CENTER ON PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

SISEP State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices

I·MTSS RESEARCH NETWORK

National Center on Improving Literacy

Lead for Literacy

A SCHOOL GUIDE FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL DURING AND AFTER CRISIS:

A Guide to Supporting Schools, Educators, and Students through a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework

CENTER ON POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS
STATE IMPLEMENTATION AND SCALING UP OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES CENTER
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MARCH 2021

A School Guide for Returning to School During and After Crisis:

A Guide to Supporting Schools, Educators, and Students through a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework

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Purpose, Outcome, Context, Guiding Principles, and Rationale for the Guide

Purpose

This abbreviated school guide describes the use of a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework, like positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), to restart classrooms and schools in a manner that all students, families, and educators are supported effectively, efficiently, and relevantly. This guide is *not* a primer on MTSS or PBIS. (For a basic introduction, visit PBIS.org.[6]) This guide *is* aa set of considerations for experienced leadership teams to enhance, adjust, or adapt school and classroom action plans to meet the current context.

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* Table numbers are retained from the complete guide; therefore, tables are NOT numbered continuously in this abbreviated guide.

In particular, this guide provides recommendations for:

- **School leaders** (principals, members of school-wide leadership team) as they prepare to re-open school (in person and/or remotely) in the fall. (See school-level action planning tips.)
- **Educators** as they develop and implement supports for students in their (in-person or remote) classrooms, groups, and other settings. (See classroom action planning tips.)

Outcome

The ultimate outcome of this work is to support **students, families, and educators*** during the transitions back to school during and following the global pandemic in a manner that prioritizes their health and safety, social and emotional needs, and behavioral and academic growth.

Context

COVID-19 has disrupted many aspects of our "normal" home, school, work, and community relationships, expectations, and routines. It has also contributed to economic challenges that have impacts at the global, national, state, local, and family levels. Although we have learned valuable lessons from past tragedies and crises (e.g., natural disasters, accidents, violence), mitigation, healing, and recovery are unlikely to be like anything we have experienced.

The COVID-19 public health crisis has also highlighted disparities in health care, and disproportionate health outcomes for people of color. Simultaneously, a

national movement, fueled by ongoing violence toward and murders of Black people, has resulted in a national movement to make Black lives matter. Given the inequities that have long existed in education, this movement encourages educators to examine their own practice and ensure that students who are black, indigenous, and people of color also benefit from education.

Given the current and future progression of COVID-19 and on-going economic challenges, the return to in-person school will be challenging. However, given the national focus on equity, there is also reason for hope and an opportunity to design education that works for all. Thus, as students, family, school, and community members consider a "restart" of school, effective, efficient, culturally relevant, and contextually

* We view educators as a general term that includes all school members who collectively support students, including general and special education teachers, school nurses, instructional assistants or para professionals, counselors, janitors, school psychologists, administrators, social workers, administrative assistants, bus drivers, coaches, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and other related personnel

appropriate decision making must guide our planning and implementation.

As such, our restart will be more than "flipping a switch" to turn school back on. For example, consider the following **current and anticipated conditions**:

- Students, families, and educators have experienced multiple disruptions to instruction. On-going or fluctuating needs may continue to cause disruptions for students, families, and educators throughout the next year.
- Gaps among students will be larger than ever before due to disruptions in and unequal access to instruction. Although some students may have maintained or increased skills during remote learning, many students, especially students with or at risk for disabilities, may have experienced interruptions in access and needed social, emotional, behavioral, and/or academic supports.
- The structure of school may be different with environmental changes to enable physical distancing, practices for keeping safe and healthy, and variations of remote, hybrid, and in-person learning.
- Requirements to wear masks and maintain physical distance may make it harder to establish positive connections when educators and students are together.
- Early career educators may have experienced interruptions in their pre-service and induction support, and may enter the field at a critical time with less preparation.
- Resources (budget, time) may be limited, affecting (a) availability of training, coaching, and technical assistance and (b) educators' roles and responsibilities (e.g., coach re-assigned to classroom). Requirements to modify space to ensure physical distance may further tax resources.
- There may be greater emphasis on using new practices and less emphasis on developing systems to support educators in implementing effective practices correctly and consistently.

