



Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to Address the Social- Emotional Needs of Students in Maryland

GOVERNOR'S SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM POLICY PAPER

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August 2014

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their guidance and support during the course of our research paper:

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Governor of Maryland

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PBIS State Coordinator; Lead Specialist, School Climate Initiatives, MSDE

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MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

MHEC: Maryland Higher Education Commission

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Definition of Key Terms

Alternative Education: Alternative Educational Services means programs and/or supports that allow the student to continue the student's education outside or within the regular school setting under the control of the public school system and if a secondary school student, the opportunity to earn credits and/or progress toward graduation (*Dropout Prevention* 16).

Local Educational Agency (LEA): As defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools (U.S. Department of Education).

Major Office Discipline Referral (Major ODR): Student referral to the office warranted by a severe incident.

Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3): An initiative among Johns Hopkins University, Sheppard Pratt Health System, and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to improve conditions of schools through measurement and program implementation; funded by U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students (Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools).

Minor Office Discipline Referral (Minor ODR): Student referral to the office warranted by a less severe infraction that can often be handled by a teacher within the classroom.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): Used interchangeably with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS); referred to globally as Response to Intervention (RTI), with PBIS being Maryland's adopted framework.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): PBIS is a research-based, school-wide systems approach to improve school climate and create safer and more effective schools ("What is PBIS?" 1).

Executive Summary

Maryland is responsible for addressing both the academic and social-emotional needs of students by promoting a welcoming, encouraging school environment. Positive learning in the classroom may be hindered by disruptive behaviors, such as disrespect and insubordination. When unaddressed, these behaviors result in large losses of classroom time, and contribute to a negative learning environment that leads to suspensions, truancy, and office discipline referrals. To foster parental involvement and positive student-staff relationships, Maryland schools have the opportunity to support the social-emotional needs of students by taking a holistic approach to learning.

This paper recommends building the capacity for further implementation of Positive Behavioral Implementation and Supports (PBIS), a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). With a dependable budget and the hiring of regional PBIS coordinators, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) would have the ability to expand PBIS implementation to advanced tier levels throughout the state. PBIS is not a “one-size fits all” solution; it is a decision-making framework that delivers evidence-based practices, developed specifically for the unique needs of each school. PBIS provides three tiers of support; Tier I applies to the entire school population, while Tier II and III provide increasing resources for students who require more than Tier I support. Proper implementation with fidelity can mean lower suspension and office discipline referral rates, creating a better school climate and unified school community for all. Currently, only 62% of Maryland’s schools have implemented at least a Tier I PBIS or MTSS equivalent.

PBIS is not the only strategy to improve school climate and reduce disruptive behavior. Alternative Education Programs, and the Maryland Teaching Consortium, play a supplementary role in supporting PBIS through the full range of student, faculty, and parental needs.

Background

In July 2012, the Maryland State Board of Education (MSBE) published a report on the state of school discipline in Maryland that noted of the 852,211 students in Pre-K to grade 12 in Maryland, 66,955 students were suspended or expelled in- or out-of-school; of that number, approximately 84% were suspended out-of-school (Maryland State Board of Education 1-2). Even more astonishing is the number of students suspended out-of-school for non-violent offenses, shown in Table 1 (*School Discipline and Academic Success 2*).

Table 1: School Year 2010-2011, Number of Students Pre-K to 12 Suspended Out-of-School for Non-Violent Offenses, Exclusions Report

School Year 2010-2011 Number of Students Pre-K to 12 Suspended Out of School for Non-Violent Offenses Exclusions Report Table 7a	
Total # of Students Suspended Out of School	56,041 students
Refused to Obey School Policies	7,847 students
Insubordination	6,189 students
Class Disturbance	5,722 students
Disrespect	3,941 students
Class Disruption	2,654 students
Threats to Students and Teachers	2,067 students
Communication Devices	807 students
Alcohol	685 students
Tobacco	387 students
Sexual Activity	366 students
Cheating	109 students
Inhalants	14 students
Total # of Students Suspended Out of School for Non-Violent Offenses	30,788 students

Source: Maryland State Board of Education, 2012

Of the 56,041 students, over half of the students were suspended out-of-school for non-violent offenses such as insubordination, class disturbance, or disrespect (*School Discipline and Academic Success 2*). Out-of-school suspension means less time in the classroom for those

students, which increases the need to catch up academically with their peers. This could lead to further implications regarding the dispositions of the students and negative student attitudes towards the faculty and administration. Another severe consequence of suspension for non-violent offenses involves the school to prison pipeline: “Suspensions, often the first step along the school to prison pipeline, play a crucial role in pushing students from the school systems and into the criminal justice system. Research shows a close correlation between suspensions, low academic achievement, and dropping out-of-school altogether” (Task Force to Study Multiple Suspensions).

Recently, there has been a push for alternatives to suspensions, particularly for out-of-school suspensions in regards to non-violent offenses. This does not, however, fully combat the issue of creating a more positive learning environment for students. The state of Maryland and the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should begin efforts to proactively manage behavior in the classroom and the environment of the school in which positive behavior is fostered. In 2010, The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) continued their partnership with Sheppard Pratt Health System and Johns Hopkins University to begin a state-wide initiative centered on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This partnership coordinated the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3) Project, which collects data from 60 participating high schools in two cohorts over four years through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS).

PBIS is an example of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and is a decision-making framework that is easily adapted to the needs of each unique school. The model is based on a three-tiered public health model: Tier I focuses on the majority of students (universal interventions), Tier II focuses on at-risk students (secondary interventions), and Tier III focuses

on individual students (tertiary interventions). As of 2013, Maryland has 956 PBIS schools across all twenty-four LEAs (PBIS Maryland). Most of these schools are elementary or middle schools; that is where PBIS data has been primarily collected and shown to be effective. However, MDS3 has focused solely on high schools to determine the effectiveness of PBIS in the upper secondary setting. Though the final report has not yet been released, the data from the first cohort suggests positive results.

Nationally, the effectiveness of PBIS has been evident. Fern Ridge Middle School in Oregon became the first school to implement PBIS in 1997, and research has consistently shown that PBIS has led to fewer discipline problems and improved academic outcomes for students (Bazelon Center 1). Specifically in Maryland, Anne Arundel County Public Schools released a report expressing that over a five-year period, standardized test scores in PBIS schools had a higher percentage of students meeting the criteria for “proficient” or “advanced” in both mathematics and reading when compared to schools that did not implement PBIS (Bazelon Center 2). Expanding PBIS on a broader scale throughout the state could produce similar results. As of 2013, only 899 of the 1,449 public schools have implemented PBIS, calculating to only 62% of all Maryland public schools (PBIS Maryland). Further, only ten of the LEAs have approximately 80% PBIS trained schools.

If the disciplinary climate of schools becomes more positive and students are spending more time engaged in the classroom, then numerous positive results could occur. Teacher attrition may decrease as teachers are spending less time dealing with behavior issues and feeling undervalued in their school community. Managing behavior in the classroom would translate on a larger scale within the school environment and become more streamlined. The general mental health and well-being of participants in the school community, including students,

administrators, teachers, and parents, may increase and become more positive overall. As a result of these positive effects, the school climate will become enriched and participants will feel encouraged and valued. Learning can occur in a more prominent, impactful way, and schools will become a safer and more supportive environment.

Problem Definition and Recommendations

Schools have an opportunity to support the social-emotional needs of students by taking a holistic approach to learning. Maryland needs to build the capacity for further implementation of PBIS throughout the state by permanently allocating funds in the state budget. Additional funds would support hiring of regional coordinators, training and technical assistance to LEAs, Tier II and III expansion, and provide interested schools access to PBIS implementation. There are four justifications as to why PBIS implementation would be effective solution:

1. Funding should be reviewed and perhaps allocated to support PBIS statewide;
2. Time could be used more efficiently in schools;
3. As research shows, the school climate should become more positive; and
4. PBIS has been shown to be effective throughout the country and has been used in Maryland in some schools with positive results.

Review of Fund Allocation

Despite current reforms, the education system in America is struggling to make any of the significant gains one would expect considering the billions of dollars being invested in it. Every year, millions of federal, state, and local level expenditures are not used successfully to address problems that go unresolved through ineffective solutions. Tax dollars are used to remedy issues such as teacher attrition, remedial courses, public services costs of high school dropouts, etc. without directly addressing the underlying problems.

