



A Process for Scaling Up SWPBS with Fidelity



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The process for scaling up implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Support with fidelity has been developed by the Office of Special Education Program's Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support and has been further examined by the State Implementation and Scaling up of Evidence-based Practices Center funded by OSEP. Both processes are very similar in defining the critical features that must be present for successful implementation across a large number of districts and schools. We have combined their critical features lists to include the following:

1. Leadership team(s)
2. Coordination
3. Selection
4. Training
5. Coaching
6. Technical Assistance
7. Demonstration
8. Funding
9. Visibility
10. Political Support
11. Evaluation

We will address each of these issues in describing how Florida may be able to scale-up and sustain over 3700 schools to implement Tier 1 PBS with fidelity.

1. **Leadership Teams:** Leadership at the state, regional and district level is essential to the successful scaling-up of Tier 1 PBS with fidelity.
 - A. **Establish State Leadership Team:** While Tier 1 PBS (as implemented by the Florida PBS project, as well as Foundations, Single school culture, etc.) has grown in the State, there has not existed a state level team to promote evidence-based intervention for Tier 1 PBS. The establishment of a State Leadership Team is essential to scaling-up Tier 1 PBS with fidelity. The purpose of this team is to address systems, policies and practices which impact the adoption of an effective, evidence-based process. This team should represent general and exceptional student education as well as school improvement, safe schools, juvenile justice, mental health and other related agencies and departments. The Leadership Team will also seek input and advice from participants on the Implementation Team.
 - B. **Establish Implementation Team:** An Implementation Team has responsibility for implementing an action plan to establish, support and scale-up Tier 1 PBS at a district or regional level. While the PBS Project has operated as a BEESS-funded Implementation Team for several years (providing training, technical assistance, resources, etc.), the new Implementation Team will need to be expanded in order to scale-up Tier 1 PBS. All agencies and projects that provide training on Tier 1 PBS (RtI, FDLRS, PBS Project, ESE, etc.) will need to collaborate on content and process for training and sustaining a network of districts and schools. Consensus



will need to be reached on critical components of Tier 1 PBS training, technical assistance, evaluation, etc. and consistent application of these components will need to occur across the State.

- C. Establish District or Regional Leadership Teams:** The Florida PBS Project has already established a district coordinator in each district that collaborates on Tier 1 PBS activities. Each district is required to have a District Leadership Team to assist with implementation of Tier 1 PBS in targeted schools. While many Leadership Teams are effective at expanding implementation in their district (40-60% of schools implementing), other districts have little team collaboration and participation in the planning process. In order for more district schools to participate in Tier 1 PBS, District Leadership teams with appropriate representation from general, exceptional student, student services, safe schools, etc. will need to be established in all districts. Representation on the team from district trainers and technical assistance providers in Tier 1 PBS approaches will be necessary. Training and technical assistance activities can not be initiated in a district unless a Leadership Team is established.

The State Implementation Team will need to establish an effective process for each District Leadership Team to request and receive support from the Implementation Team and personnel with experience in Tier 1 PBS.

- 2. Coordination:** A single point of contact is required for each level of team listed in 1 above.
- A. Identification of lead contact for State:** Representative from BEESS (Martha Murray)
 - B. Identification of lead contact for Implementation Team:** Representative from Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project (Don Kincaid)
 - C. Identify district coordinator for each district/region:** FLPBS Project already has a district coordinator identified for each collaborating district. The identification of a District Coordinator in new districts will be a high priority. Roles and responsibilities of District Coordinators are already identified by the FL PBS Project.
 - D. Address coordination issues for all 3 Tiers for behavior:** As schools implementing Tier 1 PBS increase so will the numbers of schools beginning to implement Tier 2 PBS and districts revising their Tier 3 (FBA/BIP) processes. School personnel charged with implementing Tier 2 and 3 interventions will need to coordinate activities with the District Implementation Team.
- 3. Selection**
- A. Selection of initial pilot districts:** While the PBS project has several districts that are currently scaling up (40-60% of schools implementing), the State Leadership and Implementation Teams may want to target specific districts (small, medium, large) that bring unique issues to the process of scaling up with fidelity. No more than 4 districts should be involved in these pilot processes. However, current districts may participate in scale-up activities as the pilots are in process.
 - B. Selection of District Coordinators:** District Coordinators will be identified for each district prior to selection of the district as a pilot site. The criteria for selecting District Coordinators are attached as Appendix A.



