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Schoolwide Behavioral Supports for Notre Dame Catholic School: A PBIS Initiative

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Schoolwide Behavioral Supports for Notre Dame Catholic School: A PBIS Initiative

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A School Improvement Plan Project Presented

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Abstract

Notre Dame Catholic Elementary School in rural northeast Iowa currently has no framework or plan in place to support students in behavioral success. This school improvement plan outlines steps to be taken toward the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a framework for behavioral supports to meet the needs of all students. The plan outlines implementation for the first year of PBIS at Notre Dame focusing on Schoolwide Tier 1 supports. The unique needs of Notre Dame are accounted for in steps to address staff buy-in and misconceptions. Steps taken during implementation include the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (SAS), PBIS training, establishing a PBIS team, creating a data collection plan, finding consensus on common language and expectations, explicitly teaching common expectations to students, plans for positive reinforcement of the expectations, and plans for staff accountability and fidelity.

Keywords: positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), implementation, staff buy-in, common expectations, fidelity

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Schoolwide Behavioral Supports for Notre Dame Catholic School: A PBIS Initiative

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are a multi-tiered system of supports for all students endorsed by the Iowa Department of Education. “PBIS provides schools with the framework and organizational plan to promote and maximize academic achievement and behavioral competence for all students” (Iowa Department of Education, 2022). In the state of Iowa, 689 schools are implementing PBIS in 217 districts (Iowa Department of Education, 2022). The goal of the Iowa State PBIS Leadership Team is for “all Iowa learners [to] experience social emotional behavioral well-being and academic success through positive, predictable, safe and supportive environments” (Iowa Department of Education, 2022). The problem is that at Notre Dame Catholic Elementary School no such framework or plan exists to support students in behavioral success. While aiming for a ‘positive, predictable, safe and supportive environment’, we fall short. Out of 179 preschool through sixth grade students, there are currently five students receiving behavioral supports of some kind. However, there is no system keeping behavioral data for these students or any students in the school. Concerns have been expressed that these supports are not solving the behavior issues and that there are no supports in place for students whose behavioral issues are less severe than these five. The lack of supports is leaving students struggling behaviorally feeling unsuccessful and their teachers and classmates feeling frustrated as everyone’s learning is negatively impacted by behavior issues.

The purpose of this school improvement plan is to outline steps to be taken toward the implementation of PBIS as a framework for behavioral supports to meet the needs of all students. The hope is that the implementation of PBIS through this plan will improve the school climate and increase the behavioral and academic success of Notre Dame students. No student should have to struggle through their school day because of a lack of supports.

During the process of reviewing existing literature that would support this school improvement project, online databases were scoured for peer-reviewed research published in scholarly journals over the last twenty years. Research demonstrating the benefits of PBIS on student or school outcomes, identifying enablers and barriers to implementation of PBIS, establishing a relationship between certain variables and the success of PBIS, or supporting individual components of PBIS were included. The research included in the literature review is intended to guide decisions made in the plan laid out.

PBIS benefits students, teachers, and schools. The PBIS components and framework effectively improve student behaviors and academics. Quality PBIS training and staff buy-in will be important in the success of implementation and the fidelity of that implementation will have an important impact on the outcomes and sustainability. The school improvement plan must address these factors.

The literature review will first provide research supporting PBIS as the choice for Notre Dame's behavior supports framework by discussing the benefits PBIS and its components provides. Secondly, research will be presented outlining factors important to the success of implementation and sustainability. Finally, the research surrounding the importance of fidelity in implementation will be discussed.

Review of the Literature

Benefits of PBIS and Its Components

Data-based decision making is an important component of PBIS. Often office discipline referrals are used as one of these data points in a PBIS framework. But are these referrals a valid indicator of student behavior? Pas, Bradshaw, and Mitchell (2011) studied behavior data from 8,645 children within 335 kindergarten through fifth grade general education classrooms at 21

elementary schools over the course of a year to answer this question by comparing referral data to teacher provided behavior ratings. The results indicated that office discipline referrals are moderately valid indicators of student behavior problems and may be an efficient source of information for use in school-based research and data-based decision-making.

