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Introduction

Greyson Cole Elementary School is a midsize school nestled in a small neighborhood on the outskirts of Reno, Nevada. Tumbleweeds regularly blow through the parking lot, and one can see the crisp Nevada landscape from its windows. It's not uncommon for a neighborhood dog to find its way to the playground during recess.

Like most schools, Greyson Cole Elementary School has its share of student problem behavior. Teachers manage behaviors that range from students running in the hallways to students fighting with each other. During one school year, the staff completed 397 major discipline referrals—documenting fighting, bullying, or property damage—and 434 minor discipline referrals—documenting tardiness, noncompliance, and minor acts of disrespect (Harlacher, 2011). Not surprisingly, such behavior extends to the buses, where over five hundred citations were given out during the same school year. In fact, inappropriate student behavior was so out of control that bus drivers occasionally turned the bus around to return to the school. Such referral rates paint a somewhat chaotic setting where time is often spent on managing behavior instead of on delivering instruction.

What are options for schools such as this one to respond to problem behavior? They could certainly adopt a zero-tolerance policy and use suspension as a means of restoring order, but zero-tolerance policies are largely ineffective for lowering misbehavior rates and for improving school climate (Advancement Project & Civil Rights Project, 2000; American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Tobin, Sugai, & Colvin, 1996). Perhaps identifying students with chronic problem behavior and developing interventions for those students could work, as school-based interventions are an effective means for managing student behavior (Bowen, Jenson, & Clark, 2004; Rathvon, 2008). However, the interventions themselves can be taxing for teachers to implement consistently, decreasing effectiveness (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002; Kratochwill & Shernoff, 2004; Noell, Duhon, Gatti, & Connell, 2002; Wolery, 2011). Additionally, teachers don't always have access to the resources they need for such interventions, such as technical assistance and training manuals, and the heavy use of individualized interventions creates a fragmented, piecemeal system that is inefficient (Merrell, Ervin, & Peacock, 2012; Peacock, Ervin, Daly, & Merrell, 2010). Schools and teachers need a more preventative, effective, and comprehensive approach to discipline. Enter Schoolwide Positive

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Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS). SWPBIS is a preventative framework that uses increasingly intensive layers of support to prevent problem behavior, create a positive school climate, and improve the overall social and academic competence of students (Sailor, Dunlap, Sugai, & Horner, 2009).

Greyson Cole Elementary School implemented SWPBIS as part of a districtwide implementation initiative (Harlacher, 2011). The results were positive after just one year of implementation, as the number of minor referrals dropped by 43 percent. The reduction in referrals was an estimated sixty-two hours of time back to teachers and students (185 referrals at twenty minutes of instructional time each). The number of major referrals dropped by 29 percent, gaining back an estimated twenty-eight hours of administrative time (112 referrals at fifteen minutes of administration time). The effect on the referrals generated from students while on the school buses was startling—they went from over five hundred to only sixteen, a reduction of 97 percent. This school isn't alone. A middle school just down the road implemented SWPBIS as well and found a reduction of 70 percent in major referrals (677 to 200) and a 46 percent drop in suspensions (243 to 156; Harlacher, 2011). Other schools have experienced similar results with SWPBIS, both at the elementary level (Horner et al., 2009) and the secondary level (Bohanon et al., 2006; Simonsen et al., 2012). The results of SWPBIS implementation can be dramatic.

Overview of This Resource

Within *An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports*, we describe SWPBIS in depth and provide practitioners and school-level personnel with a comprehensive resource. Whether you're a principal in a school plagued by behavioral issues, a teacher who wants to know more about SWPBIS, a coach working with teams to implement positive behavior support strategies, or a district-level coordinator faced with improving school climate, you can use this book as a resource. Although there are resources available on SWPBIS, some of them are technical and target researchers, while others only focus on one aspect of SWPBIS, and still others are too conceptual and not detailed enough for practitioners. This book fills the void in the literature by providing a comprehensive SWPBIS overview and specific, practical advice for school personnel and practitioners. It provides the theoretical background of SWPBIS and the tangible aspects of it, so readers will know the *why* behind SWPBIS as well as what it looks like in practice. Because this book is comprehensive, we also envision it being helpful for university personnel and for educators in training.

