies set by the school. Administrators are used as enforcers of rules, and behavior is controlled rather than taught.

## In a SW-PBIS School Environment...

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- The emphasis is on systems of support that include proactive strategies to define, teach, and support appropriate student behaviors.
  - School safety is based on preventing behavior problems.
  - Teams anticipate and plan for problem behaviors.
  - Behavior skills are taught specifically.

With PBIS, discipline is consistent and based on prevention rather than reaction to behavior problems. Staff anticipate and plan for student problems by teaching behavioral skills across all environments. This includes the classroom, the lunchroom, hallways, playground, buses--anywhere the student may be during the school day.



## Teaching Behaviors Using SW-PBIS

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- Develop simple, broad rules
  - Example: I will respect myself, others, property, and community
  - Describe what the rules mean
    - State the expectation
    - Provide examples of appropriate behavior
    - Provide examples of inappropriate behavior
    - Re-teach

When a school decides to implement SW-PBIS , a coach and team will meet to develop simple, broad rules that embrace the school’s values. For example, one school might choose a rule that says, “I will respect myself, others, and property.”

In that case, the SW-PBIS team would identify what respect means in its school. Respecting one’s self in the hallway might mean passing on the right side and closing your locker door; respecting others in the hallway might mean not pushing and using a low voice tone; respecting property in the hallway might mean picking up a candy wrapper even if it is not yours.

By talking with students about what this rule means, providing positive and negative examples, teaching, and re-teaching the concept of respect, students eventually will understand the idea and use it in their everyday school life, from the classroom, to the hallway, to the lunchroom, to the playground.

## Teaching Behaviors Using SW-PBIS

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- State the behavior you want to see
- Recognize the behavior when it occurs
  - Positive recognition must outpace negative recognition by at least four to one for behavior change to occur.

Two of the most important aspects of PBIS are stating expectations in a positive way and recognizing the behavior when it occurs. Research shows that positive recognition must be given over negative recognition at least four times to one for behavior change to occur. For example, saying, “I appreciate you picking up that candy wrapper in the hallway even though it wasn’t yours,” provides immediate recognition for a student doing the preferred behavior.

# Changing Behavior

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- Teaching is not enough to change behavior.
- A system of carefully planned incentives for meeting behavioral expectations is essential.
- A system of carefully planned consequences for violating expected behaviors is essential.

Just as teaching students a behavior is important, so is developing a system of carefully planned incentives that recognize when children are meeting expectations. Some schools create immediate “recognition” slips that students can accumulate both individually and for their classroom. The classroom with the largest number of recognition slips may get a pizza lunch, recognition in a school assembly, an extra recess, or some other planned incentive.

Likewise, it’s essential to develop a system of carefully planned consequences should be in place when violations of the expected behavior occur. If a student is caught littering, for example, a planned consequence could include meeting with the custodian to clean the hallway after school. A planned consequence needs to include teaching the replacement behavior.

## Why Does SW-PBIS Work?

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- Students learn appropriate behavior skills through direct instruction and informative and positive feedback on their performance.

Research on human behavior shows that students learn better ways of behaving by being taught directly and receiving immediate, positive feedback. Shaming, punishing, or giving consequences does not create good behavior, and may, in fact, contribute to bad behavior.

## What Schools Are in the SW-PBIS Initiative?

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- The Minnesota Department of Education has been supporting this initiative since 2005.
- Every school in Minnesota has been asked to consider joining this initiative.
- Talk with your child's school administrator about the SW-PBIS initiative.

Every school in Minnesota has been asked to consider joining the SW-PBIS initiative, and almost 100 schools are in various stages of implementing it. To find out if a particular school participates, ask the school administrator

Ask, too, about how you can help moving your school or school district toward the implementation of schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports.

## How Can Parents Be Involved in SW-PBIS?

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- Speak with your school administrator about the value of SW-PBIS
- Offer your time as a parent advisor on the SW-PBIS school team or as a home-school liaison for the SW-PBIS initiative
- Use SW-PBIS at home. PBIS works best when used consistently.

As a parent, you can help the SW-PBIS initiative succeed by:

- Learning about the initiative and bringing that information to your school. Check out the SW-PBIS Web page resources at [www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org), network with other parents in SW-PBIS schools, and attend workshops on positive behavior interventions and supports. Share the information with your school administrator.

- Offer to help your school explore joining the SW-PBIS initiative. You might ask your Parent Teacher Organization to invite someone to speak on the topic. If your school is already implementing SW-PBIS, you could be a parent advisor on the school team, or serve as a liaison between school and home to give parents information and share support.

- Use SW-PBIS at home. When used consistently and across all settings, positive behavior interventions and supports can dramatically change problem behaviors.

Parents can contact PACER Center for information on parent involvement in SW-PBIS, parent leadership training, understanding positive behavioral interventions, developing collaboration skills, and many other topics related to

behaviors and academic achievement. For more information, contact Renelle Nelson at 952-838-9000 or [rnelson@PACER.org](mailto:rnelson@PACER.org). The Minnesota Department of Education offers information sessions on SW-PBIS for schools considering implementing SW-PBIS.