Given these conditions, we must deliberately (re)arrange teaching and learning environments within an MTSS framework so (a) all students experience vibrant, positive, and constructive adult and peer relationships; (b) students who are at risk for academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral difficulties proactively receive increased and targeted supported; and (c) students with disabilities or other significant academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral challenges receive intensive and individualized supports to promote positive and equitable outcomes for all students.

Guiding Principles

Our recommendations are grounded in the **core elements of PBIS/MTSS** (*Figure 1*).

- Prioritize **equity**. MTSS is for all students, families, and educators. Use the MTSS framework to differentiate supports for students, and monitor to ensure equitable outcomes are observed.
- Make student growth and benefit central to all decisions. Student **outcomes** that reflect equitable learning opportunities must be the ultimate criteria for all decisions, including those related to funding, practice selection and implementation (see Hexagon Tool[7]), policy, and professional development.
- Prioritize the most efficient and effective **practices**. Emphasize practices that are supported by evidence, match the local culture and current context, and promote high-quality implementation across time. Integrate, align, and connect practices within domains: (a) effective environments, instruction, and intervention to support social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) growth and (b) high leverage academic instruction to support student learning. If a new practice is identified, consider evidence, contextual fit, and feasibility (see Hexagon Tool[8]). Most importantly, do a few important and relevant practices well, that is, with the high degree of accuracy, fluency, durability, and adaptability.
- Use **data** to inform decisions about (a) which students, families, and educators need which supports (screening); (b) continuing, adjusting, or fading supports for students, families, and educators (progress monitoring); (c) ensuring all students, families, and educators experience benefit (equitable outcomes); and (d) supports are being implemented with fidelity.
- Continue to invest in **systems** to support high-fidelity implementation across time. Leverage existing leadership teams to guide planning and implementation, and consider efficient and effective means to support educators' professional learning and wellness within current resources, experience, and expertise.

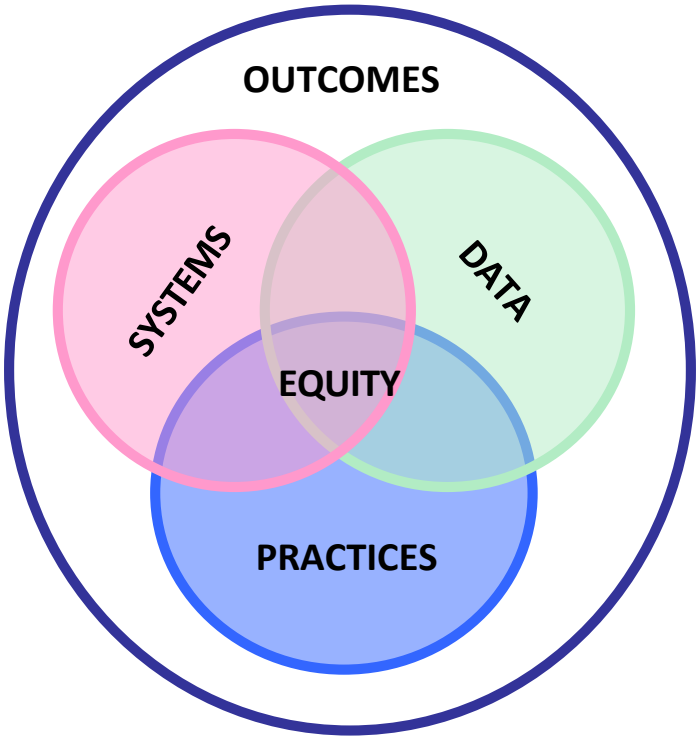

Figure 1. Core elements

Rationale

Given this context, we see a strong rationale for (1) providing support throughout the implementation cascade, (2) leveraging what works in existing systems, and (3) going back to basics by focusing on a small number of practices that have the biggest impact and

doing them well.

1. Provide Support Throughout the Implementation Cascade

As stated, the ultimate goal of support is student growth and benefit. To realize that benefit, consider how to provide support throughout the implementation cascade. **State** and regional leadership teams coordinate training, coaching, and evaluation to support all districts within the state. **District** leadership teams provide training, coaching, and evaluation to support all schools within the district. **School** leadership teams provide on-going coaching to support educators and monitor their implementation of key practices in **classrooms** that ultimately support **student** growth and benefit. At the same time, bi-directional communication creates feedback loops throughout the cascade; for example, educators learn from students and adjust or enhance their classroom practices; and districts communicate needs, resources, and lessons learned to inform state-level systems, as *Figure 2* illustrates.