We wrote this book based on the SWPBIS research from experts that included Robert Horner, George Sugai, Heather Peshak George, Don Kincaid, Wayne Sailor, Glen Dunlap, and Kent McIntosh, as well as our personal experience working with school teams to implement it. We provide a clear description of the model, what SWPBIS looks like in practice, and what steps schools can take to implement it successfully.

How to Use This Book

We have provided a wealth of information in this book, as we wanted to detail SWPBIS conceptually and what it looks likes in practice. We hope this book serves as a guide for

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those just starting out with their SWPBIS journey and for those who are experienced with SWPBIS. To that end, this book contains explicit information on the theoretical basis of SWPBIS, as well as numerous examples and discussion of what implementation looks like in practice in both elementary and secondary schools. We also provide questions that school teams can ask to evaluate both the impact of their SWPBIS framework and the quality of implementation of the framework. This book also contains sections devoted to the necessary data and the critical systems needed for successful implementation. In short, this is a comprehensive and practical book that provides content on many things related to SWPBIS.

We begin the book with an overall description of SWPBIS and its theoretical underpinnings in chapter 1, including a summary of the research supporting its use at the elementary and secondary levels. We also present the four key elements of SWPBIS—(1) outcomes, (2) practices, (3) systems, and (4) data—and describe the model's tiered nature. We then cover each subsequent tier—Tier One in chapter 2, Tier Two in chapter 3, and Tier Three in chapter 4—detailing what each tier looks like in practice by describing each of the four key elements. We include examples of what schools have done for each tier, and we discuss using the Problem-Solving Model for each tier at both the systems and student level. Chapter 5 explains how to put SWPBIS into action, and we discuss the systematic approach needed in order to implement SWPBIS for sustainability. We also provide direction for school personnel on where to start. Chapter 6 describes two case summaries, one of which details SWPBIS at an elementary school and the other at a secondary school. Each of the chapters ends with a summary of the most important information, and the epilogue brings things to a close. We end the book with two appendices. Appendix A is a template for a menu of Tier Two interventions; appendix B is a functional behavior assessment interview. We have collected educators' accounts of SWPBIS implementation for your benefit as well—you'll find their comments throughout the book in special feature boxes.

Ideally, readers will progress though each chapter sequentially, but we understand each reader's background and experience impacts informational needs. Those new to SWPBIS will want to start with chapter 1, but those who want specific information on a given tier can jump ahead to that chapter (chapters 2 to 4). For those looking just for information on how to implement SWPBIS, they can skip to chapter 5. For those who need a concrete example of the whole model, chapter 6 provides that.

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Overview of Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

A school is primed for academic success if its students regularly engage in appropriate behaviors and require minimal discipline time. As we like to say about students and behavior, "If they're not listening to directions, they're not listening to instruction." This is the aim of using Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) in schools: to create a safe, orderly environment with a positive school climate that enables students to achieve social and academic success. Within this chapter, we explore SWPBIS's research base and theoretical background, after which we discuss the four key elements and the Problem-Solving Model.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is about building effective environments and using evidence-based practices that teach and encourage appropriate behaviors to replace undesired behavior (Carr et al., 2002). Accordingly, PBIS applied to the entire school is *schoolwide PBIS*. This creates a framework for all students that uses a broad range of strategies for teaching positive behaviors while also preventing and reducing undesired behavior, thus creating a system of supports within the school (Sailor et al., 2009). This system of supports is often referred to in the broader sense as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which incorporates social behavior systems (for example, SWPBIS) as well as academic systems (for example, response to intervention; Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2009; Jimerson, Burns, & VanDerHeyden, 2007). We refer to SWPBIS as a framework that can be applied as a stand-alone framework or as the behavior support side of MTSS (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). We also use the terms *model* and *framework* interchangeably, as both refer to the broad, tiered structure of SWPBIS.