Teacher attrition is a huge cost to the taxpayer, and most people may not even be aware of it. A report by the Alliance for Excellent Education finds that “A conservative national estimate of the cost of replacing public school teachers who have dropped out of the profession is \$2.2 billion a year. For individual states, cost estimates range from \$8.5 million in North Dakota to a whopping half a billion dollars for a large state like Texas” (Alliance for Excellent Education 1). In 2007, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) found that attrition expenditures for teachers leaving the profession cost the state approximately \$42 million a year for Prince George’s County and Baltimore City alone (qtd. in MD Teacher Shortage 4). When that is combined with the approximately \$69 million in attrition costs of teachers who leave for other schools or states, Maryland spends over \$100 million per year on teachers who quit or move (NCTAF 5). Some of the most recurring issues teachers cite as their rationale for leaving the profession include “a lack of support and poor working conditions” (Alliance for Excellent Education 2). PBIS is one such framework that could potentially resolve both of these issues, and aims to alleviate what prominent educators, researchers, non-governmental agencies, and the media have come to recognize; “retention depends upon more than salary or other financial benefits” (MD Teacher Shortage 3). Having some insight into exactly why teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates, with not enough incoming teachers to replace them, is the first step to curbing the shortage. This is something that needs to happen sooner rather than later: there are “estimate[s] that it costs \$78,750 to recruit one teacher into an urban school district,” which is the school environment stereotypically considered to be in need of the most support (NCTAF qtd. in MD Teacher Shortage 3-4).

Charles J. Ogletree Jr. of the Harvard Law School has said that “Students who are suspended are three times more likely to drop out by the 10th grade than students who have never

been suspended” (“Setting the Stage for the Discussion”). Furthermore, “Dropping out triples the likelihood that a person will be incarcerated later in life” (“Setting the Stage for the Discussion”). To put that into a perspective compared to college and university students, a report by the Center for Labor Market Studies finds that “the incidence of institutionalization problems among young high school dropouts was more than sixty-three times higher than among four year college graduates” (Downey). PBIS establishes an environment where students are being suspended less, graduating high school at higher rates, and moving on to higher education in greater numbers. In essence, keeping children in school improves their overall successes in life.

More often than not, students are being suspended for non-violent or behavioral problems. On a national scale, it has been noted that “most suspensions were not for guns, drugs, or violence, and actually 95% of school suspensions were for ‘disruptive behavior or other’ (Losen 8). In Maryland, a study conducted by the MSBE during the 2010-2011 school year found approximately 63% of all out-of-school suspensions were for what Maryland considers non-violent offenses, such as disrespect and class disturbance. Taking into account that many students had multiple suspensions, there were a total of 129,294 suspensions and expulsions issued that school year, with approximately 74% being strictly out-of-school suspensions (*A Safe School* 6). For that same school year, 57% of all suspensions were African-American students (*A Safe School* 8). This unfair, disproportionate disciplinary practice is further widening the achievement gap.

There are several costs associated with high school dropouts over their lifetime. For example, “Estimates indicate that a high school dropout can cost society between \$243,000 and \$388,000 over his lifetime due to dependency on government assistance. These costs escalate dramatically if the youth turns to a life of crime” (*Provision of Educational Services* 15). These

two figures for the lifetime cost of a dropout average to \$315,000 dollars out of the taxpayer wallet, per dropout. The MSDE report went on to note how Maryland schools average approximately 8,800 dropouts every year (qtd. in *A Safe School* 10). If this trend continues over the next decade, Maryland will have 88,000 students dropout, and at a \$315,000 cost per person, these dropouts will cost Maryland taxpayers over \$27.7 billion dollars. Schools need support to implement interventions to help students complete their education.

PBIS is a three-tiered framework that has been proven to significantly decrease the suspension and expulsion rates for students, and, by association, to lead to fewer dropouts. During their 2008-2009 school year, Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) has reported that their PBIS trained middle schools showed a 28% decrease in extended suspensions and expulsions (Dolan 58). AACPS had better results with their upper secondary education students, noting that 75% of their high schools demonstrated a reduction in extended suspensions and expulsions (58). The information available in the Maryland Report Card shows promising results, noting a 1.54% decrease in AACPS dropouts among the four-year adjusted cohort across the 2007-2010 school years (“Anne Arundel County”). That same cohort in AACPS also showed a 2.77% increase in graduation rates across that same period of school years (“Anne Arundel County”).

Effective Use of Time in School

The School-Wide Information System (SWIS) is often used by PBIS schools to collect information on subjects such as major and minor Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs). A 2011-2012 PBIS data summary of 3,092 schools from ten states¹ included “2,124 elementary (K-5), 630 middle (6-8), and 338 high (9-12) schools” (Gion, McIntosh, and Horner 2). The report

¹ Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, and Oregon

defines the difference between major and minor referrals as, “Minor ODRs are comparative to Major ODRs, but are described as inappropriate behaviors that are low in intensity and non-serious” (Gion, McIntosh, and Horner 1). PBIS utilizes these data to recognize early identifiers of behavioral problems and address the behavior before it escalates. The collection of these data allows PBIS schools to view their progress in reducing referrals, and provides a method to address negative student behavior early.

Among the 3,092 schools reported, there was a total of 4,407,677 ODRs. The average per school, based on these numbers, is approximately 1,425.51 ODRs per school in the dataset, regardless of age group. The summary reported:

At the elementary level, Minor ODRs were most likely to be issued for Defiance/Disrespect (36%), Disruption (22%), and Physical Aggression (19%). Major ODRs were associated with Defiance/Disrespect (27%), Physical Aggression (27%), and Disruption (21%). At the middle school level Minor ODRs were primarily given for Defiance/Disrespect (37%), Disruption (23%), and Tardy (13%). Major ODRs were given for Defiance/ Disrespect (33%), Disruption (14%), and Physical Aggression (9%). In high school, the prominent Minor ODR type was Tardy (35%), followed by Defiance/Disrespect (25%), and Disruption (11%). Major ODRs were primarily given for Defiance/Disrespect (25%), followed by Tardy (16%) and Skipping (15%). (Gion, McIntosh, and Horner 4)

Throughout the set of major and minor ODRs, defiance/disrespect and disruption were the most commonly cited reasons for the ODR. PBIS schools have the ability to take these data and correctly identify and address the problem areas of their school.

Some of the most commonly cited reasons for ODRs are non-violent, behavioral issues (Appendix A). The challenges teachers face in confronting and addressing these problems are a significant factor that affects teacher and student turn-over rates. ODRs require the removal of a student from the classroom, who then spends time with the administrator being processed. ODRs use a large amount of student and administrator time, and impair learning and the creation of a positive school climate. The PBIS framework has been successful in addressing this area of concern, and has proven results showing a decrease in ODRs over time.

The Cost-Benefit Analysis Worksheet from PBIS Maryland shows the direct loss in important learning and working time that students and administrators lose during ODRs. This sheet analyzes the amount of time students and administrators spend during the referral process. Using the previous PBIS school average of 1,426 ODRs per school, if a student is out of class for an average of thirty minutes during the referral process and the administrator processing takes forty-five minutes, the total number of referrals equates to a 713 hour loss of student class time (Appendix B). These numbers mean that eighty-nine full school days are lost considering the 1,426 referrals and multiple students. Administrators spend 1,070 hours processing the referrals. If the average time a student is out of class is moved to a full sixty-minute time period, the student body loses 178 full school days, and administrators lose 134 full school days (Appendix C). When reviewing these numbers, it is important to take into account that the number is taken from of a sample of PBIS schools across elementary, middle, and high schools.

Large amounts of ODRs come at a high cost of class time and valuable administrator time, and schools without PBIS training may be facing larger numbers and a further loss of classroom time. PBIS has had success in addressing high numbers of ODRs, and interested

schools can use the time sheet to calculate the amount of time referrals are costing their students and staff in their schools.

Administrator participation in facilitating PBIS is crucial for fidelity in implementation because PBIS changes the way a school functions. Because of this, one administrator per school is required to attend the initial Tier I PBIS training, as well as participate in monthly team meetings (Appendix D; “The Impact” 464). Administrators, however, cannot implement PBIS alone; therefore, “PBIS requires the buy-in of at least 80% of all staff and the participation of all staff in program implementation” (“The Impact” 464). For this reason, PBIS is not implemented in schools where it will not be supported. The free modules, available online, allow the administrator and other PBIS team members to return to their school and effectively teach the rest of the faculty the framework.