This guide provides recommendations for schools and classrooms for leveraging existing systems (next section) to support implementation of critical practices (following section). A complete guide[9] that includes state, district, school, and classroom recommendations

Figure 2. Implementation cascade from district support to student benefit.

to support implementation of key practices is available on pbis.org.

2. Leverage Existing Systems

To maximize both benefit and efficiency, enhance and adjust existing systems to support implementation. As educators implementing MTSS/PBIS, the Implementation Blueprint[10] district/state capacity-building graphic[11] (*Figure 3*) may be a familiar organizational structure to consider both **executive team functions** (stakeholder engagement, funding and alignment, policy, and workforce capacity) and **implementation functions** (training, coaching, and evaluation) of leadership teams. We recommend state and district leadership teams enhance these elements throughout their response to the public health crisis.

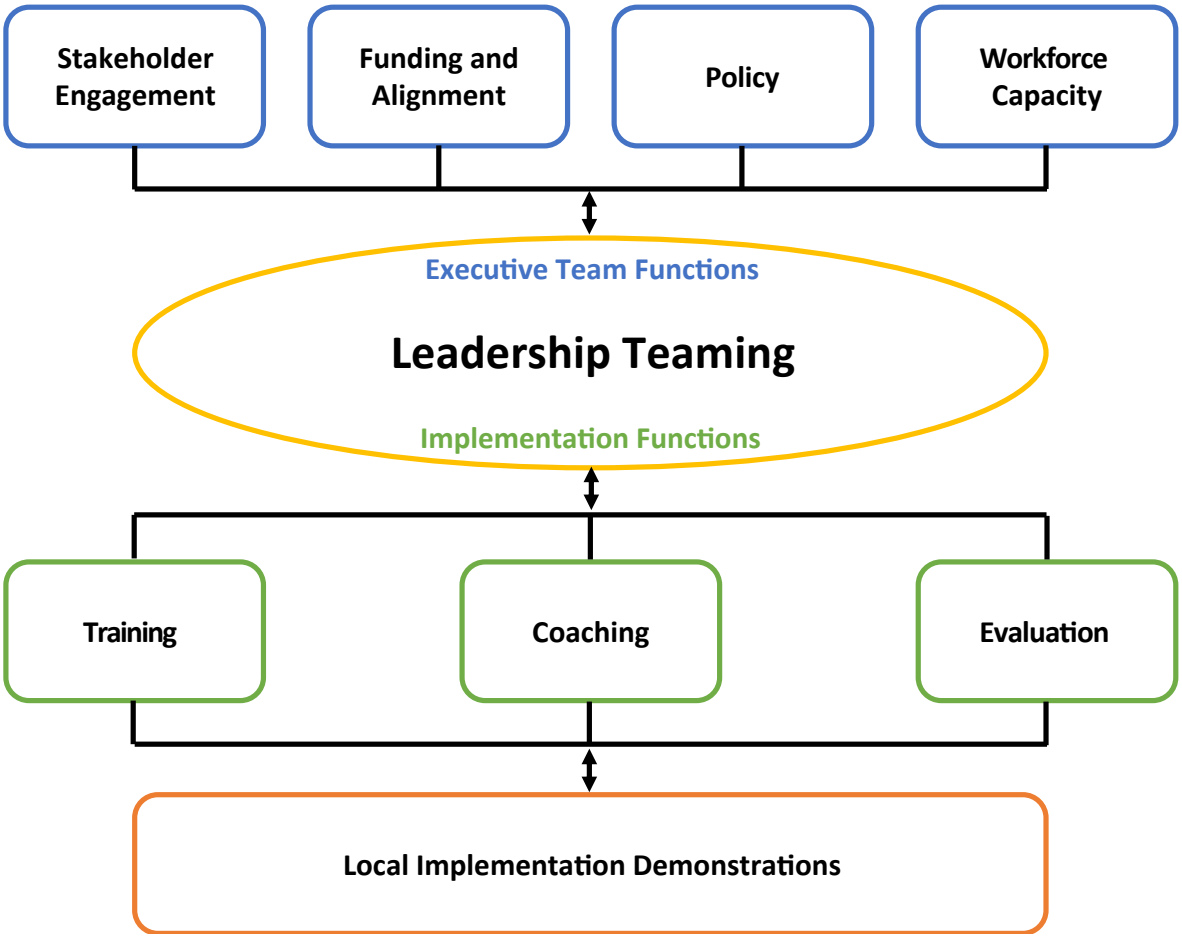

Figure 3. Implementation blueprint graphic.