SWPBIS provides all students with universal instruction, called Tier One, using instructional and behavioral principles to teach a handful of schoolwide behavioral expectations (for example, be safe, be respectful, be responsible). This foundational level serves a preventative function to mitigate problematic behavior, and at least 80 percent of the students' needs are met with universal instruction alone (George, Kincaid, & Pollard-Sage, 2009; Horner, Sugai, et al., 2005). A range of increasingly intensive and evidence-based supports

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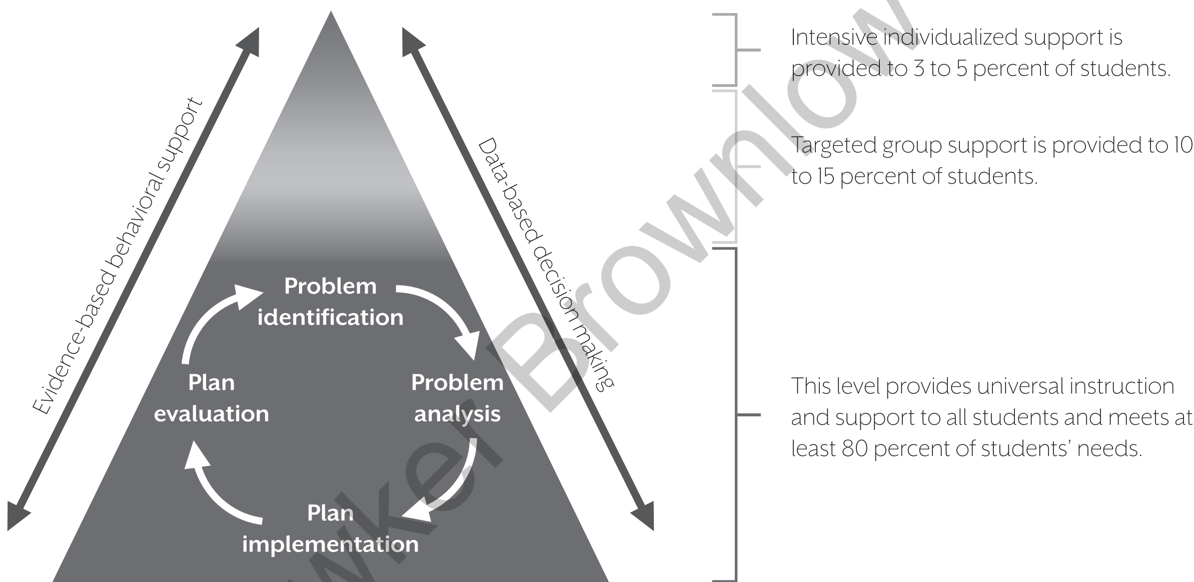
are available for students who need more direct support for behavioral concerns, which allows school teams to match each student's needs with a corresponding level of support and intervention. An additional 10 to 15 percent of students require supplemental, targeted support called Tier Two (also referred to as *targeted support*), and 3 to 5 percent require intensive, individualized support called Tier Three (also referred to as *indicated support*; Sugai & Horner, 2009). As illustrated in figure 1.1, SWPBIS creates a healthy, functioning school in which all students' needs are met. It is important to understand that figure 1.1 represents a healthy system and is the ideal outcome of implementing SWPBIS. Some schools may serve populations in which most students may initially appear to need Tier Two or Tier Three supports; however, once the foundational systems and supports are in place, such schools can achieve outcomes that represent a healthy system (that is, at least 80 percent of students' needs are met with Tier One alone, no more than 10 to 15 percent require Tier Two, and no more than 5 percent require Tier Three; Bohanon et al., 2006; Netzel & Eber, 2003). Whereas some schools may find that that 40 percent of their students are at risk for academic or behavioral failure, over time, SWPBIS will likely decrease the number of students who are at risk (Greenwood, Kratochwill, & Clements, 2008). See table 1.1 for a summary of SWPBIS.