One study, “Effects of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [SWPBIS] on Child Behavior Problems,” which was conducted utilizing 37 elementary schools, showed the positive effects of SWPBIS on child behavioral and concentration problems, as well as social-emotional learning and behavior. The children in SWPBIS schools “were 33% less likely to receive an office discipline referral than those in the comparison schools” (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, and Leaf 2013). According to PBIS, schools that efficiently implement the framework exhibit:

- Up to 50% reduction in office referral rates per year (and corresponding reduction in suspension and expulsion rates)
- Improved attendance rates
- Improved academic achievement
- Improved staff perceptions of school safety and atmosphere (“A Wise Investment”)

The PBIS framework has proven that it has the capacity to produce a positive effect on the school environment. PBIS can successfully address the needs of students and staff when implemented with fidelity. The framework not only decreases the amount of referrals as a whole, but completely changes the manner in which the school views and addresses the behavior (Appendices D and E). Students who are not in the classroom are not learning. Referrals waste a large amount of administrator and student time that could be used for more constructive activities, instead of reactive punishment.

Building a Positive School Climate

A healthy school climate should make students, teachers, staff, administrators and parents feel like valued, safe members of the school community. In order to guarantee safety, a school must promote behaviors and courses of actions that seek to ensure the physical, emotional, and social well-being of all those involved with the school. Through training, technical assistance, and research and evaluation, the MDS3 partnership works with high schools to create and utilize data systems that allow for the various voices in the school community to be heard and addressed.

A primary behavior issue addressed through the PBIS framework is bullying. Bullying is a major issue nationally, and Maryland's education legislation already includes multiple laws regarding bullying, cyber bullying, and harassment; however, these laws are limited to the bullying of students. The MSDE website specifically defines bullying as behavior that:

- Adversely affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities;
- Is a result of repeated negative actions (intentional, aggressive behavior) by one or more other students over time; and

- Occurs in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power (“Bullying Prevention”).

This definition is extremely protective against peer-to-peer bullying, but it does not account for students being bullied by teachers, administrators, or other non-students, and it also does not include bullying incidents against any staff. In the MDS3 Climate Survey given to all participating high schools, 24.82% of staff from the cohort of schools in their third year of PBIS said they had been bullied at this school (“MDS3 Climate Survey Year 3” 10). A subsequent question asked staff to indicate those who have bullied them at their school. The results show that it is primarily students (14.6%) followed by other staff/administrators (11.5%) and parents (10.3%) who are bullying school staff (11). Slightly fewer staff from the fourth year cohort (23.92%) felt bullied at their schools, but once again students (13.9%) were the primary bullies followed by other staff/administrators (12.7%) and parents (9.7%) (“MDS3 Climate Survey Year 4” 13-14). This climate survey allows schools to review the bullying of adults in the school community and make data-driven decisions about addressing the school climate for staff.

Although almost a quarter of staff in MDS3 schools have felt bullied, 74.7% of staff in the Year 4 cohort either agreed or strongly agreed that “there is a feeling of trust and confidence among the staff;” 73.2% of staff indicate that their principals would “go out of his or her way to show appreciation for the faculty and staff members;” and 80% feel like their principals “look out for faculty and staff members” (MDS3 Climate Survey Year 4” 57; 59-60). This high level of satisfaction with work conditions helps curb turn-over rates because most of the staff at PBIS schools feel as if they are valued members of the community.

Among all members of the school community, building relationships is a critical component of a healthy school climate because it is imperative in fostering student engagement

in school. Kenwood High School in Baltimore County used the framework learned from MDS3's team to create their "Check and Connect" program, which successfully raised the GPAs and attendance rates of twenty at-risk freshmen and sophomores through one-to-one mentoring partnerships with teachers. The amount of participants in Check and Connect continues to increase each year (Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools). Kenwood High School was able to help students with poor attendance and low GPAs by putting them in a more balanced relationship with teachers, which shows the worth of using positive interventions instead of punishments for student issues.

Effectiveness of PBIS

As of September 2013, at least 19,408 schools have implemented PBIS Tier I within the U.S. (Bradley 29). PBIS Tier I is a proactive rather than reactive process, and targets an individual school's leadership, students, and environment (Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project). This section examines examples of PBIS Tier I implementation in other states and in the state of Maryland, funding levels, and the cost of implementation.

Comparable States' PBIS Tier I Implementation

PBIS Tier I is implemented across the U.S. At least 14 states have more than 500 PBIS Tier I trained schools (Appendix E; Bradley 30). According to an Arizona Task Force on PBIS best practices, the characteristics of a state's successful dissemination of PBIS Tier I are direct participation of the State Education Agency, a network of local school district coaches working in a collaborative effort, and the availability of training and technical assistance from the State and LEAs (Behavior Research Center 23). Technical assistance and coaching are necessary to provide consistency, and core component implementation. PBIS Tier I promotes academic and social-emotional success for all students (Appendix F; Schillhahn).

For example, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education funds and maintains a robust PBIS Tier I team that provides training and technical assistance throughout the state. Missouri is further along in its development and implementation of PBIS Tier I, which Missouri refers to as School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support (SWPBS) (Sugai). The intent of SWPBS is improved student behavior, which translates to an environment conducive to learning. A Missouri SWPBS state team coordinator heads the team of state personnel, consisting of an assistant coordinator, twenty-four regional consultants, five Tier II and Tier III consultants, and a web and data consultant (Appendix G; George 86). The Missouri SWPBS team supervises 758 SWPBS trained schools out of 2,400 public schools, and supports 202 SWPBS trained public school districts out of 524 public school districts (MO SW-PBS 7). In a 2013 annual report, the Missouri SWPBS framework's goal was to assist the state in reaching a top ten status within the U.S. in educational performance for Missouri's students by 2020 (MO SW-PBS 7). Its ongoing efforts correlate to positive effects in Missouri's student achievement. Annually, the state of Missouri administers the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) test to its students in Communications Arts and Mathematics in the third grade through eighth grade (CTB/McGraw-Hill 1). For the school year 2010 and 2011, Missouri's fully trained SWPBS schools surpassed the MAP scores of Missouri's non-SWPBS schools (George 92).

In 2004, the state of Florida initiated its formal, state-level MTSS with full PBIS Tier I implementation. The Florida Department of Education published an action plan for transition to the advanced levels of the framework (Florida Department of Education). Florida's Department of Education has fully instituted advanced Tier II and III implementation throughout the state as well.

In contrast to Missouri and Florida, the California Department of Education does not have a centralized PBIS Tier I initiative or support PBIS implementation. Grassroots efforts to implement PBIS Tier I do exist, but the training and technical assistance varies by county. The California Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (CalTAC, Inc.) is a not-for-profit organization technical assistance center. Special Education Local Planning Areas, County Offices of Education, Regions and Districts contract and pay between \$50 to \$85,000 for CalTAC Inc. to train participants in PBIS Tier I over a period of three years (Kelley). CalTAC, Inc. has three full-time staff members with seven additional part-time staff, which limits the organization's capacity to respond to educational support requests.

California has 10,296 public schools within 1,043 school districts (California Department of Education). In school year 2011-2012, there were approximately 650 PBIS Tier I schools in the state (PBIS~CalTac). California does not have a centralized repository of PBIS Tier I data or provide technical assistance and training; however, suspension data indicates California's school climate for learning. Reviewing 500 districts out of 1,043 districts, a 2012 Civil Rights Remedies' report estimates that California schools suspended 400,000 students at least once in the school year 2009-2010 (The Civil Rights Project). Many of the infractions were for non-violent behavior such as disrespect, defiance, and dress code violations. In the school year 2011-2012, African American students accounted for less than 7% of California's total enrollment, but consisted of 41% of all suspended students (California Department of Education). California's implementation of a MTSS varies across the state without central oversight from the state Department of Education, which may manifest in its suspension statistics.

Maryland's PBIS Tier I implementation

Within the Maryland's twenty-four LEAs, Maryland has a total of 956 PBIS Tier I trained schools out of 1,449 public schools as of 2013 (MSDE PBIS). Under the auspices of the Division of Student, Family and School Support and the PBIS Maryland Partners, MSDE provides state-level oversight to LEAs with emphasis on coaching, training and technical assistance. MSDE has at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) position to lead PBIS implementation across the state ("Report on Best Practices" 19). Over the years, MSDE has reallocated funding to support training to the LEAs. This year, funding was re-directed for advanced tier training and expansion within the LEAs. To train and sustain PBIS Tier I in the future, non-PBIS schools and current PBIS schools will use web-based training modules. Without consistent funding and adequate personnel, MSDE has been unable to provide the necessary support and technical assistance to the LEAs.