In addition, we recommend that school leadership teams consider enhancements to their implementation functions (*Table 5*).

3. Back to Basics: Do What Works, and Do It Well

Given the challenging context, we recommend going "back to basics" by (a) focusing on a small number of evidence-based and culturally relevant practices, across social, emotional, behavioral (SEB) and academic domains, that have an equitable and big impact and (b) doing them well. *Figure 4* illustrates the importance of key Tier 1 practice features to create positive, predictable, and safe learning environments that support students' SEB and academic growth.

Specifically, we recommend that educators connect, screen, support, teach, and monitor.

- **Connect.** Enhance **relationships** among educators, students, and families to promote **effective communication** during times of disrupted learning.

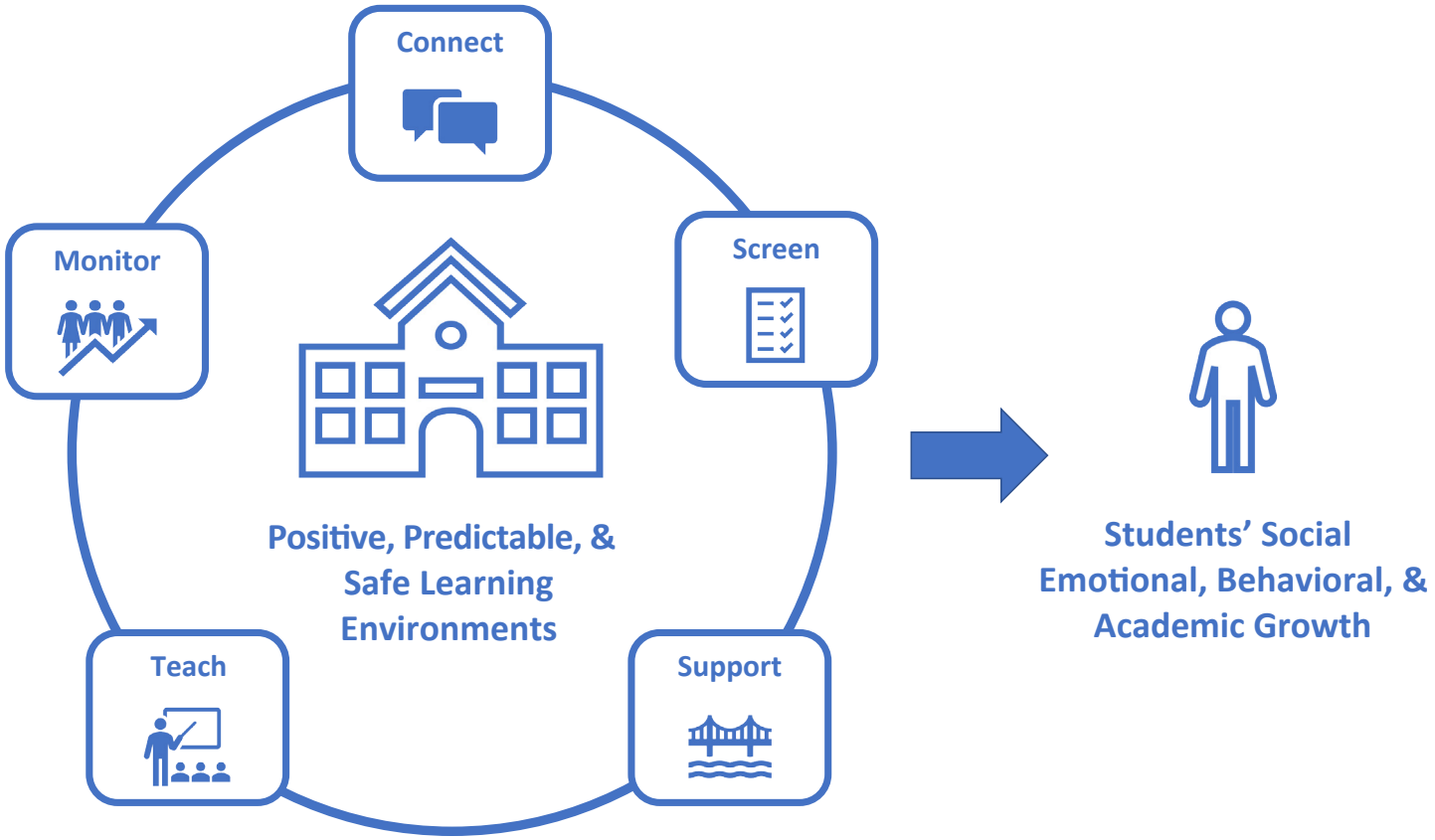

Figure 4. Critical practices to support students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic growth

Check in with students daily and with families regularly to identify support needs as they emerge.