Source: Harlacher, Sakelaris, & Kattelman, 2014.

Figure 1.1: SWPBIS framework.

SWPBIS is a responsive, efficient system of supports in which the intensity of support and services increases as students receive supports that are higher up in the triangle. To ensure their needs are met, teachers screen all students at least two to three times per year to identify those who may be at risk for behavioral difficulties (students already identified at risk are monitored with similar tools). Teachers provide students with support, and their progress is regularly monitored to ensure that support is effective (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005; Sailor et al., 2009). Every teacher proactively assesses students' needs, provides instruction, and then monitors its impact on every student; the entire school uses

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Table 1.1: SWPBIS Summary

Instruction	Group Size	Frequency and Duration
Tier One		
Three to five positively stated expectations; teaching and reinforcement of those expectations; consistent procedures for responding to misbehavior	Whole school, taught in various formats (for example, at an assembly, in classroom, and so on)	Initial teaching; reteaching and recognition provided throughout school year; instructional boosters provided as needed, based on data
Tier Two		
Targeted group, interventions to supplement Tier One with goal of displaying schoolwide expectations with increased instruction in explicit skills, increased opportunities to practice and receive feedback	Small group or 1:1 Designed to reach groups of students but not always delivered in a group setting	Occurs daily or weekly, depending on intervention Duration determined by student's progress, but typically no longer than twenty weeks
Tier Three		
Intensive instruction that includes small-group, 1:1, and wraparound services Individually designed	1:1 or small group, depending on intervention	Varies by student, but usually daily occurrence Longer duration relative to Tier Two

Source: Adapted from Harlacher et al., 2014.

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this approach. Such processes create a fluid system that emphasizes evidence-based practices and data for decision making (Horner, Sugai, et al., 2005; Sailor et al., 2009). Consequently, SWPBIS is a continuous-improvement system. It requires school teams to regularly examine both the impact and the implementation of individual interventions *and* the system itself (Newton, Horner, Algozzine, Todd, & Algozzine, 2009).

However, SWPBIS is about more than just teaching behavioral expectations to students; SWPBIS focuses on creating supportive environments (Sugai & Horner, 2009). The most obvious way school teams do this is through its facilitation of social competence by directly teaching behavioral expectations and prosocial skills (Sugai & Horner, 2009). For example, school teams teach students the schoolwide expectations (such as be respectful and be safe), and they may also receive instruction on related prosocial skills (such as having empathy and working cooperatively). Additionally, the school team sets up an environment where students are more likely to succeed and to engage in prosocial behaviors (and learning) rather than problematic behaviors. The language adults use is geared toward the expectations (for example, "When we listen to others, that's a way of being respectful"), structures can change in the environment (such as adjusted schedules or a modified layout of a common area), and the ratio of feedback for appropriate behavior to redirects for misbehavior increases as students are acknowledged often for displaying prosocial behavior. This differs starkly from approaches that focus on *within-child problems*, where the focus is only on students and

adjusting their behaviors. Because of its focus on prosocial skills and the setting in which those skills occur, SWPBIS impacts the school's overall climate, culture, and safety. In turn, students experience more positive social outcomes, develop lifelong skills, and face improved academic learning opportunities (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

"PBIS is the foundation for our school community; not only does it bring students and staff together, but it also incorporates families. Using PBIS helps us to consistently see students actively engaged in all aspects of their school day. When students are aware of the expectations set for them, they consistently rise to meet them. This system helped us create an uplifting environment in school where students and teachers alike feel successful."

—Nikki Matthews, fourth-grade education teacher, Walterville Elementary School, Springfield, Oregon (personal communication, May 13, 2016)

Next, we will delve into the research base for SWPBIS, its theoretical background, its four key elements, and the Problem-Solving Model.

