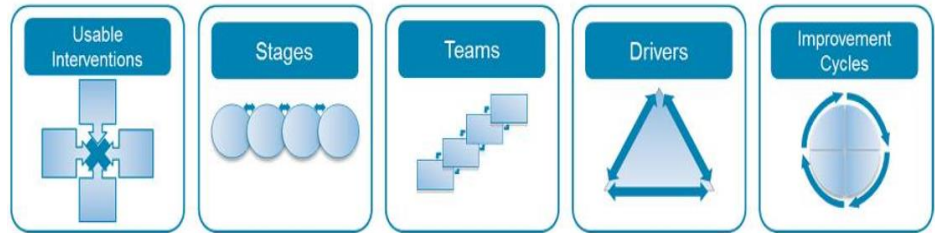


# HOW? Snapshot

"Embrace Sugai's law: For every new initiative, stop two ineffective or harmful current practices."  
-Dean Fixsen.

**Implementation Science**  
Implementation Science is the study of factors influencing the full and effective use of innovations in practice. The goal is not to answer factual questions about what is, but rather to determine what is required. (NIRN, 2015)

## Active Implementation Framework



## Stages of Implementation

<p><b>Stage 1:</b> <b>Exploration and Adoption</b> Deciding to commit to adoption and implementation of PBIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Determine if your school has any need for behavioral interventions</li> <li>➤ Become informed about what MTSS-PBIS is</li> <li>➤ Discuss how PBIS might meet the need in your context</li> <li>➤ Discuss whether to adopt PBIS</li> <li>➤ Complete District Capacity Assessment</li> <li>➤ Secure support and sufficient staff buy-in</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 2:</b> <b>Installation</b> (Getting Ready) Establishing necessary infrastructure to support the implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Get system support</li> <li>➤ Demonstrate priority</li> <li>➤ Build leadership teams</li> <li>➤ Review existing resources</li> <li>➤ Develop action plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 3:</b> <b>Initial Implementation</b> (Getting Going) Putting key features of PBIS actively in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Carry out action plan</li> <li>➤ Evaluate and compare plan to PBIS Eight Steps of Implementation</li> <li>➤ Data driven decision teams for problem solving</li> <li>➤ Move toward achieving all eight steps with fidelity</li> <li>➤ Integration of MH, Cultural Proficiency &amp; Restorative Practices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 4:</b> <b>Full Implementation</b> (Up and Running) Expanding the framework across people and settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Expand from few to many</li> <li>➤ Across staff, families and community</li> <li>➤ Across schools in district</li> <li>➤ Integration of multiple data sources for problem solving teams</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 5:</b> <b>Sustaining and Continuous Improvement</b> Maintaining and improving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluate implementation fidelity and valued outcomes</li> <li>➤ Revise based on implementation and fidelity data</li> <li>➤ Improve efficiency</li> <li>➤ Adapt to change</li> <li>➤ Embed within school and district routines</li> </ul>



## Kent McIntosh's 4 Principles of Enhancing Sustainability of PBIS

- ▲ Promote PRIORITY
- ▲ Ensure EFFECTIVENESS
- ▲ Increase EFFICIENCY
- ▲ Use data for CONTINUOUS REGENERATION

The SUBSIST is a school team planning tool for sustainability.  
<http://kentmcintosh.wordpress.com>

## Behavioral Science

- ▲ PBIS is grounded in the science of behavior or applied behavior analysis.
- ▲ The science of behavior focuses on changes to the environment resulting in changes in behavior.
- ▲ Assumes students are not born with bad behavior.
- ▲ Students do not learn better ways of behaving when only given aversive consequences.
- ▲ To learn better ways of behaving, students must be directly taught the expected behaviors.
- ▲ To retain new behaviors, students must be given specific positive feedback and opportunities to practice in a variety of settings where the behaviors are expected.



## Know Your ABC's of Behavior

**ANTECEDENTS** are cues, prompts, signals, questions, commands, reactions which happen right before the behavior occurs; they are the happenings occurring before the behavior, setting the stage or triggering the behavior.

**BEHAVIOR** is the observable, measurable and clearly defined actions or reactions of the individual to the environment or antecedent.

**CONSEQUENCES** are the outcome or feedback occurring immediately following the behavior; positive corrective feedback helps students learn and use appropriate behavior in the future.

<b>ANTECEDENTS</b> "PREVENT"	<b>BEHAVIOR</b> "TEACH"	<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> "REINFORCE"
<b>Design</b> supportive environments using antecedent strategies promoting a positive and safe school climate for ALL students.	<b>Teach</b> positive expectations, self-management and socially appropriate peer interactions supporting a positive and safe school climate for ALL students.	<b>Provide</b> specific performance feedback and a continuum of positive reinforcement intrinsically motivating ALL students to engage in socially appropriate behaviors.

Traditionally, approaches to discipline have been punitive in nature, where the emphasis is on negative consequences or what is done following the behavior to punish or suppress behavior. PBIS focuses heavily on prevention practices or **Antecedents**; the things we can do to set students for behaving in socially appropriate ways, such as:

- ▲ Clarify expectations so all students understand what they are expected to do.
- ▲ Teach those expectations to students in an ongoing way to ensure students know how to behave successfully.
- ▲ Effectively respond to behavior – appropriate or inappropriate – to shape the behavior you seek.

## Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

### School-wide Behavior and Social/Emotional Supports

- ▲ Commitment to a school-wide positive and proactive social culture
- ▲ Commitment to building personal competence of ALL students
- ▲ Linking behavior and social development with academic success



### Embedding Social Skills Within the Classroom Curriculum

An integrative and comprehensive multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) promotes essential skills for social and emotional competence and prevents or reduces challenging behaviors making schools more effective learning environments for ALL students. When instructional practices for embedding social skills are organized into lesson plans, students acquire the important social skills needed for academic and social success while they are doing their math, or science, or social studies with little or no infringement on academic time. Students and teachers increase their focus on academics as the expected social behaviors become "a way of being" in the classroom.

# Active Implementation Framework

#1

Processing Activity: Jigsaw  
Foursquare Guide Page 11

- Read your assigned section from **ACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORKS FOR PROGRAM SUCCESS**  
*Adapted from the National Implementation Research Network at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute: Chapel Hill, North Carolina*
- Facilitator guides discussion on key points from the assigned reading and discussion questions
- Recorder writes responses on puzzle piece and reporter shares out to the group.



## Stages of Implementation



### Exploration Stage

The overall goal of the exploration stage is to examine the degree to which a particular model, program, or approach meets the community's needs and whether implementation is feasible. In this first stage of implementation, communities must assess the goodness of fit between potential program models and the needs of the children and families they serve. Requirements for implementation must be carefully assessed and potential barriers to implementation examined. Involvement of key stakeholders and the development of program champions are key activities during this stage. A prerequisite for implementation is to ensure that core intervention components are identified and fully operationalized. Even with existing evidence-based and evidence-informed practices, more program development work might need to be done during the exploration stage before final implementation decisions can be made.

### Installation Stage

The installation stage is often overlooked in implementation. Once a decision is made to adopt a program model, many structural and instrumental changes in a number of settings and systems must be made in order to initiate the new practices. Practical efforts to initiate the new program are central to the installation stage and include activities such as developing referral pathways, ensuring that financial and human resources are in place, and finding physical space or purchasing equipment and technology. Developing the competence of practitioners is a key component of this stage to ensure that programs are implemented with fidelity.

### Initial Implementation

During the initial implementation stage, the new program model or initiative is put into practice. Attempts to implement a new program or innovation often end or seriously falter during the installation stage or early in the initial implementation stage. The key activities of the initial implementation stage involve strategies to promote continuous improvement and rapid cycle problem solving. Using data to assess implementation, identify solutions, and drive decision making is a hallmark of this stage. It is critical to address barriers and develop system solutions quickly rather than allowing problems to re-emerge and reoccur.

### Full Implementation

Full implementation occurs as the new learning at all levels becomes integrated into practice, organization, and system settings and practitioners skillfully provide new services. The processes and procedures to support the new way of work are in place, and the system, although never completely stable, has largely been recalibrated to accommodate and, it can be hoped, fully support the new ways of work. The time it takes to move from initial implementation to full implementation will vary depending upon the complexity of the new program model, the baseline infrastructure, the availability of implementation supports and resources, and other contextual factors.

### Sustainability

Sustainability planning and activities need to be an active component from the initial stages of implementation. To sustain an initiative, both financial and programmatic sustainability are required. Financial sustainability involves ensuring that the funding streams for the new practice are established, reliable, and adequate. Programmatic sustainability is related to ensuring that sustainable supports are in place to continue effective training, coaching, and performance assessment protocols; to measure fidelity and make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement; and to ensure that facilitative policy-making and procedural decisions continue to support full implementation.

**How might stage-based work support PBIS implementation?**

**How can the careful assessment and selection of PBIS interventions be supported?**

**What role can fidelity and student outcome assessments play in PBIS programming?**

**How can issues of readiness and buy-in be assessed and addressed when implementing PBIS?**

**What types of stage-based data collection are important to consider before moving to the next stage?**



## Implementation Drivers



The implementation drivers are the core components or building blocks of the infrastructure needed to support practice, organizational, and systems change. There are three types of implementation drivers and when used collectively, these drivers ensure high-fidelity and sustainable program implementation: competency drivers, organization drivers, and leadership drivers.

### 1. Competency Drivers

Competency drivers are mechanisms to develop, improve, and sustain practitioners' and supervisors' ability to implement a program or innovation to benefit children and families.

- A. **Selection** – Effective staffing requires the specification of required skills, abilities, and other model-specific prerequisite characteristics.
- B. **Training**—Trainers need to learn when, how, and with whom to use new skills and practices. Training should provide knowledge related to the theory and underlying values of the program, use adult learning theory, introduce the components and rationales of key practices, provide opportunities to practice new skills to meet fidelity criteria, and receive feedback in a safe and supportive training environment.
- C. **Coaching**—Most new skills can be introduced in training but must be practiced and mastered on the job with the help of a coach. Districts should develop and implement service delivery plans for coaching that stipulate where, when, with whom, and why coaching will occur; use multiple sources of data to provide feedback to practitioners including direct observation; and use coaching data to improve practice and organizational fidelity.
- D. **Performance Assessment**—Evaluation of staff performance is designed to assess the application and outcomes of skills that are reflected in selection criteria, taught in training, and reinforced in coaching. Districts should develop and implement transparent staff performance assessments, use multiple sources of data to assess performance, institute positive recognition so assessments are seen as an opportunity to improve performance, and use performance assessment data to improve practice and organizational fidelity.