- **Screen.** Formally or informally **screen** to efficiently identify students who need more support (related to health, safety, SEB needs, academic concerns). For students who require additional support, **differentiate and intensify** Tier 1 and consider Tier 2 or Tier 3 (see Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity[12]).
- **Support.** Establish a **safe environment** (in class and/or online). Teach, prompt, and acknowledge **predictable routines**, **positive expectations** and **SEB skills**. Bridge expectations (teach connections) across settings (e.g., home, school, community).
- **Teach.** Effectively **teach and prompt** critical **academic** skills, and actively **engage** students in learning. Prompt and reinforce expectations and SEB skills throughout instruction. Provide **positive and supportive feedback** to support skill development.
- **Monitor.** Continue to **monitor** implementation and safety, health, SEB, and academic needs to (a) **enhance** supports for all students and (b) **identify** students who require more support (Tier 2 or Tier 3) over time. Match the intensity of monitoring to the intensity of need.

Table 1 highlights specific examples of practices and strategies in two key domains: (a) effective (positive, predictable, and safe) environments, instruction, and intervention to support social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) growth and (b) high leverage academic instruction and intervention to support student learning. Included practices are practical, usable, doable, and easy to implement. *Table 5* and *Table 8* provide examples of these practices during remote and in-person learning at the school and classroom levels, respectively.

Critical Practices	Examples of Practices to Support	
	Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth	**Student Learning**
Connect	• Use **positive greetings at the door**[13] (or at login for remote learning) • Regularly **check-in** with students and families, and adapt check-in during periods of remote instruction[14] • Build **relationships** with students, among peers, and with families[15] through purposeful communication	• Provide structured **opportunities** for students to use language throughout the day in pairs, small groups, and in whole-class settings to promote connection and oral language development • **Connect** with families regularly to discuss and address issues together
Screen	• Select and implement a **SEB screener**[16] or develop procedures for informal screening (e.g., extant data, family wellness check) • Regularly **review data** in school-wide team meetings to make decisions, based on level of risk and other data, to **differentiate and/or intensify** Tier 1[17], Tier 2[18], or Tier 3[19] support	• Establish a **universal screening protocol**[20] to screen all students for learning difficulties • Select and implement **academic screening measures**,[21] with established technical adequacy,[22] to identify students for intervention or monitoring • Implement consistent data team meetings, as part of a **decision-making process**,[23] to review screening data, group students appropriately, and **differentiate and intensify** instruction as needed
Support	• Design **safe environments** (e.g., physical distance, planned pathways) • Develop and teach **predictable routines** • Use a **matrix** (see *Table 7*) to define, teach, and prompt **positive expectations** and key SEB skills within routines for in-person[24] or remote[25] instruction (also see Supporting and Responding to Behavior[26]) • Maintain a **5:1 ratio** (5 positive comments for each negative comment), and consider other strategies, like the student/teacher game[27], to **acknowledge** student behavior	• Ensure that the **master schedule** allocates sufficient time for key academic instruction, including high quality classroom instruction for all students and supplemental small-group or individualized intervention for students that need additional academic support • Incorporate academic routines in **matrix** • Set, visibly post, and refer to **learning goals and objectives** for all important facets of instruction