Both the teaching of specific expected behaviors and the positive reinforcement of those behaviors are also important components of PBIS. One study that tested the effectiveness of these strategies targeted the lunchroom behavior of 200 first through fifth grade students in Utah. The intervention consisted of teaching specific appropriate behaviors, providing opportunities for students to practice the expected behaviors, and implementing a Praise Note system to reward students for behaving appropriately (Wheatley et al, 2009). Data showed significant decreases for each of three target behaviors. The average amount of litter left in the lunchroom decreased by 96%, the average number of instances of sitting inappropriately decreased by 64%, and the average number of instances of running in the lunchroom decreased by 75%. A similar study conducted by Leedy, Bates, and Safran (2004) measured the effectiveness of PBIS strategies in managing hallway behaviors. The data showed that through the “use of clear, consistent behavioral expectations, grade-level assemblies, and complimentary reinforcement, there was a substantial improvement in hallway behavior, with an overall increase of 134.9% for compliance across six positive behaviors” (Leedy, Bates, & Safran, 2004). A third study supporting these strategies applied them to a recess setting. 577 students enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade in Oregon went through recess workshops designed to explicitly teach expected recess behaviors to students. After three years of consistent implementation, office discipline referrals from recess decreased from 84 to 17 per year. Data also indicated improved school climate and increased staff satisfaction (Todd et al, 2002).

Research shows that PBIS as a whole has a positive impact on student behavior in schools. Bradshaw et al (2012) conducted a study to answer the question ‘Do children in schools implementing schoolwide PBIS experience better adjustment and fewer problem behaviors relative to their peers in comparison schools?’ Their four-year randomized controlled effectiveness trial involving 37 elementary schools found that PBIS implementation was associated with lower levels of disruptive behavior problems and concentration problems, better emotion regulation, more prosocial behavior, and fewer office discipline referrals (Bradshaw et al, 2012). A second study conducted by Waasdorp, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2012) involving 12,344 students in Maryland elementary schools found that children in schools that implemented schoolwide PBIS displayed lower rates of teacher-reported bullying and peer rejection than those in schools without PBIS. Yet another study, conducted by Bradshaw, Mitchell, and Leaf (2010), found a significant reduction in suspension rates. In this study, the schools trained in PBIS also reported a significant reduction in both the percentage of children with a major or minor office discipline referral as well as for the overall rate of major and minor office referral events.

PBIS seems to provide even greater benefit for students who might be perceived as behaviorally at risk. Bradshaw, Waasdorp, and Leaf (2015) classified kindergarten and first grade students into four categories-- socially-emotionally skilled, normative, at-risk, and high-risk—and tracked office discipline referrals for each group over the course of four years. The study confirmed that students in PBIS schools were significantly less likely to receive an office discipline referral and found these results to be magnified in students classified as at-risk or high-risk. A few years later, a similar study focusing on fourth and fifth grade students in 48 Norway schools discovered that although the baseline scores of the high-risk students were identical in the intervention and comparison groups, the trajectory for students in PBIS schools showed a

significantly larger drop in problem behavior over time than their counterparts in the comparison schools. Students who were considered to be most at risk for later conduct disorder, school failure, and other negative life outcomes benefitted the most from the schoolwide PBIS model (Sorlie et al, 2018).

Research also shows that PBIS has a positive impact on student academics. Data from 36,248 students in the Fayette County Public School District in Kentucky over the course of nine years was used to create a schoolwide academic index for comparison between PBIS schools and comparison schools. Results showed improved student academic achievement in elementary, middle, and high schools implementing PBIS when compared to their expected pre-intervention trajectories and matched comparison schools (Madigan et al, 2016). A second study conducted over a three-year timespan found that in addition to a decrease in student discipline problems, student academic performance, as measured by standardized tests of reading and mathematics skills, improved after PBIS implementation (Luiselli et al, 2005).

In addition to benefitting students, PBIS benefits teachers. Kelm and McIntosh (2012) questioned 62 teachers in western Canada and found that teachers in schools implementing schoolwide PBIS reported greater feelings of self-efficacy. Improving a teacher's belief in their ability to effect positive change in their students is known to have a positive impact on student academic achievement, motivation, and on-task behavior. Teacher self-efficacy is also a barrier to teacher stress and burnout.