- C. Selection of initial schools for training:** Initial schools for training (scaling-up) will be identified by the District Leadership Team. However, schools will need to complete an application/paperwork to demonstrate their interest and commitment. In the FLPBS Project, the School Readiness Packet includes awareness materials about Tier 1 PBS (video, newsletter, project brochure, etc.), a letter describing the application process, a 19-item Training Readiness Checklist, an initial Benchmarks of Quality (baseline measure), a new school profile (demographic information and baseline academic and behavioral data) and a School Commitment letter. This packet has been extremely valuable in educating and gathering necessary commitment from individual school teams. A sample packet is attached as Appendix B.
- D. Selection of interventions for Tier 1:** While the Florida PBS Project utilizes an evidence-based PBS process that has been used in thousands of schools nationwide, PBS is not the only Tier 1 intervention that could be used by a district to meet their need to implement an evidence-based practice for supporting all student behavior at an individual school. Regardless of the interventions used by districts, the following characteristics should be evident:
- i. **Research-validation:** There must be some level of evidence that the intervention is effective in decreasing problem behaviors across an entire school. Interventions that are applied in only one setting of the school are not considered as Tier 1 PBS interventions. For instance, individual classroom-based interventions that are not applied to the entire school are NOT considered as the primary Tier 1 behavior intervention. Each district should utilize research and evaluation personnel to determine the level of evidence for each considered intervention.
 - ii. **Evidence of local effectiveness:** Each intervention scaled-up in a district should have some history of success in the district or state school system. If the evidence of local effectiveness does not exist, districts should initiate pilot projects to determine whether the intervention produces the desired student and teacher outcomes.
 - iii. **Consistent components:** The Tier 1 behavioral intervention should include at a minimum the following components:
 - a. A collaborative teaming approach
 - b. Positively stated behavioral expectations and rules
 - c. A method of identifying current problems (data system)
 - d. A system for teaching expectations and rules
 - e. Procedures for encouraging expected behaviors
 - f. Procedures for discouraging violations of school-wide expectations and rules
 - g. A plan for monitoring implementation and effectiveness
 - iv. **Efficient and cost effective:** While many effective Tier 1 behavior interventions exist, it is essential that the district team select interventions that are efficient and cost-effective. An efficient Tier 1 intervention will be simple to understand and implement, free of unnecessary jargon, and require a minimum of staff time. A guiding question for selection would



be: Does the outcome of the intervention justify the commitment of staff time and energy?

In addition, the intervention must be cost-effective. Tier 1 interventions may cost from a few thousand dollars per school to over \$100,000 per school. Given the expense of scaling-up across multiple schools and multiple years, the district team will need to consider where they can get the “biggest bang for their buck” and allocate resources to the most effective, efficient and cost-effective interventions.