Critical Practices	Examples of Practices to Support	
	Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth	**Student Learning**
Teach	• Begin each lesson with a **positive reminder** of expected behavior and SEB skills • **Prioritize** key SEB skills to emphasize • Purposefully **integrate instruction** in SEB and academic skills[28] • Actively **engage students**[29] in instruction • Ensure instruction and support is culturally responsive,[30] incorporates student voice,[31] and promotes active civic engagement	• **Prioritize** key academic skills • Explicitly teach **background knowledge** to set up for the lesson • Provide **explicit and systematic instruction**[32] at a brisk pace that includes (a) teacher demonstrations, (b) clear and explicit language, and (c) multiple and varied opportunities for all students to respond and participate • Engage a **gradual release** of responsibility (I do, we do, you do), and provide sufficient guided practice before releasing students to work independently • Provide consistent, supportive, and corrective **feedback** during instruction
Monitor	• Collect and use simple **data** to monitor student engagement and SEB skills • Regularly **review** data to (a) adjust Tier 1[33] support (if needed) or (b) consider additional supports (Tier 2[34] or Tier 3[35]) for students with limited skill growth or interfering behavior	• Throughout instruction, elicit frequent student group and individual responses to **monitor comprehension** of lesson content • Regularly collect and **review progress monitoring**[36] data, and use data to inform instructional decision making, including adjusting tiers of instruction, group size, instructional time, instructional content, and instructional delivery

Note: SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 1. Descriptions and examples of critical practices to support students' social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) growth and learning.

Putting it All Together: Using the Guide

In the rest of this guide, we provide tips to enhance existing action plans at the school (*Table 5*,* *Table 6*,* and *Table 7**), and classroom levels (*Table 8**) to support implementation of key practices. (Note that separate focused guides for state, district, and school are also available at pbis.org.)

We recognize that preparing for next year will occur in phases, and learning will take a variety of forms (from in-person to remote, and everything in between) on a variety of schedules (from all to a few students in each form of learning at any point in time), based on guidance from national, state, and local health officials. Consider the phase of the year (prior to, during, or after initial return to school) and type of instruction (remote, hybrid, or in-person) as you view the tables to focus on the most relevant information for your current needs. We conclude with additional considerations for this challenging time in our educational history. Consider the following questions to choose where to start:

- How can we enhance our school action plan to support each phase of our return to school?
- How can my school support implementation of critical practices?
- How can I support implementation of critical practices in my classroom?

* Table numbers are retained from the complete guide; therefore, tables are NOT numbered continuously in this abbreviated guide.

Guidance for School Leadership Teams

At the **school level**, the goal is to provide on-going support and coaching to educators. School leadership teams monitor implementation fidelity and outcomes to support educators in implementing key practices intentionally and at an intensity that students benefit. *Table 5* presents considerations for enhancing, adjusting, or adapting school-level leadership teaming, key implementation functions, and local demonstration examples throughout the school year. (School teams rely on district leadership for executive team functions.).

Critical Systems	Key Considerations	Prior to Return to School	Initial Return to School	After Initial Return to School
Leadership Teaming	Consider whether your school leadership team includes members with all relevant areas of **expertise** (e.g., health and safety, mental health, school-based behavioral health, school nursing, academic content expertise, special education, IT). Use **effective team meeting** approaches (e.g., Team Initiated Problem Solving [TIPS],[37] plan-do-study-act [PDSA][38]) to maximize the effectiveness of remote and in-person team meetings, prioritize team-based and data-driven **decision making**, and maintain an **action plan** to prompt key implementation steps.	• Identify and onboard new team members who may be more critical in this new context (e.g., health and safety, mental health, school-based behavioral health, school nursing, academic content expertise, special education, IT) • Consider revisiting team norms related to group decision making and communication routines • Revisit vision and mission to ensure they communicate clear, focused, and relevant messages related current context (e.g., equity, safety, positive and predictable environment, clear academic goals)	• Maintain effective teaming practices • Consider increasing frequency of team meetings to support the need to review, monitor, adjust, or enhance existing practices or potentially implement new practices and systems (consider Hexagon Tool[39]) to address rapidly changing needs • Monitor team member wellness and redistribute action plan items as needed	• Maintain effective teaming practices • Plan for team member turn over and regularly assess membership needs to ensure adequate representation and effective teaming practice • Monitor team member wellness and redistribute action plan items as needed

Note: IT = information technology; MTSS = multi-tiered systems of support; PDSA = plan-do-study-act; SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 5. Considerations for school-level implementation of key systems to support educators and students across the timeline of crisis response and recovery.

