



# Factors Involved in the Successful and Sustained Implementation of School-wide PBIS

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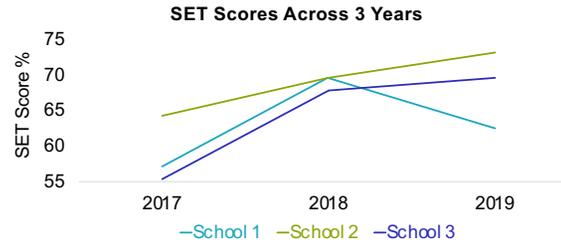
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## Overview

- The use of a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework is prevalent, but information is limited regarding approaches used to monitor implementation and outcomes.
- This study is part of a larger randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the *Foundations* program, a positive and proactive approach to school-wide discipline that employs PBIS strategies.
- This study was designed to gain a deeper understanding of facilitators and barriers for effective and sustained implementation of a PBIS approach.

## School Context

- All three schools showed improvement from baseline (2017) on the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001), a measure of implementation fidelity that assesses the degree to which core features of school-wide behavior support exist.



## Findings

Theme	Key Takeaways
<b>1. Integration of <i>Foundations</i> with existing initiatives</b>	
Type of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restorative justice (RJ) and Schoolwide PBIS (SWPBIS)</li> </ul>
Integration methods or approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Similar practices:</b> <i>Foundations</i> and RJ both focus on positive practices and relationships.</li> <li><b>Overlap in leaders:</b> Having RJ and SWPBIS leaders on the <i>Foundations</i> team supported integration of initiatives.</li> <li><b>Integration strategies:</b> Sharing planning and meeting times, co-hosting assemblies, using a social-emotional learning curricula that combined <i>Foundations</i> with either SWPBIS or RJ teachings, and using a common language across initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Facilitators and barriers to successful implementation of <i>Foundations</i></b>	
Leadership team composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Diverse:</b> Range of skills, perspectives, roles, departments, cultures/ethnicities, experiences with different student populations, and tenure</li> <li><b>United:</b> Common goals to improve school culture</li> <li><b>Relationship and communication skills:</b> Respected and positive relationships with students and other staff, listening skills, compromise and conflict-management skills, generosity with positive reinforcement, and humor.</li> </ul>
Dedicated time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Regular meeting times</b> for the leadership team to                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surface problems, brainstorm solutions, and devise plans to implement solutions.</li> <li>Share out periodically with staff and students through professional development, meetings, and school-wide assemblies.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Staff/student ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for building staff and student ownership through <b>involvement in decision making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can have a say in school rules and policies (such as consequences for being tardy).</li> <li>All school staff can help to prioritize program areas of focus (by voting on a school map).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Recognition and incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Regular rewards and recognitions</b> for implementing program practices                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition can range from simple "shout outs" at meetings/assemblies to formal awards provided on a monthly basis.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistency in <b>expectations</b> for students and regular reminders to staff and students about these expectations.</li> <li>Consistency in the <b>reinforcement</b> they provide for positive behavior, as well as the <b>consequences</b> for misbehavior.</li> </ul>
Leadership support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Principal and/or Assistant Principal involvement</b> on the leadership team                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the collective decision-making process and enact principles and strategies of the program.</li> <li>Turnover in school leadership can impact the maintenance, momentum, and success of the program.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>3. Strategies to support sustainability of <i>Foundations</i></b>	
Refreshers and reminders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminders might take the form of videos at assemblies, email reminders, PA announcements, and large posters.</li> <li>Seeing administrators and <i>Foundations</i> leadership team members model practices helped increase teacher buy-in.</li> </ul>
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Documenting processes, progress, and successes</b> can help sustain the program despite staff turnover by allowing someone to step into the work rather than start from scratch.</li> </ul>
Assess and revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Having a continuous improvement process in place</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine relevant data and feedback, assess practices in place, and consider modifications to improve success.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Key Questions

- How, if at all, do schools integrate *Foundations* with existing initiatives, practices, and policies?
- What do school *Foundations* teams perceive as the most critical factors, as well as the biggest obstacles, for successful implementation?
- What types of strategies and resources do schools plan to use to support sustainability of the *Foundations* intervention?

## Participants & Methods

- Participants included *Foundations* leadership team members from 3 middle schools in a large urban school district in Southern California. These schools were randomized to the treatment condition (i.e., implementing *Foundations*) in the larger RCT.
- We conducted in-person focus groups with *Foundations* leadership teams at 2 schools and follow-up phone interviews with 8 individual team members who volunteered across 3 schools.
- Two researchers analyzed the data using consensus coding, and a third senior adviser reviewed the coded data and key takeaways.
  - We analyzed focus group and interview notes by applying *etic* codes that we developed to align with key interview constructs.
  - We also documented any *emic* codes, themes that teams or individual members voiced in conversations.

## Areas for Growth & Consideration

- Cultural/racial sensitivity and bias**
  - Staff from all 3 schools recognized the importance of considering students' racial and ethnic backgrounds and issues of inequity.
    - One school was mindful of integrating English Learners more fully into the school culture.
    - Another school made intentional efforts to build stronger relationships with African American students by affirming positive behaviors and leadership potential.
    - One school was in the early stages of providing structured opportunities for teachers to reflect on their own biases or belief systems and how they can influence interactions with students and disproportionality in disciplinary practices.
- Parent involvement and engagement**
  - Staff from all three schools voiced a desire to improve parent engagement.
    - Ideas included informing and engaging parents in the *Foundations* program before the start of the school year (at orientation) and involving parents in *Foundations* activities and leadership teams.

## Conclusions

- When integrating with existing initiatives at the school, it is helpful to streamline those with similar goals as the program (McIntosh et al., 2013).
- Buy-in and support from everyone, including administrative leadership (George et al., 2018), staff (Coffey & Horner, 2012), and students, is crucial. An important way to achieve this is by helping people feel ownership of the program, especially through collective decision-making and recognitions.
- Documenting and keeping stakeholders aware of program activities and successes can support sustained implementation (Sugai & Horner, 2006).
- Areas for future research include: investigating the most effective types of support and resources at the district and state levels; examination of the potentially evolving roles of different facilitators and barriers across stages of implementation; and identification of strategies to create and sustain culturally responsive practices.