- v. ***Goodness of fit with the values and philosophy of the state and district:*** The selected interventions should fit well with the values, mission statements, and goals of the district and state. For instance, does the district mission, plan, goals, etc. mention student behavior as one of the top 5 goals to be addressed.
- vi. ***Uses a data-based decision making/problem-solving model:*** A comprehensive process for data-based decision-making and problem-solving at Tier1, initially, and at Tiers 2 and 3, eventually, is essential to any Tier 1 intervention and also consistent with the RtI framework implemented throughout Florida.
- vii. ***Sustainable at the district level:*** Any Tier 1 behavior support system should be implemented with the goal of increasing the capacity of the district to provide training, technical assistance, evaluation, data management, etc. independent of outside consultants. Such a Tier 3 system should include an action plan for increasing the internal training, coaching and implementation capacity in the district and decreasing the reliance on external consultants and external fiscal support.
- viii. ***Coordinated efforts of Tiers 1-3 in integrated system:*** As the Tier 1 intervention is implemented with fidelity, the Tier 1 behavioral efforts will need to be integrated with new and existing Tier 2 and 3 behavioral efforts in the district. The district action planning process should clearly lay out procedures for adding Tier 2 and 3 supports into schools and a plan for how training, progress monitoring and technical assistance will occur for school implementing all three tiers of a behavior system.

4. Training

- A. **Consistent training content:** It is likely that districts will look to the State Implementation Team for the content of Tier 1 PBS training. Since the Implementation Team will likely consist of individuals from different training experiences, philosophies, etc., it will be necessary for the Implementation Team to adopt a standard curriculum that would be available for the district team. That curriculum will need to include the content listed in 3.D.III above. All members of the Implementation Team providing initial training to districts will collaborate on the training efforts and gain experience and skill with the content and process of Tier 1 PBS.
- B. **District/regional trainers collaborate with experienced trainers:** Members of the State Implementation team and identified trainers from the districts will



collaborate on training efforts. Experienced trainers (have provided multiple trainings on similar curricula, implemented PBS in schools, etc.) will mentor less experienced trainers across multiple training opportunities. Less experienced trainers will progress through a series of mentoring opportunities that include 1) observing training activities, 2) co-leading sections of the training, 3) leading comprehensive training activities with feedback from the mentor, and 4) providing training independently and submitting evaluations of training for analysis to the State Implementation Team.

- C. Training of trainers (technical assistance, state-wide skill training, etc.):** The train-the-trainer process above will also occur at the district level. Prior to initial training efforts, potential trainers will receive focused training (1-2 days) on the content of the training material and scheduled technical assistance to process and answer questions after each training session. The State Implementation Team will also provide state-wide workshops aimed at skill building and updating the content of training.
- D. Maintaining fidelity of training process:** The fidelity of the training process can be managed by evaluation at three levels. First, the fidelity of the content can be assessed by requiring trainers to complete checklists of the content covered at each training. Second, training evaluations will be completed for each training. Both the checklist and the evaluations will be submitted to the State Implementation Team. Finally, the progress and outcomes of school trained will serve as a measure of the quality of the training. While other variables may impact implementation (follow-up, district issues, etc.), initial training quality can also be indirectly evaluated by the outcomes achieved by school-level teams.
- E. Training across all three tiers:** As schools implement Tier 1 PBS with fidelity, it will be essential to expand the training focus of the State Implementation Team and the district teams to address training, technical assistance and coordination issue across Tiers 2 and 3, while maintaining Tier 1 trainings for new schools.

5. Coaching

- A. Selecting Coaches:** The coaching model is inherent in any implementation and scale-up discussion. Each school will need to have either an internal coach (school staff) or an external coach (district personnel) to support the school PBS team through the Tier 1 PBS process. A list of coaching prerequisites, coaches' roles and responsibilities and coaches' skill requirements can be found at the FL PBS website: <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/coachescorner.asp>.
- B. Initial and ongoing training of coaches:** Initial training of coaches can be accomplished in 2-3 hour face-to-face meetings with groups or can be done with videos and written information at an individual coach level. Coaches will be eligible to receive district and State Implementation Team support as they work with a school to implement Tier 1 PBS. Coaches will also receive 1-2 days of regional/district training in data collection, problem-solving, changes in Tier 1 processes, etc.
- C. On-going TA from District staff and TA providers:** District Coordinators can provide support to coaches via a formal system to request support or as a result of the evaluation process identifying areas of concern. Members of the State



Implementation Team will only be available to provide support to individual coaches in collaboration with other district support personnel because the State Implementation Team's support is limited and because the goal is to increase the capacity of district personnel to eventually sustain their efforts independent from outside technical assistance. Thus, district personnel will need to learn effective skills from the Implementation Team.