Regional PBIS coordinators are responsible for collecting, reviewing, and analyzing PBIS effectiveness data; however, Maryland does not have these positions. One FTE coordinator provides oversight, coordinates training and technical assistance, writes grants, updates the PBIS Maryland website, monitors active PBIS trained schools, markets PBIS, and performs other support to the 956 schools. Due to the lack of personnel, MSDE does not have the capacity to expand PBIS.

In 2010, 55.7% of the PBIS trained schools were elementary schools, 24.6% were middle schools, and 12.7% were high schools ("A State-Wide Partnership" 229). Maryland's elementary schools have a mandate for implementing and expanding PBIS. The Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.08.06.01-.02, Section 7-304.1 mandates that an elementary school must implement or expand PBIS if the out-of-school suspension rate exceeds 10%. In 2012-2013, four

LEAs had an out-of-school and expulsion rate that exceeded 10% (“2012-2013 Publications”). Without a state mandate regarding suspension rates for secondary schools, the decision to implement PBIS Tier I is locally driven.

Currently, Maryland mandates that schools implement PBIS if truancy rates exceed 1%. For 2012-2013, eight LEAs had a habitual truancy rate in excess of 1% (“2012-2013 Publications”). The National Center for Student Engagement identified reasons for students’ truancy such as “no one seems to care, classes are boring and not relevant, teachers are disrespectful, and the environment is uncomfortable” (Bonner-Tompkins and Rubin 11). The analysis of habitual truancy reduction for PBIS or MTSS trained schools versus non-PBIS schools is an important factor of evaluating PBIS implementation’s effectiveness. The MSDE Accountability, Assessment, and Data Systems Division publishes an annual student report on Habitual Truants on its website (“Staff and Student Publications”). This paper includes an informal analysis of habitual truancy of PBIS trained and non-PBIS trained high schools as an aggregate by county for grades nine through twelve. The county averages of the habitual truancy percentage (HTP) change for PBIS trained and non-PBIS trained schools were calculated by the individual schools within a county from academic years 2009 to 2013. The state averages were calculated by averaging the data by county. The “HTP Change” analysis chart for PBIS trained schools by state average showed reduced habitual truancy over the period (Appendix I). Although the state average of HTP increased for PBIS trained schools as new schools implemented PBIS, the HTP average consistently declined from school year 2011-2012 to 2012-2013. The chart of the state average for HTP for non-PBIS schools steadily increased from academic years 2010 to 2013. The “HTP Change” analysis chart indicated that PBIS trained schools by state percentage average were effective in habitual truancy reduction.

Maryland's PBIS Examples

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) had positive results, using the PBIS framework. For school year 2010-2011, BCPS had 73 PBIS trained schools, consisting of forty-five elementary schools, sixteen middle schools, and nine high schools (Kidder 7). The PBIS trained high schools showed a significant drop in school suspensions from 755 in school year 2008-2009 to 579.62 in school year 2009-2010 (Kidder 11). From 2003 to 2013, BCPS PBIS schools also improved in Maryland School Assessment (MSA) achievement scores for mathematics and reading. PBIS trained schools had greater percentage point increases in MSA scores than non-PBIS schools for grades three, five, and eight (Appendix H; “Report on Best Practices” 13). For example, third grade math scores for PBIS schools gained by 31.3% percentage points, but non-PBIS schools only increased by 21.8% percentage points (13).

Current Funding Sources

Funding for PBIS Maryland comes from various sources, depending on the availability of remaining funds at the end of the fiscal year. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has funded the National Technical Assistance Center for PBIS support to Maryland. Currently, MSDE allocates \$80,000 in Special Education funding for PBIS Maryland. The funds facilitate the expansion of capacity for advanced tier levels of PBIS training. In 2010, Maryland received a \$13 million federal grant over four years for the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative (MDS3) to reduce rates of school violence and substance use with special emphasis on suspensions and out-of-school suspensions. The grant is administered by MSDE in collaboration with JHU and Sheppard Pratt Health Systems. MDS3 recruited the participating high schools for

advanced tier level training, but the grant ends in September 2014 (Barrett)². In June 2014, the MSDE PBIS coordinator applied for federal funding under the School Climate Transformation Grant to continue the ongoing Tier II and Tier III implementation and was awarded the funding; however, approval and funding amounts are at the federal government's discretion.

Cost to Expand PBIS to more Maryland Schools

MSDE does not have a permanent line item in the budget for PBIS. For Fiscal Year 2015, MSDE submitted an Over-the-Target (OTT) budget for expansion of MSDE's capacity to provide PBIS training and technical assistance to the LEAs. The (OTT) budget includes personnel hires of regional coordinators, continued evaluation from Johns Hopkins University, and training support from Sheppard Pratt Health System (Appendix J; Alexander). With permanent funding, MSDE could hire regional coordinators. Those coordinators located across the state will address training and technical assistance for the LEAs who want to implement PBIS with fidelity.

Challenges

One of the major challenges to PBIS or any MTSS would be the dedicated participation it requires from the staff and administration in each school. This has been a leading cause of failure among schools that adopted the PBIS framework, although the number of "failed PBIS schools" is minimal. PBIS believes that at least 80% of a school's staff and administration must embrace the MTSS for it to work, and that insufficient participation and support will lead it to failure within the school.

² In spring 2012, eight additional schools were added for a total of 60 schools. Maryland was one of 11 states out of 33 to receive the funding.

Furthermore, this framework requires additional funding to bring in Tier II and III. Until now, most Maryland schools have only been using the first Tier, and with great results. The schools reporting the most success have had finances available to develop into those upper tiers. However, this is a limit that applies to most schools in Maryland, and it is those upper two tiers that require the funding for schools to take the next step in using PBIS and become true success stories.

Another obstacle thus far has been the lack of school documentation for student referrals and similar information. In some instances, it has been hard for PBIS to establish a baseline for student improvement because there was no tracking of how many referrals were issued per year, if they qualified as “Minor” or “Major,” how much time the referrals take on average to complete and the class-time lost in the process. These elements are what schools start to track once they begin implementing PBIS using a system such as SWIS. There is a recognized need for evidence-based practices, but Maryland has no standardization of data collection regarding how schools should gather evidence. Further, the current Maryland PBIS implementation model requires improved transparency of pre- and post- PBIS implementation for schools and LEAs, as well as comparative data with non-PBIS schools and LEAs.

Counterarguments

In order to fully understand the impact of implementing MTSS such as PBIS into Maryland schools, it is essential to consider any potential counterarguments. There is not enough support for the social-emotional aspect of education, and a few primary counterarguments have been raised in regards to increasing social-emotional support for students.

Some would argue that the disciplinary actions of the administration in each school are justified, and discipline occurs to remove poorly-behaving students from the classroom. The

rationale behind this argument is that exclusion from the classroom is to prevent consequential impacts surrounding the learning of all other students. However, this is a reactive approach to managing behavior in a school. Implementing a framework such as PBIS would take a preventative approach. This counterargument goes hand-in-hand with another argument regarding PBIS. Some people have mentioned that PBIS is wrongly providing students with incentive, and that proper behavior should not be rewarded; rather, it should become normalized in the school environment. There is the thought that PBIS could be enabling administration and teachers within schools to feel the need to incentivize students in order to encourage proper behavior. Many LEAs do not want to provide additional financial resources or time commitments to incentivize students to behave properly in the school environment. If the LEAs can help each school take preventative measures to combat negative behavior, the school climate will become more positive and there will be less need in the long term to rely on reactive disciplinary measures.

Perhaps the most prevalent argument is that every Maryland public school does not need to implement PBIS, and that the framework is best suited for schools with high rates of dropouts, office referrals, or suspensions. Though this may be true in some cases, it can be argued that every public school could benefit from PBIS because it is a framework through which to implement evidence-based practices. Every school in Maryland should be able to support best practices and implement them in a way that works uniquely for each specific school setting. No school or LEA should be content with adequate performance; Maryland needs to provide the best support and resources to be able to reach every student in every school.