### 2. Organization Drivers

Organization drivers intentionally develop the organizational supports and systems interventions needed to create a hospitable environment for new programs and innovations by ensuring that the competency drivers are accessible, effective and data are used for continuous improvement.

- A. **Decision-Support Data Systems**— Data are used to assess key aspects of overall performance of an organization and support decision making to ensure continuing implementation of the intervention over time. Decision-support data systems include quality assurance data, fidelity data, and outcome data. Data need to be reliable, reported frequently, built into practice routines, accessible at actionable levels, and used to make decisions.
- B. **Facilitative Administration**— Administrators provide leadership and make use of a wide range of data to inform decision making, support the overall processes, and keep staff organized and focused on the desired innovation outcomes. Districts should ensure leadership is committed and is available to address challenges and create solutions, develop clear communication protocols and feedback loops, adjust and develop policies and procedures to support the new way of work, and reduce administrative barriers.
- C. **Systems Interventions**—These are strategies to work with external systems to ensure the availability of financial, organizational, and human resources required to support the work of practitioners. The alignment of external systems to support the work is a critical aspect of implementation.

### 3. Leadership Team Drivers

The use of the Leadership Driver in the context of active implementation focuses on leadership approaches related to transforming systems and creating change. **A. Technical challenges** are those characterized by pretty clear agreement on a definition of the dimensions of the problem at hand. We can be reasonably certain that given the agreed upon problem and the dimension of the problem, if we engage in a relevant set of activities we will arrive at a solution – not necessarily quickly or easily but the challenge and path to a solution are largely known. Technical challenges can be managed. The leader can form a team, make a plan, make decisions, hold people accountable and execute the solution.

**B Adaptive challenges** are characterized by the definition of the problem being much less clear, and the perspectives on the "issue" at hand differ among stakeholders. Viable solutions and implementation pathways are unclear and defining a pathway for the solution requires learning by all. This "all" means that the primary locus of responsibility is not a single entity or person. These types of challenges require a different type of leadership and often require leadership at many levels.



- Getting on the balcony - Stepping out of the fray to see the key patterns and the bigger picture. Leaders also need to recognize the patterns of work avoidance and the potential for conflict.
- Identifying the adaptive challenge - Putting the unspoken issues out on the table. It also involves recognizing the challenges to and uncomfortable changes that may be required in values, practices and relationships.
- Regulating distress - Creating a safe environment for challenges to be discussed, and creating a space for diversity of opinion, experiences, and values as well as the opportunity to challenge assumptions. Stress is accepted, tolerated, and regulated by the leader.
- Maintaining disciplined attention - Being aware of patterns of behavior that indicate that there is a purposeful or unconscious attempt to avoid disturbing or difficult issues. These patterns and behaviors can show up as scapegoating or blaming others; denying that the problem exists or is truly problematic; or diverting attention by focusing on technical issues.
- Giving the work world back - Creating conditions that help people take greater responsibility for the work of change, including defining and solving the problems. The leader supports staff rather than directing or controlling them. Giving the work back to the people also requires instilling and expressing confidence in others so that they will take risks and backing them up when they make mistakes.
- Protecting all voices - Relying on others to raise questions about adaptive challenges and provide support and protection for employees who identify internal conflicts in the organization. This includes providing a legitimate space for those who constructively disagree.

### **How are the implementation drivers relevant to PBIS implementation?**

**Within your organization, which drivers have your program given the most and least attention to? Why?**

**How can the driver's framework improve the implementation infrastructure of PBIS in your organization?**



## Expert Implementation Teams



Traditional approaches to disseminating and implementing evidence-based and evidence-informed practices for children and families have not been successful in closing the research-to-practice gap. In extensive reviews of the dissemination and diffusion literature (Greenhalgh, Robert, MacFarlane, Bate, & Kyriakidou, 2004; Hall & Hord, 2011), past efforts to support implementation have been characterized as “letting it happen” or “helping it happen” (Greenhalgh et al., p. 593). Approaches that let implementation happen leave it to agency administrators, practitioners, and policymakers to make use of research findings on their own. Approaches that help it happen provide manuals or Web sites to help implementation happen in real world settings. Both approaches have been found to be insufficient for promoting the full and effective use of innovations (Balas & Boren, 2000; Clancy, 2006). Greenhalgh et. al. (2004) identified a new category they called “making it happen,” (p. 593) in which expert implementation teams can play a role in using evidence-based strategies to actively support implementation of a new innovation or initiative.

*Implementation teams provide an internal support structure to move selected programs and practices through the stages of implementation in systemic change.* The teams focus on:

1. Increasing “buy-in” and readiness
2. Installing and sustaining the implementation infrastructure
3. Assessing fidelity and outcomes
4. Building linkages with external systems
5. Problem-solving and sustainability

An advantage of relying on implementation teams is that the team collectively has the knowledge, skills, abilities, and time to succeed. Collectively, the core competencies of the implementation team include: knowledge and understanding of the selected intervention and its linkages to outcomes; knowledge of implementation science and best practices for implementation; and applied experience in using data for program improvement.

Implementation teams might actively work with external experts of evidence-based practices and programs in PBIS. PBIS experts represent a group of individuals very knowledgeable about the innovation who actively work to help others implement the “*new innovation*” with fidelity and good effect. PBIS experts are often affiliated with researchers and training and technical assistance centers.

