

District Decisions: Tier 1 Behavior

This document provides an overview of the Tier 1 behavior components of an MTSS framework and outlines decisions districts need to make to support schools in the installation of those components.

Behavior Components of MTSS

The behavior components of an MTSS framework are framed around School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS). SWPBIS is a proactive, team-based multi-tiered framework for creating and sustaining safe and effective schools. Emphasis is placed on prevention of problem behavior, development of pro-social skills, and the use of data-based problem solving.

Definition of Tier 1

Tier 1 is defined as “universal instruction and differentiation intended to meet the needs of all learners” (MDE MTSS Practice Profile, 2020, p.14). Also referred to as “core” instruction, Tier 1 instruction is preventative in nature and is designed to meet the instructional needs of at least 80% of students.

The data, systems, and practices that need to be in place school-wide for effective implementation of the Tier 1 behavior components of an MTSS framework are framed around six big ideas.

1. Identify and define behavior expectations
2. Teach behavior expectations
3. Monitor expected behavior
4. Acknowledge and encourage behavior expectations
5. Establish continuum of responses to behaviors that includes teaching/re-teaching
6. Use data for decision-making

These big ideas are the foundation of SWPBIS in all school settings, including supporting behavior in the classroom environment.

District Decisions

Districts need to determine what guidance and support will be provided to all schools regarding implementation of School-wide PBIS. It is up to each district to determine the level of standardization of SWPBIS implementation across schools.

District-wide Behavioral Expectations

The first big idea of School-wide PBIS is to identify and define 3-5 positively stated behavioral expectations that articulate the values and behavioral concepts important in a school and its community. Districts may choose to have common, school-wide behavioral expectations for all schools in the district.

The following benefits and challenges associated with the selection of district-wide expectations should be considered:

Benefits

- Supports consistency and alignment of behavioral expectations across the district. This is especially beneficial in common settings and spaces shared across schools (e.g., buses, football stadium, cafeteria) or in the broader community (e.g., local library, local restaurant)
- Supports students if there is transiency between buildings in the district
- Easier for staff that work in multiple buildings in the district

Challenges

- One or more schools have previously established expectations, making it difficult for staff and students to switch.
- Staff, student and family participation in selecting behavioral expectations is critical. Developing district-wide expectations will require representation from all schools. Depending on the size of the district, this may increase the size of the group involved and the time it takes to finalize the expectations.

To support districts in deciding if district-wide expectations should be developed, DITs should consider the following steps:

- Identify the appropriate individuals to engage in the discussion and decision-making process regarding whether or not the district will have common school-wide behavioral expectations across all schools. At minimum, include members of the DIT, as well as a representative from each building in the district.
- If the decision is made to move forward with district-wide behavioral expectations, the following steps would need to be taken:
 - **September/October:** Schedule time for DIT to view the recorded module “District-wide Expectations: Guidance for District Implementation Teams,” to better understand how to prepare and who to involve in the development of district-wide expectations.
 - **By end of November:** Select and communicate with individuals who will work to select the district-wide expectations. Guidelines for selecting this group of staff, students, and families are outlined in the recorded module.
 - **December/January:** Meet to develop district-wide behavioral expectations. Final decisions need to be made and communicated with School Leadership Teams prior to SWPBIS Day 2 (February).

Document the district decisions and / or process that will be followed to determine if the district will develop common, school-wide behavioral expectations for all schools.

District-wide Referral Form

The last big idea of School-wide PBIS is using data for decision making. One data source that schools use to measure impact of SWPBIS implementation is behavior referral data. To collect this data, schools develop a behavioral referral form aligned with fields in SWIS.

Districts may choose to have a common referral form used by all schools in the district. A common, district-wide referral form supports consistency and alignment in collecting behavioral data. More specifically, a common form can support consistency with data integration between SWIS and the MiDataHub. In addition, having a common form is helpful for collecting data in common settings and spaces shared across schools (e.g., buses, cafeteria).