Beyond the benefits for staff and students, PBIS has also been shown to improve the overall school environment. A study was conducted to determine the impact of PBIS on school organizational health using data from a large randomized controlled trial of PBIS conducted in 37 elementary schools in Maryland (Bradshaw et al, 2008). The study found significant

improvements in several aspects of the organizational health of schools implementing PBIS, including overall organizational health, resource influence (the “principal's ability to lobby for resources for the school and positively influence the allocation of district resources”), staff affiliation (“warm and friendly interactions, positive feelings about colleagues, commitment to students, trust and confidence among the staff, and [a] sense of accomplishment”), and academic emphasis (“students are cooperative in the classroom, respectful of other students who get good grades, and are driven to improve their skills”) (Bradshaw et al, 2008).

Factors for Success and Sustainability

One factor that stands out as significant to the success of PBIS implementation is staff buy-in. Pinkelman et al (2015) conducted a survey of 860 educators with knowledge of the schoolwide PBIS systems in their school. The survey sought information about the perceived enablers and barriers to PBIS implementation success. The most commonly identified enabler and barrier was staff buy-in. Twelve other themes were also identified. Enablers include school administrator support, training and professional development, a consistent approach, fidelity of implementation, adequate time and money resources, and functionality of the PBIS team. Barriers include lack of resources, lack of consistency and fidelity, lack of student buy-in, competing priorities, inadequate training, and lack of administrator support (Pinkelman et al, 2015).

The importance of PBIS training for educators was also emphasized in a different study conducted by Bradshaw et al in 2008. They studied the effects of training on PBIS implementation fidelity in 37 public elementary schools from five suburban and rural school

districts in Maryland. They found significant increases in fidelity scores for schools receiving PBIS training (Bradshaw et al, 2008).

A few of these themes were echoed in a study conducted by George et al in 2018. Their study of 1329 schools in 50 school districts in Florida examined district practices associated with successful PBIS implementation. Qualitative interviews identified eight major themes in successful PBIS implementation related to district-level supports for schoolwide PBIS: having a district coordinator, utilizing coaches, district teaming, internal implementation drivers, leadership buy-in and support, district data infrastructure, direct support to schools, and communication.

While the previous research focused on successful implementation, sustainability of the PBIS program is also worth examining. What factors not only get PBIS started successfully, but help it to continue to be successful in the future? To answer this question, McIntosh et al (2018) studied 860 schools in fourteen states over the course of three years. They found that adequate implementation fidelity and better team use of data when making decisions in the first year were the strongest predictors of sustained implementation in year three. In addition, the number of other schools in the district adopting schoolwide PBIS was a similarly strong predictor (McIntosh et al, 2018).

Importance of Fidelity

It was previously mentioned that the fidelity with which PBIS is implemented in a school impacts the success and sustainability of the program (McIntosh et al, 2018), but it also affects the beneficial outcomes that a PBIS framework provides. In a study examining the relationship between fidelity and student outcomes, Pas et al (2019) found that schools with higher fidelity

rates also had lower rates of suspension and truancy, and higher rates of achievement, in most cases. A similar study conducted by James et al (2019) found that changes in implementation fidelity over time are inversely related to changes in behavioral problems. These results were confirmed by Amity et al (2019) as researchers studied the academic and discipline outcomes in 153 schools in Ohio. The research determined that higher tier 1 PBIS implementation fidelity is significantly associated with positive student outcomes, especially those related to student behavior (Amity et al, 2019). A fourth study (Benner et al, 2010) focused on the impact of PBIS fidelity on students with emotional disturbance. After studying thirty-seven public school students receiving special education services for emotional disturbance in an urban, northwestern city, researchers concluded that teacher fidelity to PBIS played a large and statistically significant role in improving the behavior of students with emotional disturbance (Benner et al, 2010). A plan that encourages fidelity and provides checks and balances for accountability will likely be more successful than one that takes fidelity for granted.