Possible Alternatives

Data Collection for Alternative Education Programs (AEP) in Maryland

The proposed policy would standardize LEA reporting requirements for AEPs, using an ad hoc or unfunded mandate. The state of Maryland has various forms of AEP that are unique to each LEA. Across Maryland's LEAs, AEPs are not consistent in services, effectiveness, and efficiency. The policy would require necessary data collection points to assess an AEP's effectiveness, and resource requirements. In the aggregate, the data may consist of reasons for students' referrals, types of support staff, recidivism rates, teacher turn-over, leadership turn-over, and dropout rates of AEP. Currently, AEP reporting requirements are voluntary, and follow the dropout prevention indicator standards in MSDE's "2012 Dropout Prevention Resource Guide" (12).

The AEPs should be one of many tools that LEAs use as part of a comprehensive plan for helping students. Tier II intervention was not sufficient in meeting the student's needs. Supporting the Tier III level of PBIS on the continuum, AEPs provide one-on-one intense academic and social-emotional support to students to encourage student achievement. In one article, Cummings and Goor stated 1% to 3% of students in school need an individualized plan for behavior or academics through an alternative education program in order to meet success in school (Cummings and Goor 314). Without intervention, a student is likely to become disengaged with the traditional school and student body, and may become at-risk for dropping out. This proposed policy would ensure consistency for AEP's in supporting students' academic achievement, and continuity of education services.

Continuation of the Maryland Teaching Consortium through state funding

While PBIS focuses on the total school environment, the Maryland Teaching Consortium (MTC) initiative increases proficiency for pre-service teachers in the areas of early childhood, elementary, middle, and secondary education. MTC pre-service teachers teach students living in poverty and/or high concentrations of culturally or linguistically diverse students. Similar to PBIS, MTC potentially leads to better, more effective, and competent teachers, which translates to fewer suspensions, expulsions, and habitual trancies. Started in 2010, MTC is an initiative that used Race to the Top (RTTT) funding that partnered ten public and private institutions of higher education (IHEs) with LEA Professional Development Schools (PDSs). Under the auspices of the MSDE Division of Educator Effectiveness, the Program Approval and Assessment Branch administered the competitive RTTT grant. While the Maryland Higher Education Commission administers the Improving Teacher Quality federal grant that provides content training to in-service teachers, MTC was the first program to focus on pre-service teachers' preparation through coursework, field experiences, and a 100-day internship over two consecutive semesters specifically focused on preparing educators for high poverty/culturally and linguistically diverse schools (*Preparing Educators 12*).

The MTC partnered Maryland IHEs with local Maryland's PDS to produce tailored pre-service teacher training programs to meet the PDS' needs. Through six annual training sessions, and summer institutes, the MTC shared best practices, knowledge, and expertise among IHEs about pre-service teacher training. In school year 2011-2012, 42.2% of new, prepared teacher hires came from outside the state Maryland ("Teacher Staffing Report" 22). The MTC initiative encouraged teachers to work in Maryland in support of PDSs with high poverty/culturally and linguistically diverse populations. For the school year 2012-2013, the MTC program produced

program graduates, some of whom began service in high poverty/culturally and linguistically diverse schools. By the end of the grant period in 2014, the MTC initiative produced 254 pre-service teachers (*RTTT MTC Summer Schedule*). In addition, MSDE in collaboration with the IHEs and their PDS partners published and distributed *Preparing Educators for High Poverty/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Schools: A Manual for Teacher Educators, Teachers and Principals*. The RTTT grant for MTC ends in September 2014. Despite the manual's publication, MSDE will not have funding to expand MTC to other IHEs and PDS partners to meet Maryland's need for quality pre-service teacher hires from Maryland's IHEs. The lack of funding also adversely impacts MSDE's ability to monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of the 2013-2014 newly graduated pre-service teachers.

Comparing PBIS to MTC, MTC impacts pre-service teachers and their competency in the classroom. PBIS is a school-wide environment change. Through course and field work, MTC has a classroom management program component in its pre-service teacher training while PBIS does not emphasize classroom management. Through longitudinal studies, PBIS has large amounts of data for analysis while the MTC initiative is still gathering and analyzing data. Since the MTC initiative's federal funding is ending, state funding would permit the MTC initiative to continue an evaluation of the newly trained teachers for the school year 2013-2014, and an analysis of the MTC initiative's impact on teacher effectiveness. An effective teacher who is trained in developing relationships with students in engaging classroom instruction limits the need for the large number of student referrals by creating the positive classroom climate that is the aim of PBIS. With funding, the MTC initiative is a potential supplement to PBIS full implementation by preparing teachers for dealing with challenging students prior to their hiring in Maryland schools.

Conclusion

Maryland students need a balanced educational environment that fosters emotional support alongside academic stability. Presently, the dialogue surrounding education in Maryland is primarily focused on academics, Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards implementation, the PARCC assessments, and teacher and principal evaluations; it is important that Maryland ensures that school climate is not overshadowed by these equally important concerns. Maryland has already created the web-based capacity for LEAs to train schools in the first tier of PBIS. Although Multi-Tiered Systems of Support have been proven to help with discipline issues, decreasing the amount of office referrals and suspensions are not the only things PBIS can affect. PBIS, and school climate by extension, should not be considered a characteristic of only low-performing schools, but rather as a necessary element to providing all students with a holistic, world-class education.

In Tier I specifically, PBIS focuses on helping schools meet the needs of all its students instead of simply reacting to the needs of the few students who require disciplinary actions. Traditionally, schools respond to overt symptoms such as, suspension rates, dropout rates, and attendance rates, and this is understandable when such information is already being collected. PBIS gives schools the opportunity to collect data about what is going on, where it is happening, and who is doing it, which in turn allows principals to implement the evidence-based initiatives their schools actually need. This collection of school building level data allows for the development of a proactive rather than reactive approach. With fluctuating funding and personnel levels, LEAs may not be receiving the services and support they need. Regional PBIS coordinators and a permanent, sustainable budget allocation will help to build the capacity

necessary to meet the needs of all Maryland students by providing training, coaching, and technical assistance to the LEAs.

Principals and teachers spend considerable time addressing and responding to disruptive behaviors, but the PBIS framework helps schools create a system of positive reinforcement by celebrating model behaviors. PBIS has been proven to: reduce problem behaviors; increase academic performance; increase attendance; improve perceptions of safety; reduce bullying behaviors; improve organizational efficiency; reduce staff turn-over; increase perceptions of teacher efficacy; and improve social emotional competence (Alexander 2). PBIS can do great things for the students of Maryland, but that can only happen if the state is equally as invested in it as Maryland is with the academic side of learning.

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Appendix

Appendix A

South Frederick Elementary School Definitions of Major Behaviors

Abusive/ Inappropriate Language	Verbal messages that include swearing or using words in an inappropriate way in such a manner that the learning environment is significantly disrupted. <i>(different from Harassment/Discrimination)</i>
Fighting	At least two students mutually engaged in serious physical contact (punching, kicking, scratching, hair pulling, hitting with object).
Physical Aggression	One student making serious physical contact upon another (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, hair pulling, hitting with object).
Insubordination	Complete refusal to follow staff directions in such a manner that the learning environment is significantly disrupted and/or the students places his/herself in a dangerous situation.
Student Threat	Student delivers a message (verbalized, written, drawn or gestured) toward another that conveys an act of intended injury or harm.
Disruption	Behavior causing a sustained and significant interruption of a class or activity.
Harassment/Discrimination	Repeated teasing, name calling, or other actions, as well as activities or statements intended to be offensive of one's religion, race, heritage, color, and disability, including sexual harassment.
Property Damage (school)	Deliberately impairing the usefulness of school property. <i>(different from Vandalism)</i> .
Property Damage (others)	Deliberately impairing the usefulness of another's student's or staff member's personal property.
Vandalism	Participating in an activity that results in substantial destruction or disfigurement of property.
Theft	Possession of, having passed on, or the removing of someone else's property.
Other	Could include: possession (<i>tobacco, pagers, laser pointers, drugs, or weapons</i>)--arson--forgery--bomb threat--false alarms--extortion--computer use violation--leaving campus.

Appendix B

Cost-Benefit Analysis Worksheet: 30 Minutes Out of Class

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Enter info below

School name

N/A

Number of referrals for last year

Number of referrals for this year

1426

Average # of minutes student is out of class due to referral

30

Average # of minutes administrator needs to process referral

45

Time Regained

	Student	Administrator
Minutes	-42780	-64170
Hours	-713	-1070
Days	-89	-134

Student Minutes: -42780, Admin Minutes: -64170. N/A for Last Year.

Student Hours: -713, Admin Hours: -1070. N/A for Last Year.

Student Days: -89, Admin Days: -134. N/A for Last Year.