To support districts in deciding if a district-wide referral form should be developed, DITs should consider the following steps:

- Identify the appropriate individuals to engage in the discussion and decision-making process regarding whether or not the district will have a common district referral form across all schools. At minimum, include members of the DIT, as well as a representative from each building in the district (e.g., administrator).
- Meet with the MiMTSS TA Center Behavior Data Coordinator / Implementation Specialist to discuss and make decisions about the use of a district-wide referral form prior to January.
- If the decision is made to move forward with a district-wide referral, work with the MiMTSS TA Center Behavior Data Coordinator / Implementation Specialist to ensure the form is compatible with SWIS.

[Document the district decisions and/or process that will be followed to determine if the district will develop common district referral form will be used with all schools.](#)

Time Allocation for Teaching SWPBIS

Following SWPBIS installation, time will be needed to be allocated each year in the fall to teach and review behavioral expectations and processes established to support behavior.

Each year, staff will need time to engage in professional learning to support implementation of SWPBIS. District decisions may need to be made to ensure bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other hourly staff have opportunities to engage in the professional learning. Frequently districts allocated time within their back-to-school professional development for these annual refreshers.

Districts will also want to consider what broad learning might be included as part of a new staff orientation process at the district level (e.g., overview of big ideas of SWPBIS). If districts have new teacher PD days or orientation days, this could be included.

Students need to be taught behavioral expectations, acknowledgement system, and the process for responding to behaviors at the beginning of each school year, as well as throughout the year. The district may need to support scheduling to ensure bus drivers and other shared staff who need to be involved in teaching students behavioral expectations are available.

[Document district decisions and/or processes that will ensure time is allocated for the initial teaching and annual re-teaching of staff and students about SWPBIS.](#)

When making decisions, consider the following questions:

- What steps need to be taken at the district-level (e.g., district PD schedule) to ensure all staff are involved in professional learning related to SWPBIS every fall, prior to school starting? Is there additional communication needed with individual groups and/or supervisors to ensure participation in the learning (e.g., paraprofessionals, bus drivers, cafeteria)?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure new teachers understand the “Big Ideas of SWPBIS” and the district’s commitment to implementation?
- What steps need to be taken at the district-level to ensure all schools have the time and staff available to support teaching and re-teaching students about SWPBIS in their school every fall and throughout the year?

Instructional Guidelines

School-wide PBIS provides a framework for supporting student behavior. However, additional programs and practices may be needed to ensure students can successfully engage in learning. Instructional practices and resources need to be carefully reviewed and selected by the district to ensure systematic, explicit instruction is provided to all students which prioritizes the principles and big ideas of SWPBIS.

To support schools in the use of district-selected programs, practices and resources for behavior, districts should consider the following steps:

- Support the completion of an initiative inventory and alignment process to gather key information about district-selected behavior initiatives (e.g., Capturing Kids Hearts, social emotional curriculum, character education program) and determine how initiatives complement, overlap or contradict one another and fit within a SWPBIS framework.
- Review the results of the alignment summary and ensure recommendations for continued use, selection or de-selection of initiatives, programs, and practices are communicated to district leadership.
- Support the completion of an initiative and innovation review process to select or de-select programs, practices, or resources.
- Work with district leadership to develop written guidelines to ensure teachers understand expectations for using programs, practices, and resources to teach and reinforce behavior expectations and social-emotional competencies within a SWPBIS framework (e.g., student of the month, Second Step). Guidance should include how programs or practices will be used within the SWPBIS framework.
- Work with district leadership to communicate district decisions and guidelines with all staff to support effective Tier 1 instruction.

Document district decisions to support consistent, effective core reading instruction across all schools:

- [Alignment Summary for Tier 1 Behavior \[insert link\]](#), with recommendations for continued use, selection, and / or deselection of initiatives, programs, and practices
- [Review Process\(es\) for behavior initiatives and innovations \[insert link\]](#)
- [Written guidelines for teaching and reinforcing behavior expectations and social-emotional competencies \[insert link\]](#)

District Approved Policies (e.g., Student and Staff Handbooks)

Processes and procedures that schools develop related to SWPBIS should be included in student and staff handbooks, to ensure they are documented and clearly communicated with staff, families, and students. Depending on district processes, the district may need to support communication with the Board of Education or other groups if adjustments need to be made to student or staff handbooks (e.g., behavior definitions, continuum of responses).

Document the district decisions and / or communication needed to support schools in making revisions to student and staff handbooks to align with SWPBIS.

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