School Profile & Baseline

Located in rural Northeast Iowa, the Notre Dame Catholic School serves students spread over 426 square miles (Howard-Winneshiek Community Schools, 2020). The 179 preschool through sixth grade students learn in a single building adjacent to its parent church in Cresco, the county seat of Howard County with a population just under 4,000 (City of Cresco, 2020). Upon advancing to junior high, most of the students attend Crestwood Junior High and High School, part of the Howard-Winneshiek Community School District.

Cresco grew as the railroad was expanding in the area. Today it is supported mainly by manufacturing businesses in the area and is surrounded by agriculture. Since 2006, Howard County and surrounding communities, like much of rural Iowa, has been going through a

dramatic drop in population (Howard-Winneshiek Community School District, 2020). According to the 2010 census (United States Census Bureau, 2011), the racial makeup of the city was 97.3% White, 0.4% African American, 0.1% Native American, 0.4% Asian, 0.7% from other races, 1.1% from two or more races, and Hispanic or Latino of any race were 1.6% of the population. The area does not have a history of much diversity.

The demographics at Notre Dame Catholic School are similar to those in the community. 97.2% of students are white with only a few black, Hispanic, and Asian individuals. 26% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch status: about half the rate at the local public school. While Notre Dame is a Catholic school, only 69% of its students are Catholic. Of the 179 students, there are three with speech IEPs, two with academic IEPs, and one with a 504 plan. Enrollment at Notre Dame has decreased over the last three school years and is projected to do so again next year.

Notre Dame's academic test scores are above the averages for both other schools in northeast Iowa and throughout the state. FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) test scores for the Winter of 2021-2022 school year measured the reading and math skills of Kindergarten through Sixth Grade students. 81% of Notre Dame students met the reading benchmarks compared to 61% of students served by the local Area Education Agency (AEA 1) and 66% of students in Iowa. On the math test, 88% of Notre Dame students met benchmark compared to 69% served by AEA 1 and 68% throughout the state.

Notre Dame Catholic School is a part of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Schools in the archdiocese are "committed to partnering with parents for the spiritual and educational formation of students" (Notre Dame Catholic School, 2021). The Catholic Faith based programs instill a love and knowledge of the Catholic faith, integrate instruction with Catholic values, lead

students and families to active participation in their parish communities, provide opportunities for worship, service, and prayer, and support a safe and nurturing environment where students encounter Jesus Christ. Academics are also important to the philosophy of archdiocese schools. The archdiocese believes academic excellence promotes life-long learning, fully advances the development of the whole person, forms students prepared to become productive, virtuous citizens and church leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world, and fosters a culture of academic excellence through critical thinking skills, innovative and rigorous curriculum standards, a global perspective and an emphasis on community and service (Notre Dame Catholic School, 2021).

Notre Dame Catholic school is an accredited, faith-based environment. The vision of Notre Dame “is to develop and provide faith-based education built on the pillars of compassion, family, integrity, and service” (Notre Dame Catholic School, 2021). The school mission states, “we hold our students to academic excellence as well as moral and spiritual expectations” (Notre Dame Catholic School, 2021). It continues by noting the pride taken in bringing the community, students, and families together to mold courageous minds after the person of Jesus Christ in all aspects of loving, learning, and serving with integrity. The mission finishes by acknowledging the partnership between the school, parents, and community to build a legacy of lifelong faith-filled learners prepared to succeed in an ever-changing world (Notre Dame Catholic School, 2021).

“The philosophy of Notre Dame Catholic School is that of our Lord in teaching students with love, patience, consistency, firmness, honesty and understanding. As Jesus does with His parables, teachers share knowledge that will inform students and also encourage them to search for deeper understanding of subject matter and its application to themselves. Through

instructional methods and role modeling, teachers strive to build student self-esteem, self-determination, self-discipline, and responsibility in an atmosphere of optimism and love” (Notre Dame Catholic School, 2021).