**How might communities of practice help implementation efforts in your organization?**

**How can frontline staff be included in implementation decision making?**

**What might be the benefits a ground-up approach to program implementation?**



## Improvement Cycles: Policy-Practice Feedback Loops



Connecting policy to practice is a key aspect of reducing early childhood systems barriers to high-fidelity implementation. There must be good policy to enable good practice, but practice must also inform policy. Frequently early childhood practitioners experience barriers to service delivery that can be solved only at the policy level. There needs to be a system in place that ensures practice experiences are being fed back to the policy level to inform decision making and continuous improvement.

Policy-practice feedback loops are one type of improvement cycle and, therefore, follow the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle (Deming, 1986; Shewhart, 1931) that signifies all improvement cycles.

- Plan—Specify the plan that helps move service and interventions forward
- Do—Focus on facilitating the implementation of the plan
- Study—Develop assessment to understand how the plan is working
- Act—Make changes to the next iteration of the plan to improve implementation

Policy-practice feedback loops demonstrate the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle on a larger scale where moving through the cycle takes longer than when the Plan, Do, Study Act is happening at one level of the system.

Effective policy-practice feedback loops must be institutionalized into the agency's way of work to ensure that change happens on purpose. New practices do not fare well in existing organizational structures and systems. Too often, effective interventions are changed to fit the system, as opposed to the existing system changing to support the effective interventions. Embedded policy-practice feedback loops promote system change to support service change.

**How can formal, transparent, and regular methods for hearing from the practice level about what's working in the organization – and then moving information up the system and back down – support effective implementation of evidence-based practices such as PBIS?**

**What are the next right steps in creating a more hospitable policy, funding, and regulatory environment for PBIS to thrive?**

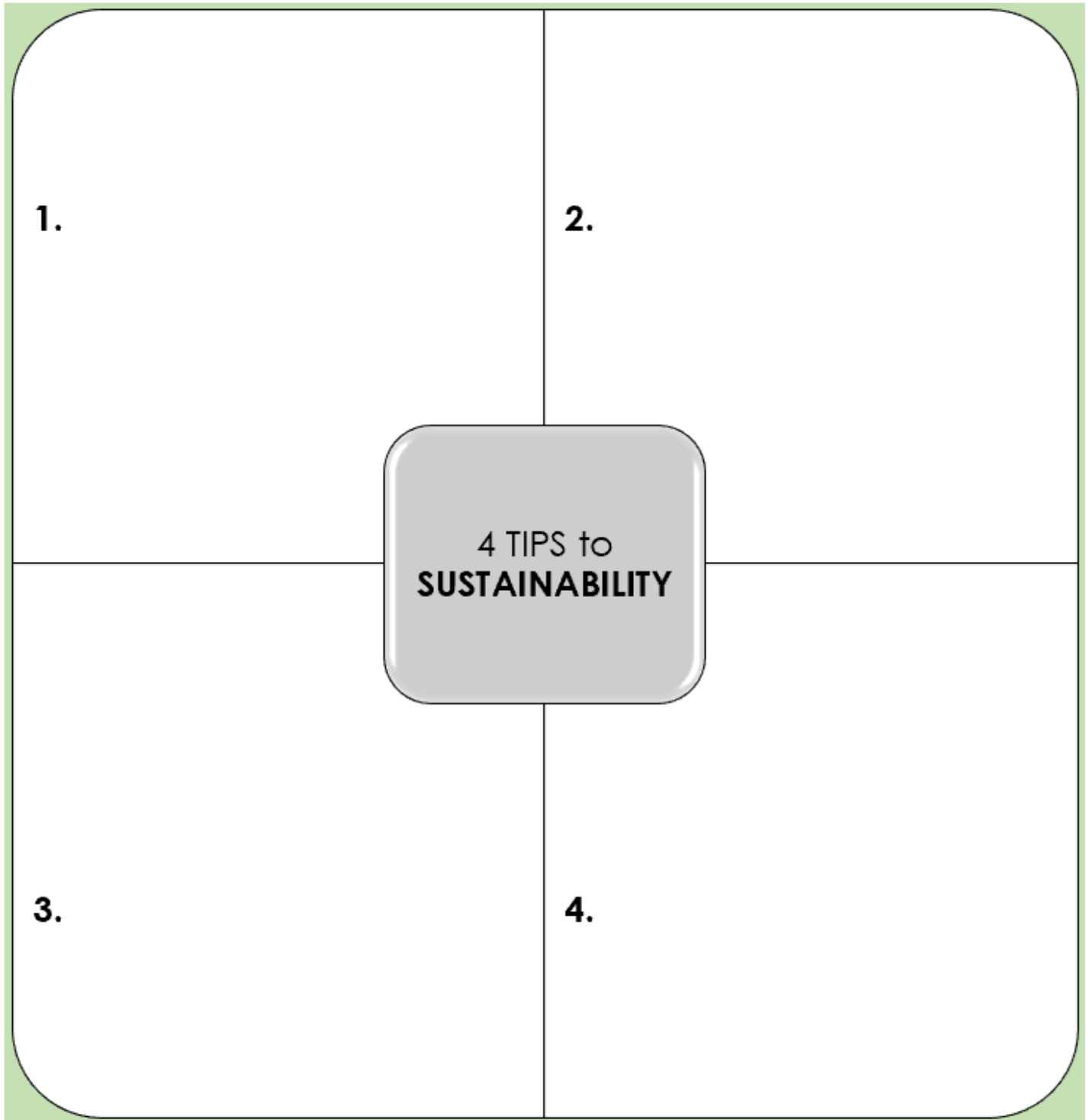




# Four Tips to Sustainability

#2

<https://pbisapps.wistia.com/medias/uhkgj8pf29>





# Effective Practices in the Face of Principal Turnover

List the support strategies addressed in the article.