Research Base for SWPBIS

To date, over twenty-one thousand schools in the United States use SWPBIS (National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [NTACPBIS], n.d.). Behind SWPBIS is a long history of effective results. In fact, Robert Horner, George Sugai, and Timothy Lewis (2015) provided a list of over one hundred references that have explored the effects of SWPBIS, including evaluation studies and randomized controlled studies. We summarize some of the results here.

The implementation of SWPBIS is associated with decreases in office discipline referrals and instances of problem behavior (Algozzine et al., 2008; Algozzine, Wang, et al., 2012; Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Curtis, Van Horne, Robertson, & Karvonen, 2010; Horner et al., 2009; Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008), decreases in both in-school and out-of-school suspensions (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Curtis et al., 2010; Muscott et al., 2008; Netzel & Eber, 2003; Scott, 2001; Simonsen et al., 2012), and increases in feelings of school safety from both students (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001) and staff (Horner et al., 2009). One study found that students in schools using SWPBIS had better emotion regulation, fewer concentration problems, and more prosocial behaviors than in schools that did not (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Leaf, 2012). Teachers also reported feeling more confident in handling discipline and feeling less burnout from the school day (Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2012), and the model was associated with improvements in the organizational health of the school (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008; Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009).

Studies have found associations between the use of SWPBIS and increases in academic achievement, albeit modest (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Horner et al., 2009; Muscott et al., 2008). The association between SWPBIS and achievement is logical, as schools have reported gaining back hours and days of instructional time because of decreases in absences, tardies, and suspensions (Caldarella, Shatzer, Gray, Young, & Young, 2011; Taylor-Greene et al.,

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1997). One middle school reported gaining back over 222 hours from reductions in office referrals and over 640 days due to decreased absences (Caldarella et al., 2011).

Perhaps most appealing is that the work to implement the model is an efficient process, as schools with positive results have received two to three days of initial training and a few follow-up trainings prior to implementing the model (Bradshaw et al., 2012; Mass-Galloway, Panyan, Smith, & Wessendorf, 2008). The actual process of teaching the schoolwide behavioral expectations to students is also very efficient. Susan Taylor-Greene and colleagues (1997) reported spending a half day at the beginning of the year and a few booster sessions during the year for their model, which resulted in nearly a 50 percent reduction in referrals. Paul Caldarella and colleagues (2011) reported using monthly twenty-minute lessons throughout the school year to teach students the expectations and certain social skills, which resulted in large reductions in referrals and absences.

The benefits of SWPBIS are not exclusive to one setting or type of school, as beneficial results occur in early education settings (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; Frey, Boyce, & Tarullo, 2009; Muscott et al., 2008), elementary schools (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2012; Horner et al., 2009), middle schools (Metzler et al., 2001; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997), and high schools (Mass-Galloway et al., 2008; Muscott et al., 2008; Simonsen et al., 2012). The findings also include rural settings (Curtis et al., 2010) and urban settings (Bohanon et al., 2006; Netzel & Eber, 2003). Given these findings, it is evident that SWPBIS is a well-researched and evidence-based practice that benefits a variety of students and settings (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010).

Theoretical Background

Six principles serve as the theoretical and conceptual background of SWPBIS (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

- Principle 1. Use of behavioral principles
- Principle 2. Use of a proactive and preventative approach to discipline
- Principle 3. Focus on instruction and matching support to student need
- Principle 4. Use of evidence-based practices
- Principle 5. Use of data-based decision making
- Principle 6. Focus on a schoolwide perspective

The following sections address each in order.

Principle 1: Use of Behavioral Principles

SWPBIS's historical roots are grounded in behaviorism and applied behavior analysis (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Behavioral principles are used because of their effectiveness in achieving valued outcomes and facilitating healthy development in students (Sugai & Horner, 2009; Shinn, Walker, & Stoner, 2002). Table 1.2 (page 10) provides a brief summary of key terms and concepts related to behaviorism. Students are taught prosocial skills and then acknowledged for using those skills with reinforcement methods, and various strategies are used to manage, prevent, and decrease unwanted behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2009; George, Kincaid, & Pollard-Sage, 2009).

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