Guidance for School Leadership Teams *continued*

Critical Systems	Key Considerations	Prior to Return to School	Initial Return to School	After Initial Return to School
Training	(Re)establish a **professional development plan**,[40] and consider training **topics** all staff may need to support students during the return to school year, including training in key practices (*Table 6*), health and safety, and related topics. Consider **flexible training methods** (e.g., remote and in-person).	• Consider lessons learned during Spring 2020 (e.g., expanded expectations matrix, connections with students and families) to inform selection, training, and implementation of key practices • Coordinate with district to provide PD to all staff in key areas (e.g., IT, physically distanced requirements, relationship building in virtual environments) • Provide training in short recorded snapshots to accommodate staff who may not be able to participate in live training events	• Provide ongoing job-embedded professional development activities for all staff, focusing on evidence-based practices and programs • Provide access to previously recorded training snapshots • Provide plan for how educators may access additional professional learning opportunities	• Review training capacity to ensure that training is provided on topics related to "current normal" and/or if there are emerging skill develop needs that should be addressed (consider implementation fidelity data) • Provide educators access to additional professional learning opportunities in flexible formats
Coaching	Consider **flexible coaching approaches**[41] to support implementation of key practices, including remote coaching, peer-to-peer support, or self-management, given the potential for disruptions to traditional coaching models and restricted resources.	• Develop coaching capacity in new key areas to ensure coaches have content knowledge needed to support implementation upon return to school • Develop coaching plans to be implemented in the fall	• Implement coaching plans • Assess implementation and adjust as needed • Provide resources and tools for coaching, with guidance for more focused coaching for educators who are in new positions or serving different functions than in the past	• Adjust coaching practices based on implementation and staff wellness/need • Continue to assess and build coaching capacity to support any new practices or systems

Note: IT = information technology; MTSS = multi-tiered systems of support; PDSA = plan-do-study-act; SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 5. Considerations for school-level implementation of key systems to support educators and students across the timeline of crisis response and recovery.

Guidance for School Leadership Teams *continued*

Critical Systems	Key Considerations	Prior to Return to School	Initial Return to School	After Initial Return to School
Evaluation	(Re)establish an **evaluation plan**[42] to **collect and closely monitor** data on health, safety, social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs and outcomes alongside fidelity and capacity data; to (a) identify students, family, educators, and schools that require additional support, (b) evaluate the fidelity and outcomes of support, and (c) drive data-based adjustments to maximize benefit for all during remote and in-person learning. Consider Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)[43] and Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory,[44] with the Interconnected Systems Framework Companion Guide[45] to assess fidelity.	• (Re)establish and enhance data calendar to monitor transition and support continuous PDSA cycles[46], including consideration that capacity and fidelity may change throughout the year • Focus on evaluating immediate staff and student wellness and needs • Adapt previous evaluation strategies to context of return to school • Clarify what data are most necessary to guide effective implementation and successful outcomes • Expand data routines and systems as needed, and ensure process is in place to examine and act on disaggregated data[47] (by race, gender, and disability) to promote equity	• Use data calendar to monitor transition and support continuous PDSA cycles • Focus on evaluating implementation fidelity of new key practices • Provide supports and resources to screen students who may need more intensive academic and/or non-academic supports • Apply MTSS logic to differentiate support to schools based on need • Examine disaggregated data, review with school leadership teams, and ensure action steps are in place to promote equity for all students	• Use data calendar to monitor transition and support continuous PDSA cycles • Focus on evaluating impact of new key practices and ensuring equity of access and outcomes • Adjust training and coaching supports as needed • Consider new or refined practices when indicated by data • Apply MTSS logic to differentiate support to schools based on need • Examine disaggregated data, review with school leadership teams, and ensure action steps are in place to promote equity for all students
Local Implementation Demonstrations	Highlight local **classroom-based examples** of educators effectively supporting students, including effective implementation of key practices during in-person and remote-instruction, integration and alignment of support, and using data to drive decisions.	• Identify classrooms that have adjusted supports for effective implementation of SEB and academic MTSS, and share with other districts and schools	• Identify classrooms that demonstrate successful initial return to school implementation of MTSS in any or all areas of academic or SEB support • Emphasize practices that promote staff and student wellness and relationships	• Identify classrooms that demonstrate success in after the initial return to school implementation of MTSS in either or all areas of academic or SEB supports • Focus on exemplars that demonstrate equitable access and outcomes

Note: IT = information technology; MTSS = multi-tiered systems of support; PDSA = plan-do-study-act; SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 5. Considerations for school-level implementation of key systems to support educators and students across the timeline of crisis response and recovery.