Notre Dame Catholic School (2021) cites three main goals: to develop a meaningful relationship with Christ and with one another, to develop a sense of wonder and appreciation for the gifts within and around us, and to help students to use Catholic teachings to make valued decisions related to themselves, their society, and their environment. In addition, there are several outcomes incorporated and developed within the curriculum. One goal is for students to understand the basic elements of the Catholic faith and live these truths. Notre Dame also strives to teach students to communicate using verbal, written, and listening skills. Students should also demonstrate reading, writing, legible handwriting, and math skills and employ these in problem solving. The curriculum encourages students to demonstrate a positive self-concept, self-discipline, responsibility and to act appropriately. It is also the goal of Notre Dame for students to be computer literate and knowledgeable of current technology. Notre Dame works to teach students to use resources effectively. Instruction at Notre Dame strives to develop students who are respectful of authority, socially responsible, considerate, and appreciative of the gifts of others. Additional goals of the curriculum are to ensure students apply decision making skills to daily life, to grow students who are active members of the community, and to teach students to self-motivate and develop a love of learning (Notre Dame Catholic School, 2021).

Needs Assessment

While the mission, vision, philosophy, and goals of both the Archdiocese of Dubuque and Notre Dame Catholic School focus on a positive school climate and culture, the reality isn't

meeting those ideals. It is hard for an environment to feel “nurturing” when there is constant behavioral correction taking place. Notre Dame has a vision for compassion, but we fail to show compassion when we ignore student needs or fail to support those who struggle to be successful. If Notre Dame wants to model the love of Jesus, students with behavioral skill deficits must be accepted and supported.

While many schools have plans in place to address behaviors, there is currently no framework or plan in place to support students in behavioral success at Notre Dame. PBIS is one such framework that has been used successfully in many schools. The PBIS philosophy is preventative rather than reactionary. What can we do to prevent student behaviors before they start? How can we support students and set them up for success behaviorally? These are the questions that a framework could answer.

In addition, there is currently no consistency in how to handle students who are not successful behaviorally. Having seen these behaviors firsthand, it is clear these students are struggling, and their teachers and classmates feel frustrated as everyone’s learning is negatively impacted by behavior issues. A protocol needs to be established for consequences and behavior referrals.

PBIS implementation would revolutionize Notre Dame by providing much needed structure to the way challenging behavior is handled. It would establish a procedure for documenting behavior, provide common language for staff, more clearly define common expectations, create a strong foundational climate, build more individualized supports for students, support a shift from a reactive to a proactive mindset, and establish a more consistent set of procedures for dealing with challenging behavior. I believe PBIS is an important first step in Notre Dame being able to support the behavioral needs of its students.

School Data & Analysis

Data is important for all sorts of decision making in a school. In this case, it is the lack of data that indicates the need for change at Notre Dame. There is no central documentation of behavioral issues at Notre Dame. Each teacher keeps their own documentation and informs administration or other staff as they see necessary through conversation or email. There is no standard method or system for documentation. Teachers decide when and how to document behaviors. There are no clear expectations for whether teachers should document behaviors other than common sense and an understanding of best practice.

The data that is available is minimal. As previously stated, five of the 179 preschool through sixth grade students at Notre Dame are currently receiving behavioral supports of some kind. These supports range from a safe spot outside of the classroom for them when they need time away to working with the school therapist once a week.

Additional data is anecdotal only. Both teachers and the principal have expressed a concern with behaviors across the grades at Notre Dame. Students already receiving supports continue to struggle and there are students with less severe behavior issues that are not receiving supports. Something needs to change.

In order to be able to make more educated decisions regarding supports for student behavior at Notre Dame, we need more data. We need a system for collecting data. We also need a method for analyzing and using that data. PBIS can provide that framework.

Action Plan

Staff Buy-In

The designing of this action plan is based, in large part, on the existing research. Pinkelman et al (2015) cited staff buy-in as an important factor in successfully implementing a PBIS program. Staff buy-in is a major concern at Notre Dame as staff have previously resisted PBIS and expressed reservations about some aspects of PBIS. The staff at Notre Dame also has a history of resisting change in general. Due to the importance of staff buy-in in any PBIS implementation, but especially at Notre Dame, this action plan's first focus will be on obtaining staff buy-in.

PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)

The first step will be to establish a need for changes by exploring the current strengths and weaknesses at Notre Dame through the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (SAS). Area Education Agency (AEA) staff have experience in administering this evaluation so a member of the AEA should be brought in to support Notre Dame staff in completing the survey. The results of the survey will support Notre Dame staff in meeting the needs of the school and utilizing its resources as they implement a PBIS framework.