Administrators	School Teams	Districts

# Effective Practices in the Face of Principal Turnover

M. Kathleen Strickland-Cohen, Kent McIntosh, and Robert H. Horner

*Last spring, the school district informed the faculty at Pecan Creek Elementary that it was transferring the school's principal, Ms. Davies, to a lower-performing school within the district. Ms. Davies was a well-known proponent of a multitiered schoolwide positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) approach, and educators considered her to be a "champion" for providing evidence-based interventions for students with behavior disorders. Under the active leadership of Ms. Davies, the school's PBIS team met every other week to discuss schoolwide data, track individual student progress, and adjust plans for students who required individualized behavior support. Ms. Davies worked hard to help the team ensure high levels of implementation fidelity and for 3 years successfully managed to use site-based funds to allow release time for team members to meet during regular school hours and to attend relevant professional development training.*

*In the fall, Mr. Thibault will become the new principal at Pecan Creek. Mr. Thibault's primary focus has been on improving overall achievement. He says that he supports the PBIS initiative, but he did not make it a priority at his previous school. The team fears that he will not focus on PBIS at Pecan Creek and that problem behavior will increase, staff members will lose faith in system effectiveness, and some educators will search for alternative approaches.*



Scenarios like the one described here are all too common. In general, the field of education does not have a strong track record for continuing practices that improve student outcomes. Professional associations have recently made important advances in defining and implementing effective evidence-based practices for students with and at risk for disabilities (Odom et al., 2005). Much of that effort has focused on documenting small-scale demonstrations of short-term improvements, particularly with grant funding and extensive technical assistance. Researchers have expanded efforts to identify factors that influence the sustained implementation of those practices (Coffey & Horner, 2012; McIntosh, Mercer, et al., 2013). Although identifying empirically demonstrated practices for struggling learners is still an important task, an exhaustive list of evidence-based interventions will not be sufficient to close the gap in achievement between students with disabilities and their peers unless teachers and leaders clearly understand and change the variables that help or hinder the sustained use of practices in schools.

### **Sustainability and the Role of the Administrator**

Researchers have described a number of factors that affect the sustainability of evidence-based practices in school settings. For example, they have identified contextual relevance, staff buy-in, professional development and ongoing technical support, data-based decision making, and a shared vision of expectations and desired outcomes among school personnel as critical features of sustained innovation (Baker, Gersten, Dimino, & Griffiths, 2004; Coffey & Horner, 2012). However, the factor that has received the most focus in the literature is administrator support. School personnel perceive that the role of the building administrator is singularly important to the sustained implementation of effective programs and practices (McIntosh, Predy et al., in press).

Building administrators are in a unique position to improve the likeli-

hood of sustained implementation because they can do the following:

- Play a key role in creating a school culture in which staff members share common values and work together to achieve common goals.
- Provide clear staff expectations.
- Ensure accountability by routinely asking staff to report on outcome data.
- Creatively allocate limited resources to help ensure that personnel have access to necessary supports (e.g., data systems needed for decision making, time available to meet regularly).

Administrators can thereby help ensure the high levels of fidelity of implementation that are associated with sustained success (Bambara, Goh, Kern, & Caskie, 2012).

**School personnel perceive that the role of the building administrator is singularly important to the sustained implementation of effective programs and practices.**

### **Administrator Turnover as a Barrier to Sustainability**

Because building administrators play a pivotal role in the sustained use of effective programs and practices, administrator turnover can pose a significant threat to the sustainability of these programs and practices. When a committed administrator like Ms. Davies leaves, staff may quickly lose momentum, particularly if the administrator leaves during the early stages of adoption of a new practice (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Yet district policies sometimes require that

- Principals rotate among schools on an arbitrary schedule regardless of whether a new practice is being installed.

- Exemplary administrators quickly rotate to different schools, leaving less experienced leaders to oversee continuing implementation of practices.

To make matters worse, because of the continuous push to improve educational practices by adopting new trends, incoming principals often neglect existing practices or attempt to leave their mark by instituting new policies and practices (Clayton & Johnson, 2011). These policies and practices can impede attempts to sustain effective practices and can decrease the likelihood of the long-term positive outcomes of those practices for students.

### **School-Based Team Members**

Although the loss of an administrator who championed an effective initiative often represents a powerful barrier to sustainability, the continuation of effective existing school practices is possible. Team leadership, the frequency with which teams meet and share data, and the ways in which the team uses the data to make decisions significantly affect the likelihood that effective practices will continue over time, even in the absence of administrator support (McIntosh, Mercer, et al., 2013). Therefore, school-based team members and team leaders can take proactive steps to help ensure the durability of effective practices.

### **Proactive Team Strategies for Sustaining Effective Practices**

In the face of administrator turnover, personnel often simply wait until the new school year begins and hope that the new administrator will continue to support current programs. However, proactive approaches to a change in leadership are more likely to be successful. School-based team members (along with an outgoing administrator) can use specific practical strategies to prepare for change and ensure sustained implementation of successful evidence-based innovations.