Appendix C

Cost-Benefit Analysis Worksheet: 60 Minutes Out of Class

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Enter info below

School name

N/A

Number of referrals for last year

Number of referrals for this year

1426

Average # of minutes student is out of class due to referral

60

Average # of minutes administrator needs to process referral

45

Time Regained

	Student	Administrator
Minutes	-85560	-64170
Hours	-1426	-1070
Days	-178	-134

Minutes Chart:

Category	Student Minutes	Admin Minutes
Last Year	0	0
This Year	85560	64170
Time Regained	-85560	-64170

Hours Chart:

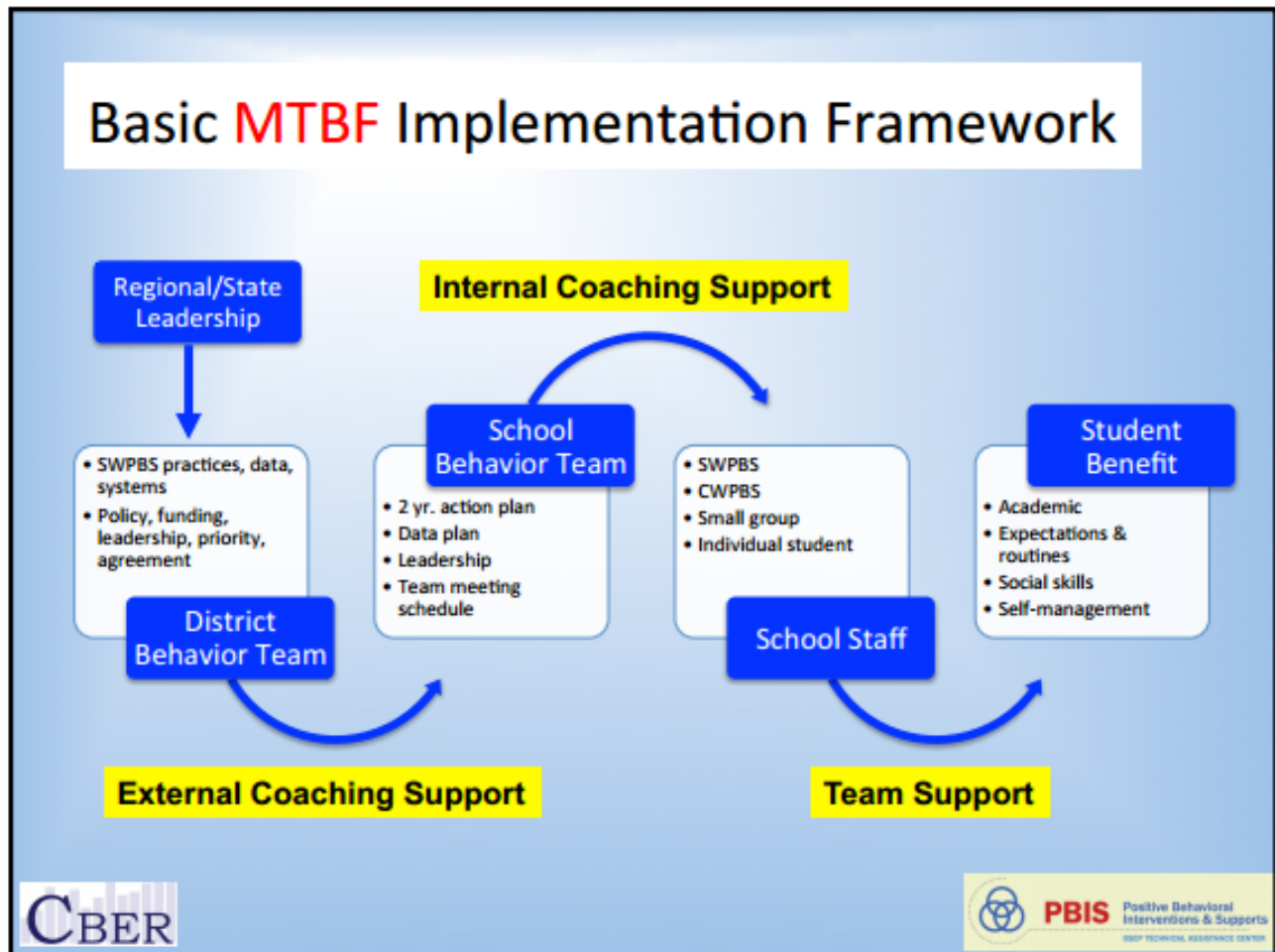
Category	Student Hours	Admin Hours
Last Year	0	0
This Year	1426	1070
Time Regained	-1426	-1070

Days Chart:

Category	Student Days	Admin Days
Last Year	0	0
This Year	178	134
Time Regained	-178	-134