- D. Expanding and linking coaching networks at district and state levels:** Currently, districts collaborating with the PBS Project are encouraged to arrange monthly coaches' meetings for all the coaches in their district. A formal agenda and meeting process is provided to District Coordinators. PBS project personnel attend each of the meetings the first year and to selected meetings after the first year. It is recommended that members of the State Implementation Team follow the same pattern at a district level. In addition, regional and state coaching networks can be established to enhance problem-solving and the sharing of effective practices.

6. Technical Assistance

- A. Florida's PBS Project:** The Florida PBS Project has developed an effective and efficient model for providing technical assistance to districts. This model can continue and additional technical assistance providers can be trained at the state and district levels.
- B. Collaborating with FDLRS, SEDNET and other district resource personnel:** It is likely that related organizations already provide some Tier 1 PBS trainings in districts. In an attempt to provide a consistent PBS model, trained personnel in each district and at the state level will collaborate in training and technical assistance activities. All participants will need to be open to learning new Tier 1 support approaches and adapting the agreed upon processes across their district.
- C. Technical assistance across all three Tiers:** As PBS approaches expansion across all three tiers, team members will also need to learn skills in supporting a range of Tier 2 and 3 interventions and systems.
- D. Includes assistance with data, monitoring, team processing, etc.:** Technical assistance with implementation activities across all three tiers includes more than knowledge of PBS content. It also includes addressing systems issues at the state and district level that impact implementation, dealing with school team issues, assisting with developing an effective database, and training school and district person effective problem-solving and data-based decision-making skills. Technical assistance providers will need to develop skills to work with individual students and teachers, school teams, district personnel, and state agency personnel.

7. Demonstration

- A. Expand number of Tier 1 PBS schools by 300/yr.:** Currently, the PBS Project trains about 100 new schools each year in the Tier 1 PBS process. In order, to begin the scale-up process the number of new schools will likely need to expand to 300 in the first year and double in subsequent years as districts gain the capacity to implement more independently.



- B. Maintain fidelity of implementation such that 50% of schools achieve high scores (70 or >) on BOQ:** Scaling-up of schools without attention to fidelity will not establish a self-sustaining and expanding system of support. Following the guidelines described in this report should insure that schools maintain commitment and implementation fidelity across multiple years. All schools will complete the Benchmarks of Quality (a research-validated tool to assess implementation fidelity) once each year. These data will be used to measure the overall fidelity of schools across the state before and after scale-up activities are instituted.
 - C. Expand Tier 2 to 200 schools per year:** Simple and effective Tier 2 interventions can be implemented in schools that have reached 70% fidelity on the BOQ for Tier 1 PBS. Over 50 schools have already received training and support in Tier 2 interventions in the past year. Training and technical assistance activities will be provided to those identified schools.
 - D. Pilot 2 districts per year to implement effective Tier 3 strategies:** While all districts already implement Tier 3 strategies (FBAs and BIPs), discussions and evaluations of districts indicate that almost all districts are implementing ineffective and inefficient systems. Initially, 2 pilots will be selected to evaluate, revise and implement research-based practices for providing Tier 3 supports. Such technical assistance may have the opportunity to radically change the Tier 3 supports provided to students with the most problematic behaviors. The Florida PBS Project is already working with several districts to revise their Tier 3 practices and have developed a model that is being used across the country for assessing Tier 3 district needs.
- 8. Funding**
- A. Reallocation of funding in the PBS Project to coaches and district coordination efforts:** Approximately, 50% of the Florida PBS Project budget is disbursed to districts to cover training and evaluation activities (stipends, travel, fiscal support for data collection). As the Tier1 PBS process becomes systematized and an expectation from the DOE level, these funds will be reallocated to support district team activities, increased training activities, coaches training supports, etc. which will be essential to sustaining and expanding the implementation process.
 - B. Training and TA needs to schools are provided by districts with reallocation of existing funds from ineffective or non-capacity building approaches:** Most of the direct training and technical assistance activities to schools will be provided by highly-trained district personnel and coaches. It is expected that the District Leadership Team will review district funding and assess the effectiveness of current approaches. Such an evaluation should result in the reallocation of existing resources to sufficiently meet district level training and technical assistance needs. For instance, discontinuing one inefficient program that costs a district \$50,000 per school to implement should be able to provide support to 20-30 new schools implementing a more effective and less expensive Tier 1 PBS system.