We have based the following recommendations on the assumptions that



practices at the school are evidence-based and are a priority for all relevant stakeholders and that staff members regularly collect effectiveness data and use the data to guide the implementation of these practices (McIntosh, Horner, & Sugai, 2009). The information presented stems primarily from our experiences related to schoolwide and individual positive behavior support; however, the recommendations apply to many systems-level interventions or approaches (e.g., response to intervention, collaborative individualized education program (IEP) development, inclusion initiatives).

When faced with administrator turnover, team members can take a number of actions to help ensure the durability of effective practices. The following strategies can help make administrative transitions smooth and can enhance practice sustainability in general. Figure 1 provides a list of sustainability-enhancing strategies for school teams.

### **Ensure That Teams Represent the Whole School**

To promote the sustainability of effective practices, educators must ensure that school personnel understand the purpose of those practices and support their use. One way to increase whole-school support for a practice is to make sure that school-based teams that meet regularly to assess the efficacy of the practice include members who represent all relevant contexts and programs within the school, especially across both general and special education. Staff may view programs with teams that do not include general education representation as initiatives that are only for special education; conversely, staff may view initiatives with teams that do not include special education representation as initiatives for general education only.

Consider, for example, a school that has recently begun implementing schoolwide PBIS. All staff will teach schoolwide expectations to students within their classrooms. So that all school personnel will adopt and implement the schoolwide expectations with fidelity over time, the schoolwide PBIS

**Figure 1. Sustainability-Enhancing Strategies for School Team Members**

- Ensure that teams are representative of the whole school
  - Increase whole-school support by including members who represent all relevant contexts and programs within the school
- Plan proactively for sustainability
  - Ensure that many individuals understand and have the skills needed to maintain effective practices when key team members (such as the principal) leave
- Create a practice handbook
  - Include detailed descriptions of procedures and protocols; the ways that staff uses the procedures and protocols across school contexts; and the roles that team members, administrators, and other school personnel play in implementing practices
- Collect and show data documenting effectiveness and acceptability
  - Include outcome data that special and general education staff both value
  - Demonstrate how valued outcomes have improved over time
- Meet with the incoming administrator
  - Determine the best way to present current practices as they relate to high-priority initiatives
  - Select and share outcome data that most closely align with the values and goals of the incoming principal
  - Consider how the new administrator’s goals might fit within or can enhance existing practices
- Recruit district support
  - Provide district teams with regular updates related to highly valued outcomes
  - Increase the visibility of high-priority practices in the larger community of practice

team should include representatives from both general and special education. This team composition will help guarantee that a broader constituency of staff members will agree on and support the expectations and will teach and represent them in such a way that they are accessible for all students within the school.

### **Plan Proactively for Sustainability**

The true test of a strong school leader is the extent to which the staff continues effective practices long after the administrator leaves. To increase the likelihood that effective practices will persist, team members need to work together with the outgoing administrator to ensure that a critical mass of school personnel has the skills to continue or even advance the practices after the administrator leaves. Some ways that team members can proactively plan for sustainability include the following:

- Regularly invite school personnel to team meetings to discuss how they use specific practices within their individual classrooms.
- Pair new staff members with veteran team members for mentoring.
- Strategically rotate the roles of team members, including the role of team leader.

The purpose of these strategies is to build capacity within the school, so that many individuals understand and have the skills needed to maintain effective practices if one or more team members leave (Andreou & McIntosh, 2013).

### **Develop Policies and Create a Practice Handbook**

To ensure that all new staff members understand that school personnel are invested in and committed to existing practices, team members can work with the outgoing administrator to embed effective strategies into written



school policies (e.g., mission statements, school improvement plans) and compile into one handbook or manual a description of current practices that they wish to see continue, as well as a list of resources (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). To enhance sustainability, the team can create a written document of the organizational systems needed to implement existing practices (e.g., specific policies, data systems, tools for documentation, skills that key personnel need).

**The true test of a strong school leader is the extent to which the staff continues effective practices long after the administrator leaves.**

Members of the school-based team can provide the practice handbook to the incoming administrator so that he or she can recognize its formalized processes and institutionalization into school practices. Effective handbooks include specific procedures and protocols and indicate how educators use them within different school contexts (e.g., in classrooms, during IEP meetings) and the roles that team members, administrators, and other school personnel play in implementing those practices. For example, a handbook describing a system that uses a daily behavior report card for students with behavioral IEP goals would need to include the following information:

- The names of staff members who are responsible for implementing the system and whom other personnel should contact when questions arise.
- Any forms needed.
- Documented procedures for using the forms, including who is responsible for completing the forms in various settings (e.g., classroom, playground, cafeteria).
- The specific procedures for referring students.
- Documented criteria for determining whether a student is making

progress and if not, when staff should put a modified or new intervention into place.

Such handbooks allow for rapid orientation of new personnel and can help new, existing, and itinerant staff implement practices with greater fidelity over time.