School Climate Reality Check Professional Development Activity

A second activity will reinforce the need for improvement by offering staff the opportunity to reflect upon the reality of our school culture and climate. During professional development time set aside for work towards PBIS implementation, staff will describe their vision of Notre Dame's school climate and then compare it to the reality of how teachers and students feel when they walk away from school each day. Hopefully reflection will reveal some minor discrepancies which staff can acknowledge and work to correct through PBIS implementation.

1. Around the meeting space, place four posters each containing one of the following questions:
 - a. What is school climate?
 - b. What is our school climate like?
 - c. How do you feel after a day of teaching?
 - d. How do you think a student feels after a day of teaching?
2. Staff members will write their answers to each of the four questions on one of four provided sticky notes.
3. Staff will place their sticky note answers on the corresponding posters.
4. Staff will receive four stickers. Staff will walk around the room, reading the various answers for the questions before placing a sticker next to the answers they agree with the most.
5. Staff will be able to share out/reflect on activity. Use prompting questions if needed:
 - a. What surprised you?
 - b. What did you agree with?
 - c. What questions did you have after reading the answers?

Resolve Misconceptions

After having established the need for some sort of improvements to our school climate and culture, the focus can then shift to growing consensus in a solution to the problem. At this point staff should be in agreement that there is a need but may not agree on how to proceed in meeting that need. Previous conversations about PBIS at Notre Dame have revealed some staff hold misconceptions about PBIS. They see the positive reinforcement as extrinsic motivation or bribery and worry that if we focus on the positive there won't be any consequences. These

misconceptions need to be resolved in order for staff to buy-in to PBIS as a solution to move forward with. A presentation addressing several common misconceptions with research, examples, and anecdotes will be shared along with an opportunity for staff questions and answers.

Training

The review of research literature also revealed the importance of training staff in the successful implementation and fidelity of PBIS (Pinkelman et al, 2015; Bradshaw et al, 2008). With a small staff and no previous PBIS training, it would be ideal for the full Notre Dame staff to receive training from qualified professionals. The first point of contact in arranging training will be the Area Education Agency. This training will require significant dedicated professional development time.

PBIS Team

After the staff is on board with moving forward with PBIS implementation and has received training to do so successfully, a core PBIS team should be formed to oversee the tier one implementation and maintenance. Research has shown that the functionality of this team can have a significant impact on the successful implementation of PBIS (Pinkelman et al, 2015; George et al, 2018). The team will be representative of the make-up of the staff in terms of content areas, grade levels, and administration. Team members will need to be committed to meeting regularly and continuing the work of PBIS beyond initial implementation.

Data Collection

One of the first tasks set to the PBIS team will be to determine how to collect behavior data. Data collection and data-informed decision making are an important part of the PBIS

framework. Research literature includes data infrastructure and data-based decisions making as factors in successful PBIS implementation and sustainability (George et al, 2018; McIntosh et al, 2018). Specifically, the team will likely create a system for office discipline referrals as part of the data system. Office discipline referrals are proven to be valid indicators of behavior and a reasonable data point for use in decision making. The team may consider utilizing the behavior referral system offered within the PowerSchool grading system the school already uses or creating a digital form designed specifically for Notre Dame.

Common Language and Expectations

A second task that will be taken on by the PBIS team early on will be to define common expectations and common language. Notre Dame currently has some expectations for common areas, but these will need to be reviewed, updated, and agreed upon. An example of common language that could be adopted is voice levels (Figure 1). Teacher voice in process of defining common expectations and language will improve teacher commitment and fidelity in reinforcing the expectations consistently.

Figure 1

Voice Level Chart

Voice Level Chart	
4	Shouting
3	Loud Voice
2	Speaking
1	Whisper
0	Silent

Teaching Expectations

Once common expectations are established, the PBIS team will set plans for explicitly teaching these to students when school starts in the fall. Wheatley et al (2009) and Todd et al (2002) tested the effectiveness of this strategy and found the teaching of expectations was an important factor in improving target behaviors. Lesson plans will be written and shared with staff and expectation lessons will be scheduled. The team may consider having some of the lessons taught by a staff member other than the classroom teacher and in the related locations (hallway, playground, etc.).