- C. **Funding allocated to develop effective and efficient statewide database – districts submit data as part of state-wide data management system:** The allocation of State funding resources may be necessary to develop and disseminate a database for progress monitoring important behavioral data (ODRS, ISS, OSS, percent improvement, teacher ratings, etc.) for individual students, entire schools, the district, and all districts. While the PBS Project has developed such a web-based data system for collecting the yearly outcome data from schools, there is no comprehensive program developed and implemented in schools for collecting important daily data for decision-making. Funding is necessary for developing or adapting existing databases to provide this critical resource to schools. Also, the annual data collection system will need to be expanded to support hundreds of additional schools each year.

9. **Visibility**

- A. **Written policy distributed:** It is essential that the state-wide implementation of an effective practice be encouraged, articulated, and lauded throughout the system. At the DOE level, a written policy will need to be generated with sufficient scope and effort to impress upon school and district personnel that all schools in Florida are expected to implement an effective Tier 1 process with fidelity. While a mandate is not sufficient to produce change, written policies and subsequent State changes that support such a policy are necessary. This activity and the implementation of State-level changes will be the responsibility of the State Leadership Team.
- B. **Media and dissemination plan developed at all three levels:** Each level of planning for Tier 1 PBS (State Leadership, Implementation Team, District Leadership Team) will need to address efforts to promote, advertise, disseminate and enforce adoption of effective PBS practices. It is essential to involve parents, communities, business leaders, social organizations and other entities in such a far-reaching systems change effort.

10. **Political Support**

- A. **Verbal and policy commitment to Tier 1 PBS at state level:** In addition to very clear policy and practice changes at the State level, the articulation of commitment to Tier 1 PBS will be essential. Such a significant issue will need to be seen as one of the major priorities of the State Management Team. Such a commitment can support primary issues of interest to all Floridians (improving academic success, creating safer school environments, decreasing school dropouts, preparing a future workforce, teaching students appropriate social skills for their communities, etc.).
- B. **Communication of expectations to district personnel regarding support for cost-effective programs:** While it is not essential that communications from DOE to district personnel advocate for a particular Tier 1 PBS intervention, it is essential that all communications clearly advocate for developing effective and efficient Tier 1 interventions that can be applied to all students and all schools. It would also make sense to encourage districts to consider adapting the comprehensive curriculum, and training, technical assistance, coaching and evaluation system developed by the State's Implementation Team. While districts



may be free to select alternative programs, it will be necessary for district teams to agree to certain critical components in the programs, to develop a coaching system, and to participate in state-wide data collection at the school level.

C. Redefining roles of behavior support agencies

i.. Commit to a single PBS training approach and require all BEESS behavior support funded projects to be trained in the approach: Consistent with 10.B. above, there will be an expectation that BEESS funded projects that provide training in behavior support (PBS Project, RtI, FDLRS, SEDNET, etc.) will agree to collaborate on developing, training, and supporting one curricula. While individual districts may adapt a differing approach, all BEESS projects will collaborate and support one effective model across the State.

ii. Redefine roles of district personnel (behavior analysts, school psychologists, etc.): Consistent with changes in personnel roles that are already underway with other systems change efforts (Reading, RtI, etc.), critical student support personnel will need to have their time reallocated at the school and district levels to insure that Tier 1, 2 and 3 of PBS are implemented with fidelity. These personnel will likely fill roles as district coordinators, coaches, trainers, and support providers across the district.