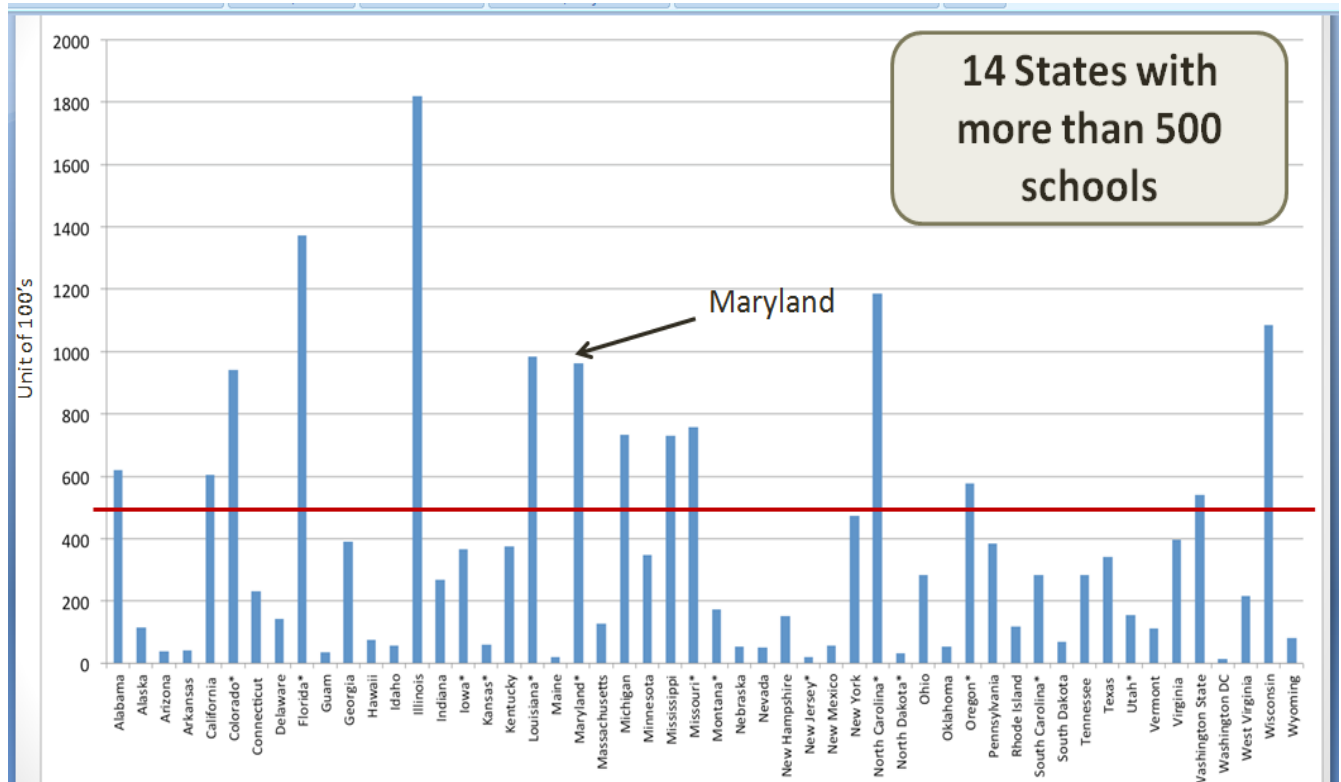
Appendix D

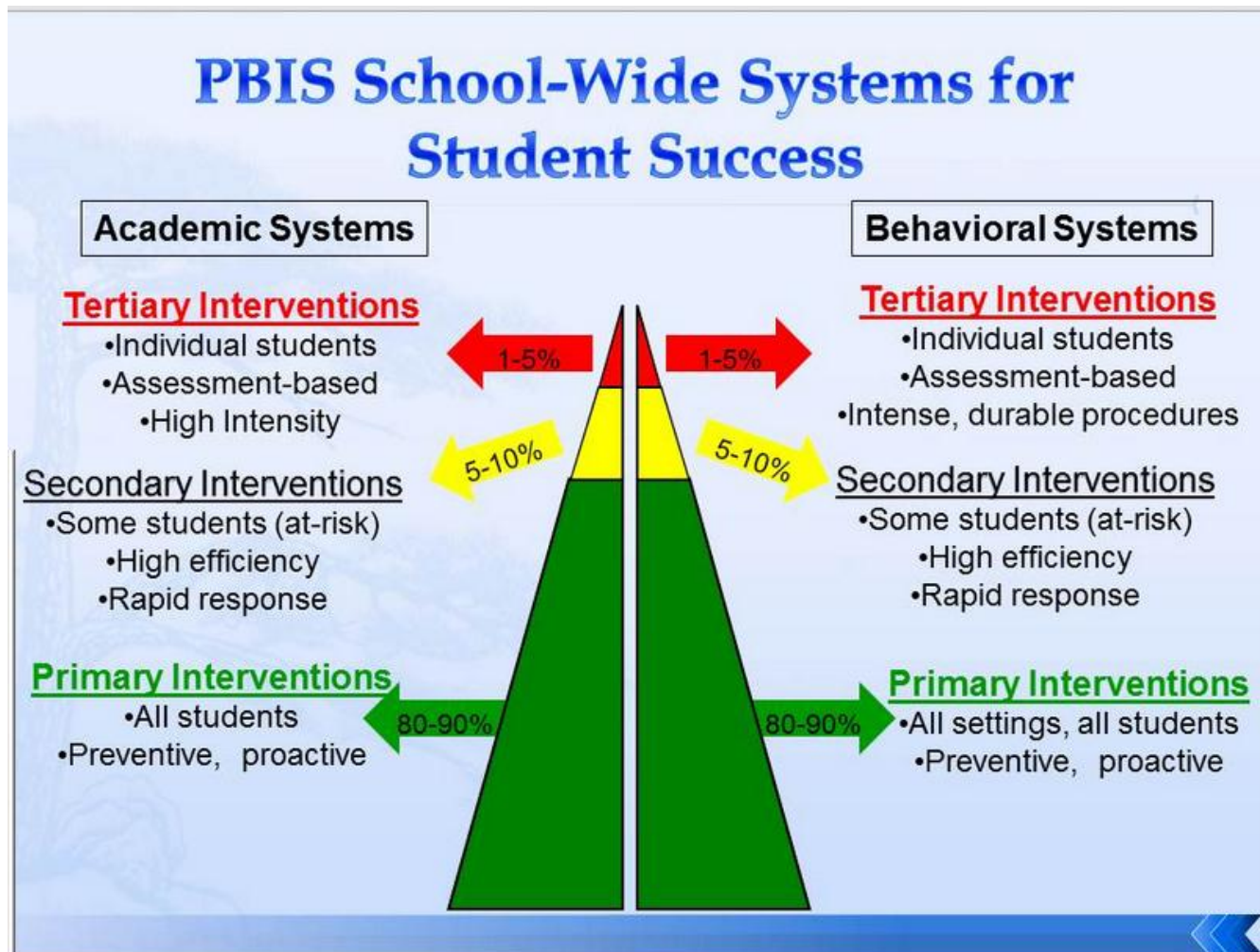
Basic MTBF Implementation Framework



Appendix E

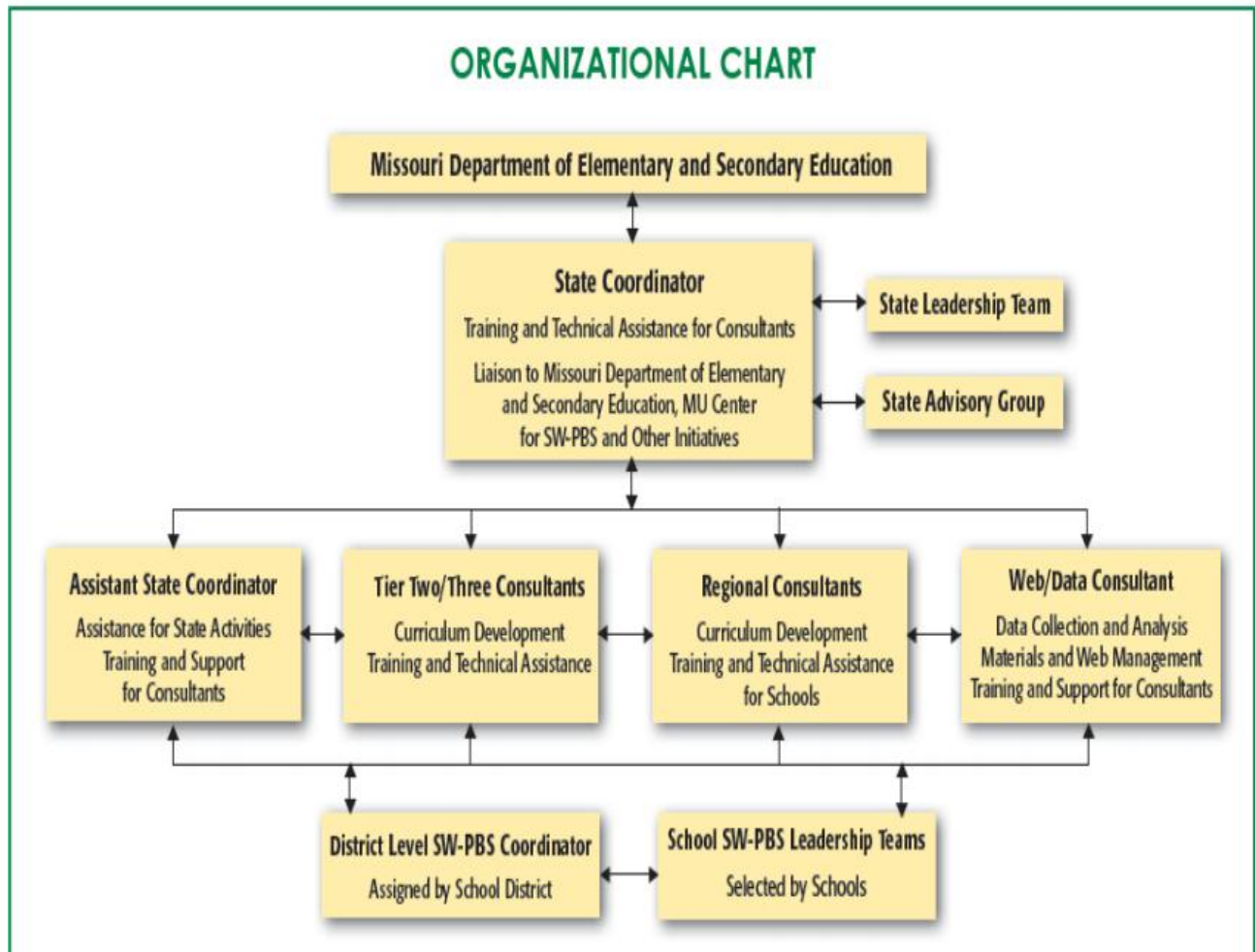
Number of Schools Implementation PBIS Tier I by State, September 2013