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement of expectations is another pillar of the PBIS framework. The PBIS team will need to develop a plan or system for positive behavior reinforcement at Notre Dame. The use of extrinsic motivation is one of the concerns staff at Notre Dame have expressed with PBIS so the development of this system will need to be specifically tailored to Notre Dame with enough emphasis on providing feedback and reinforcement to students without ‘bribing’ them. Studies cited in the literature review agreed that positive reinforcement of the expectations in the form of verbal compliments or ‘praise notes’ contributed to the resulting improved hallway and lunchroom behavior.

Fidelity

Even the best laid plans can fail without accountability and fidelity. The PBIS team will need to plan checks and balances into all of the above plans in order to provide accountability for teachers and staff. It has been well established that fidelity is vital to the success and sustainability of PBIS. Teachers must consistently document behaviors in order for data

collection to be valuable for decision making. All teachers must execute the expectations lesson plans to their fullest so that each student learns the common language and common expectations. Positive reinforcement must be frequent and consistent across all areas and grades in order to be effective. The team will need to consider how to support teachers in these goals.

Implementation of the Plan

Timeline

There are quite a few steps in the plan that will need to be carefully timed to be ready for implementation when school starts in the fall. The first step should take place as soon as possible during this school year and more than half of the steps need to be completed before school starts next year. The rest will need to take place during the first few weeks of school. Table 1 outlines these timelines and who will be responsible for carrying them out. The principal will need to schedule the dates of these steps by examining the professional development times available at the end of this school year and beginning of next year. Additional PBIS team meetings may be necessary during the summer months.

Table 1

PBIS Implementation Timeline

Step	Timeline	Responsible Staff
PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)	ASAP	Principal collaborating with AEA
School Climate Reality Check PD Activity	Before School Starts	Principal and/or Staff Volunteer
Address Misconceptions	Before School Starts	Principal and/or Staff Volunteer
Training	Before School Starts	Principal collaborating with AEA
Create a Team	Before School Starts	Principal with staff input
Establish Data Collection Plan	Before School Starts	PBIS Team
Agree Upon Common Expectations and Language	Before School Starts	PBIS Team leading staff

Teach Expectations	First Week of School/First Six Weeks of School	Staff supported by PBIS team
Positive Reinforcement	Begin concurrently with Teaching Expectations and continue all year	All staff supported by PBIS team
Teacher Accountability and Fidelity	Begin concurrently with Teaching Expectations and continue all year	All staff supported by PBIS team

Resources Needed

The biggest resource required to carry out this plan is time. Specifically, whole staff professional development time to work through the outlined steps will be needed. The process should not be rushed so, if necessary, full implementation should be pushed back to accommodate all of the steps and ensure staff buy-in.

How Will We Know the Plan Worked?

By including behavior data collection in the implementation plan, we will already be gathering the data necessary to monitor progress and hopefully the success of the implementation. After implementation, the PBIS team will monitor and analyze the data during regular meetings and adjust planning accordingly. After year one, staff should again take the PBIS Self-Assessment Survey (SAS). Changes in the results should show the areas in which progress has been made and should aid in planning for the future. This tier 1 implementation should be followed up by additional planning and implementation in year two and beyond including tier 2 and tier 3 interventions.

Potential Barriers

This implementation plan has attempted to anticipate and address potential barriers up front. Especially staff buy-in. Hopefully a school climate reality check, addressing misconceptions, and training will all work to overcome the challenge of staff buy-in. If these

activities are not enough, it will be important for administration and the PBIS team to work together to adjust the plans accordingly in order to obtain staff buy-in before moving forward with implementation.

Conclusion

PBIS implementation would transform Notre Dame by providing much needed structure to the way challenging behavior is managed. It would establish a procedure for documenting behavior, provide common language for staff, more clearly define common expectations, create a strong foundational climate, build more individualized supports for students, support a shift from a reactive to a proactive mindset, and establish a more consistent set of procedures for dealing with challenging behavior. I believe PBIS is an important first step in Notre Dame supporting the behavioral needs of all its students.

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