D. Establish a formal State process for recognizing and rewarding model schools: Just as schools are recognized and financially rewarded for student academic progress, the State Leadership Team will need to plan how to recognize schools for student behavioral progress. The recognition of model schools can include certificates, banners, features on the state website, etc. Schools may also be rewarded financially for implementation fidelity and positive student outcomes.

11. Evaluation

A. Tools are selected to measure fidelity, outcomes, process: Evaluation of implementation efforts requires the measurement of fidelity, outcomes, and process at a minimum. The State Implementation Team will select relevant measurement tools that will answer identified evaluation questions. A minimum number of tools will be used at the school and district levels.

B. Tools are validated: The tools selected will already be reliable and valid measures or will be in the process of testing for reliability and validity.

C. All schools are required to use tools and submit data: State and district-level expectations are that all schools will submit required data reports on time and in a specified format. Just as schools can not opt out of the FCAT assessment, so schools will not be able to opt out of the Tier 1 behavioral evaluation process.

D. Online system expanded to support increased numbers of schools: As discussed earlier, the Florida PBS project maintains an online data collection and evaluation process that also provides schools and district personnel with real-time graphs of results for schools. This system will need to be expanded or replicated elsewhere in order to handle the increased number of schools submitting data as hundreds of new schools are added to the system



- E. State-wide behavior data system developed:** A critical issue that has impacted the adoption of Tier 1 PBS is the need for a school-based data system that can measure critical areas related to office discipline referrals (who, what, where, when, and why), is easily accessible to school personnel, and can provide graphical representations of the data with the click of a button. Such a responsive and easy to use system is essential for Tier 1 PBS efforts to truly be a data-based and problem-solving model. Several districts have committed to accessing the School-wide Information System (SWIS) to provide this information. However, the cost per school is \$250 per year. While this is a modest price, the PBS project does not have resources to support every school's use of the system and the combined cost across 3000-4000 schools in Florida would be cost prohibitive.

Some districts have developed or adapted their own databases to provide the critical information to schools. Some times these systems are effective and efficient. Sometimes they are not.

It is recommended that the State Leadership Team commit to 1) developing a state-wide behavioral database with features similar to SWIS but linked to Florida's Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) or 2) negotiating a statewide discount rate with SWIS for all of Florida's schools. Training and support on the use and misuse of the state database will also be necessary.

- F. Data systems developed for all three tiers of PBS:** After initial efforts to develop a state-wide Tier 1 database, it will also be necessary to develop a database or expand the Tier 1 database to track and progress monitor students at Tiers 2 and 3. SWIS provides progress monitoring at Tier 2 and will soon add Tier 3 to the database. If a statewide database is developed, Tier 1, 2, and 3 will need to be linked within the system to provide a three-tiered RtI process.
- G. School, district, and state reports can be generated from the database.** As mentioned earlier, the database will need to provide reports to individual schools, districts and the state level teams. Such reports will need to be accessible at the school, district and state levels. A model for how such a system might work is available on the Florida PBS website at:
https://secure2.fmhi.usf.edu/flpbs/pbsis/user/pbsis_login.asp.

Summary:

Attending to these eleven critical features is essential to scaling up Tier 1 PBS implementation and maintaining fidelity and student outcomes. While this process may at first appear daunting, many pieces of the process are already in place and can be scaled up quickly. The most significant need is the establishment of a state-level Leadership Team to address the systems and policy issues that might impede scaling up with fidelity. The PBS Project is excited to work to address these critical features and produce a state-wide system that produces important outcomes for districts, schools and students.