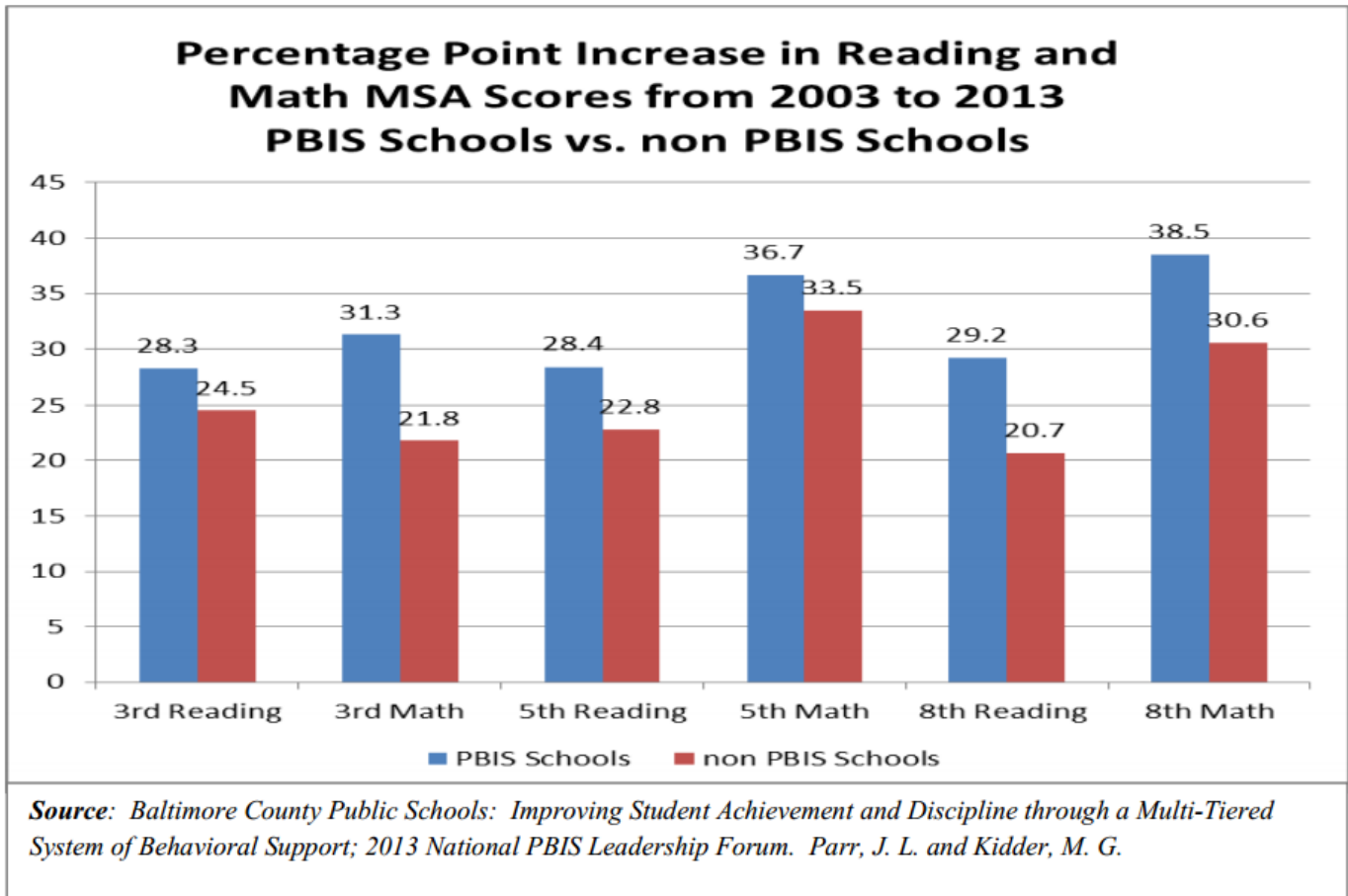
Appendix G

Missouri SWPBS Implementation



Appendix H

PBIS Schools vs. non-PBIS Schools



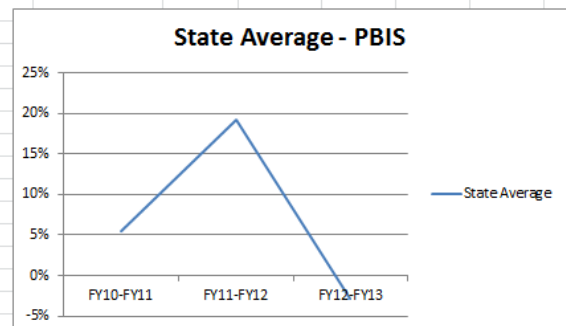
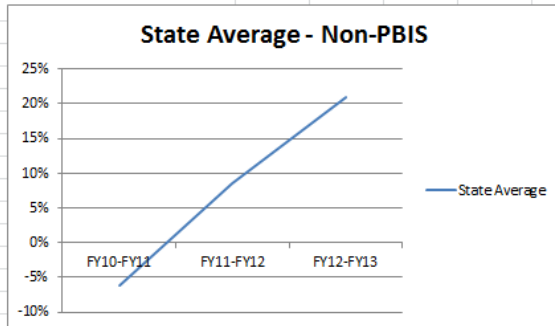
Appendix I

Non-PBIS and PBIS State Habitual Truancy Percentage Trends,

FY 2009-2010 to 2012-2013

Habitual Truancy Percentage Change for Academic Years 2010 to 2013, Maryland's Secondary Schools, Grades 9th to 12th									
Non-PBIS LEAS					PBIS LEAS				
	FY10-FY11	FY11-FY12	FY12-FY13			FY10-FY11	FY11-FY12	FY12-FY13	
Allegany	-15%	-1%	55%		Allegany				
Anne Arundel	6%	46%	43%		Anne Arundel	9%	55%	-19%	
Baltimore City	57%	33%	2%		Baltimore City	20%	15%	-3%	
Baltimore County	3%	-15%	16%		Baltimore County	17%	-1%	16%	
Calvert					Calvert	3%	-19%	33%	
Caroline					Caroline	18%	-29%	42%	
Carroll	19%	-2%	39%		Carroll				
Cecil	16%	3%	36%		Cecil	19%	-2%	44%	
Charles	33%	26%	4%		Charles	17%	12%	17%	
Dorchester	34%	11%	49%		Dorchester	28%	19%	4%	
Frederick	2%	-4%	63%		Frederick	27%	14%	39%	
Garrett	18%	-4%	0%		Garrett				
Harford	18%	-2%	26%		Harford	22%	-14%	64%	
Howard	16%	45%	29%		Howard	44%	34%	14%	
Kent					Kent	14%	46%	44%	
Montgomery	66%	145%	5%		Montgomery	49%	117%	31%	
Prince George's	-28%	-16%	-12%		Prince George's	14%	25%	-5%	
Queen Anne's					Queen Anne's	-28%	-11%	-14%	
Somerset					Somerset	-24%	-17%	-12%	
St. Mary's	-26%	-16%	-12%		St. Mary's	-24%	-15%	-15%	
Talbot	-18%	-23%	1%		Talbot	-23%	-20%	-10%	
Washington	35%	-25%	5%		Washington	-13%	-22%	11%	
Wicomico	4%	-16%	19%		Wicomico	2%	-16%	13%	
Worcester	3%	-22%	28%		Worcester				
	FY10-FY11	FY11-FY12	FY12-FY13			FY10-FY11	FY11-FY12	FY12-FY13	
State Average	-6%	9%	21%		State Average	5%	19%	-3%	
Number of Non-PBIS Schools: 100					Number of PBIS trained Schools: 99				

Note: A positive percentage change is an increase, and a negative percentage change is a decrease in the habitual truancies percentage from year to year.



Appendix J

Over-The-Top Proposed FY 2015 Budget

FY 2015 Over-The-Target Budget, Division of Student, Family and School Support									
STAFFING									
MSDE Position Classification	# of Positions	Grade	Step	Salary					
Ed Program Specialist I	5	21	3	\$ 85,771					
Management Associate	1	13	3	\$ 46,472					
Adm Specialist III	1	12	3	\$ 40,506					
Note: The Ed Program Specialists (or regional coordinators) would provide training, technical assistance, and coaching to existing LSS facilitators.									
	\$ 85,771	Ed Program Specialist I	Regional	Grade 21					
	\$ 85,771	Ed Program Specialist I	Regional	Grade 21					
	\$ 85,771	Ed Program Specialist I	Regional	Grade 21					
	\$ 85,771	Ed Program Specialist I	Regional	Grade 21					
	\$ 85,771	Ed Program Specialist I	MSDE	Grade 21					
SUBTOTAL-Ed. Prog. Spec's.	\$ 428,855								
	\$ 46,472	Management Associate	MSDE	Grade 13					
	\$ 40,506	Adm Specialist III	MSDE	Grade 12					
TOTAL STAFFING BUDGET	\$ 515,833								
	\$ 404,539	Data Collection/Evaluation/School Climate Survey Administration							JHU
	\$ 540,000	Venues, Trainer/Expenses, materials, travel, equipment, and curriculum development							SPHS
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 1,460,372								
Collaboration/Partnerships:									
Both PBIS and MDS3 have been developed, implemented, managed and evaluated within a public/private university partnership: MSDE, Sheppard Pratt Health System, and Johns Hopkins University. MSDE has traditionally performed administrative, training, and advocacy functions, SPHS has led training and Technical Assistance and JHU has led research and evaluation (with funding from other sources).									