*Pecan Creek uses a check in–check out (CICO; Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010) approach to address the needs of students who do not require individualized support but who engage persistently in problem behavior and are at risk for developing more behavior disorders. These students briefly “check in” with an adult (a CICO facilitator) at the beginning of each school day and receive a daily CICO report card. Throughout the school day, specified teachers use the report card to give the student feedback about her or his behavior, and the student meets with the facilitator at the end of the day to “check out” by reviewing the behavior report card. To run smoothly, this system requires a good deal of cooperation and consistency among staff members, and all staff members need to understand the process and their roles within it. To help ensure the integrity and continued use of this practice when staff and administrators change, the Pecan Creek PBIS team has created a practice manual for the CICO system to provide all staff with a helpful resource and to enhance fidelity of implementation (see Figure 2 for the table of contents of the Pecan Creek CICO Manual).*

**Collect and Show Data Documenting Effectiveness and Acceptability**

One of the most important actions that team members can take to improve the sustainability of current practices is to document how using those practices has resulted in measurable change in valued outcomes (e.g., achievement gains, mastery of IEP goals, decreased discipline referrals to the office, improved perception of school safety; Hume & McIntosh, in press). In considering what data to share, educators need to consider outcomes that general educators, as well as special education

staff, value. Sharing these data with the whole staff and the incoming administrator can help improve sustainability by bolstering staff buy-in and by increasing the probability that the new principal will support existing practices.

Ideally, outcome data show how social behavior and academic skills have improved over time. This aspect of data for decision making becomes particularly important when providing information to a new administrator. If the incoming administrator sees only current student success without seeing how implementation led to improvements over time, he or she may not see the practice as necessary or beneficial enough to warrant continued implementation.

Moreover, to demonstrate that members of the school community support current practices and the outcomes that they produce, team members can formally document commitment by faculty—and, when appropriate, family (e.g., through surveys, secret ballot votes). Staff can then share these data with the incoming administrator to show stakeholder support for these practices and as a result, maintain administrator support. The following scenario illustrates the use of this strategy:

*As part of the school’s PBIS program, the staff members at Pecan Creek Elementary have been implementing a highly effective collaborative teaming program for supporting students with emotional and behavior disorders (EBD) who spend more than 20% of their instructional day in inclusive settings. The program involves quarterly data-for-decision-making meetings with parents, the principal, and general and special education staff, as well as monthly progress-monitoring updates for parents. This practice began at Pecan Creek 3 years ago. Fewer behavior incidents occur, and staff members have been very pleased with the reduced need for significant accommodations in inclusive settings and reduced disruption in the classroom. However, staff members worry that the new principal may not support the program. As a proactive strategy, the team*

**Figure 2. Pecan Creek CICO Manual Table of Contents**

**Section I: Overview of the CICO Program**

- General Description of CICO
- Referring Students for CICO
- Request for Assistance Form
- School Personnel Referral Form
- Helpful FAQs for Staff and Subs

**Section II. Obtaining Parent Consent**

- Overview of the Initial Parent Meeting
- Staff Roles and Responsibilities
- Initial Meeting Checklist
- Parent/Guardian Permission Form
- Helpful FAQs for Parents

**Section III: Daily Procedures for Implementing CICO**

- Step-by-Step Description of Daily Procedures
- CICO Staff Roles and Responsibilities
- Instructions for Teaching the CICO Process to Students
- Daily Check-In Checklist for Staff
- Daily Check-Out Checklist for Staff
- Student Daily Rating Form

**Section IV: Modifying and Fading CICO**

- Progress Monitoring
- CICO Review Meeting Form
- Instructions for Modifying CICO as Students Progress
- Tips for Increasing Student Self-Monitoring and Independence
- Overview of Process for Fading Support
- Fading Process Checklist

Note. CICO = Check-In Check-Out.

*members have gathered outcome data that specifically illustrate the gains that relate to student academic and social goals and reductions in problem behavior since the program started. The staff is also asking for letters of support from parents who have participated in*

**Figure 3. Sustainability-Enhancing Strategies for District Teams**

**Develop district policies.** District administrators can explicitly include effective existing practices as part of standard district policy by

- Emphasizing the importance of specific practices in district policies (e.g., goal statements, long-term district improvement plans)
- Establishing specific performance standards and expectations

**Hire principals who support effective practices.** Through the process of interviewing and hiring potential administrators, district personnel can

- Explain the importance of specific practices and potential drawbacks associated with abandoning the practices
- Determine how the principal’s goals and aspirations fit with school practices

**Secure funding.** District administrators can help secure funding for districtwide implementation of effective practices by

- Presenting effectiveness data to important district and state-level groups that control funding (e.g., school boards, state education agencies)
- Framing effective practices as essential components of high-priority state and federal programs and initiatives to help ensure continued funding over time

**Create district-level coaching positions.** Districts can establish district-level coaches to

- Guide school teams and new principals in implementing highly valued practices
- Help mitigate the negative effects that losing key school personnel has on sustainability

*the program. Team members hope to be able to show not only how well all their students are performing in inclusive settings but also how the specific practices that they are using have been largely responsible for that success.*

**Meet With the Incoming Administrator**

After gathering and organizing pertinent information (e.g., handbooks, protocols, data), the next proactive step is for team members to ask the incoming administrator to meet in person with the team (or a team representative) to discuss materials, data, and how current practices fit with the new administrator’s goals. Team members can enhance sustainability by identifying the most highly valued outcomes for their school and explaining to the new administrator how current practices help produce those outcomes (Adelman & Taylor, 2003). When possible, team members can identify the initiatives and outcomes that the new administrator is most likely to value before the meeting. This information will help make it possible to

- Determine the best way to present current practices as they relate to high-priority initiatives.
- Select and share outcome data that most closely align with the values and goals of the incoming principal.
- Consider how the goals of the new administrator might fit within or even enhance existing practices (McIntosh, Ty, Horner, & Sugai, 2013).

*For example, the members of the Pecan Creek PBIS team are aware that the new principal, Mr. Thibault, considers increased standardized test scores to be a high-priority outcome. To demonstrate the effectiveness and importance of current school practices, the team will meet with Mr. Thibault at the beginning of the school year to share data documenting that decreases in challenging behavior link directly with improved academic outcomes and ultimately, higher standardized test scores for students in both special education and general education settings.*

To promote the continuation of effective practices, team members can also



facilitate opportunities for the incoming principal to understand both how and why the practice works. These opportunities can include participating in meetings of the school-based team, speaking with teachers and students, and observing implementation in individual classrooms. By observing effective practices in typical school contexts, the incoming administrator can see the steps involved in implementing the practice and can begin to understand why the practice is effective. Understanding the practice both procedurally and conceptually is a key factor related to the continued use of effective interventions (Baker et al., 2004).

### **Recruit District Support**

The responsibility for sustaining effective evidence-based practices in schools cannot rest solely on school-based team members. Members of district-level administrative teams also play an integral role in ensuring that the school does not abandon effective practices that support students with or at risk for behavior disorders when a championing administrator leaves (McIntosh, Predy et al., in press). By emphasizing the importance of specific practices in district policies (e.g., goal statements, long-term district improvement plans), establishing performance standards and expectations, and creating job descriptions, district administrators play a key role in ensuring that the incoming principal understands which practices the district values highly and which practices the district will expect him or her to continue as part of his or her new role (George & Kincaid, 2008). District team members are also in a position to help secure local and federal funding for district-level coaching positions to support valued initiatives and practices and to actually create these positions and thereby significantly increase the likelihood that effective practices will continue after the current principal is gone. Figure 3 lists the ways in which district teams can help enhance sustainability. An additional strategy that school-based team members can use to promote the continuation of existing

**Figure 4. Summary of Preventive and Proactive Sustainability-Enhancing Strategies**

#### **Preventive Measures**

School teams can put preventive measures in place to help mitigate the negative effects of future principal and staff turnover. These preventive strategies include the following:

- Ensuring that many staff members have the skills needed to maintain effective strategies when key team members and implementers leave. This goal can be accomplished by
  - Regularly inviting school personnel to team meetings to learn more about the practice and to discuss how they are using the practice in their classrooms
  - Asking veteran team members to act as mentors to new staff
  - Rotating the roles of team members, including the role of team leader
- Writing effective existing practices into school policy statements (e.g., school improvement plans, staff handbooks)
- Creating a handbook with detailed instructions for implementing highly valued practices across school contexts; this handbook should include specific information describing how team members, administrators, and other school personnel implement those practices
- Collecting and regularly sharing effectiveness data with the whole school and district-level teams to garner whole-staff and district support for effective practices.

#### **Proactive Strategies**

When faced with the imminent loss of a school administrator, team members can consider the immediate actions they can take to help ensure the continuation of effective existing practices and programs. These strategies include—

- Gathering effectiveness data that show how current practices have improved student outcomes over time
- Meeting with the incoming administrator to
  - Understand the new administrator’s goals and how existing practices can fit within his or her highly valued initiatives
  - Determine how to use the new administrator’s high-priority initiatives to enhance existing practices
  - Present effectiveness data that closely align with the values and goals of the incoming principal

practices is to recruit support for effective practices at the district level.

One way that school-based team members can recruit district support for a highly valued practice is to regularly provide district teams with data supporting the continuation of that practice. Since data provide information on effectiveness and show progress over time, educators must collect data throughout the school year and frequently disseminate the data to district administrators in a user-friendly and concise format so that they receive ongoing feedback on the progress of activities.

School-based team members can also promote district support of effective practices by increasing the visibility of those practices in the larger community. Team members can increase knowledge of current practices both within and outside their district by connecting key implementers from their school with a larger community of practitioners through web-based list serves. In addition, team members can represent their school and district at local conferences and in networking sessions with personnel from different schools and can share data documenting improved student outcomes. Along with promoting the sharing of new

approaches to implementation, building these types of connections with the larger community of practice can enhance sustainability by making the positive effects of implementing the practice more visible and potentially increasing shared buy-in at the district level.

*To promote support from the district for PBIS practices, the team at Pecan Creek worked with Ms. Davies to create a quarterly newsletter that describes the initiatives and programs that the team is working on and that displays user-friendly data showing how social and academic behaviors of students with and without special needs are improving over time. The team regularly distributes this newsletter to parents, community members, and all district-level teams. Not long after the Pecan Creek team began sharing the newsletters, district administrators asked team members to represent Pecan Creek by presenting their data at a local conference. After the conference, several additional schools in the district began implementing PBIS for students who required individualized behavior support; and a few months later, the district wrote PBIS into its new long-term improvement plan. Since that time, district teams have been emphasizing the importance of PBIS practices to newly hired personnel and have created a position for a district-level coach to support schools using these practices. By helping secure the support of district-level teams, the personnel from Pecan Creek were able to significantly enhance districtwide sustainability of PBIS in their school and others throughout the district.*

### Final Thoughts

Turnover of school administrators often hinders the sustained use of effective practices in schools. In addition to taking action when faced with the imminent loss of a respected principal, school teams can use the suggested strategies as preventive measures to help safeguard against any negative effects of possible future turnover. Figure 4 displays a summary of preventive and proactive sustainability-

enhancing strategies. To ensure sustainability, staff must not merely wait and hope that existing practices will continue under new leadership. Instead, by implementing proactive strategies, schools and districts can help keep evidence-based special education practices in place and prospering when administrator turnover occurs.

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