Return to beginning

Guidance for School Leadership Teams *continued*

Table 6 presents considerations for **school-level action steps** to support implementation of critical practices. Recognizing that some schools may plan to resume the year in remote, in-person, and/or hybrid models, we provided overall considerations, examples for remote learning, and examples for in-person learning. When hybrid models occur, prioritize actions from each context that maximize strengths of that mode of instruction.

Critical Practices	Considerations for All Environments	Examples for Remote Learning	Examples for In-Person Learning
Connect	• Ensure school-based educators regularly check-in with all students and families (before school year resumes and throughout the year) • Use asset-based language that highlights student strengths in ways that promote physical, cultural, intellectual, social, and emotional safety and inclusion • Provide families with accessible information in various formats about the tiered instruction and intervention system, resources on how to support their children's academic development,[48] and regular opportunities to discuss and address issues together	• Encourage families to motivate and monitor their students' learning • Ensure teachers respectfully and effectively communicate with families while considering background, language, culture, and other relevant contextual factors of the family • Regularly connect with families (e.g., email or phone) to promote successful distance learning experiences for families • Ensure special educators, related service providers, and other student support personnel also check in with students and families to provide support • Modify positive greetings at the door[49] to "positive greetings at login" to ensure each student starts instruction with a positive interaction	• Maintain active bi-directional communication with families during in-person learning to reduce the impact of disruptions • Use established communication method to answer families' questions or concerns and for making any adaptation due to their family situation • Develop a template for families to use to ask questions or report concerns • Set expectation for peer collaboration, in a safe (physically distant) manner, to support SEB and academic development • Adopt positive greetings at the door[50] as an approach to ensure each student starts with a positive interaction and provide quick daily check-in

Note: IT = information technology; MTSS = multi-tiered systems of support; PDSA = plan-do-study-act; SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 6. School considerations for supporting implementation of key practices, with examples during periods of remote and in-person instruction.

Guidance for School Leadership Teams *continued*

Critical Practices	Considerations for All Environments	Examples for Remote Learning	Examples for In-Person Learning
Screen	• Implement informal and/or formal screening protocol specified by district • Prioritize screening during first weeks of school, and repeat regularly throughout the year • Review screening data during regular (in person or virtual) grade-level and school-wide team meetings to identify students who require additional support	• Identify students and families who have not been in contact • Provide guidance and access to tools/ resources for screening process in remote learning platform • Evaluate fidelity of implementation of remote learning practices for academic and SEB content within MTSS • Implement district plan for screening during remote learning	• Communicate and support screening procedures and schedule determine by district • Provide guidance and access to tools/ resources for screening process in-person learning platform
Support	• Establish a safe, positive, and predictable environment (physical design to promote safety, predictable routines, positive expectations) within a PBIS framework • Crosswalk home, school, and community expectations (see Appendix D of Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide[51]) to bridge expectations across environments • Revisit and revise matrices and lesson plans as needed (see example in *Table 7*) • Revisit and revise school-wide recognition plan to acknowledge appropriate behavior and response plan for challenging behavior for remote, hybrid, and in-person learning • Update safety and crisis plan to reflect new requirements for remote and in-person learning	• Communicate priority to implement integrated approach for academic and social/ emotional/behavioral practices • Adapt PBIS teaching matrix for remote instruction,[52] and explicitly teach predictable routines and positive expectations for remote learning • Adjust school-wide recognition system to accommodate remote learning environments • Maintain a 5:1 positive to corrective ratio for each student	• (Re)teach expectations in the context of school-wide routines at the beginning of the year and following each period of disrupted learning • Consistently prompt and remind new and difficult routines • Enhance recognition for critical health and safety behaviors (e.g., hand washing, maintaining safe distance, wearing mask) and key SEB skills • Monitor fidelity and effectiveness of in-person supports • Maintain a 5:1 positive to corrective ratio for each student

Note: IT = information technology; MTSS = multi-tiered systems of support; PDSA = plan-do-study-act; SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 6. School considerations for supporting implementation of key practices, with examples during periods of remote and in-person instruction.

Guidance for School Leadership Teams *continued*

Critical Practices	Considerations for All Environments	Examples for Remote Learning	Examples for In-Person Learning
Teach	• Develop or refine school-wide academic MTSS plan • Within grade-level teams, identify key skills in each domain (academic, SEB) • Support teachers in using high-leverage academic practices and evidence-based programs and tools to maximize learning, and integrate SEB and academic support • Support teachers in providing specific feedback to encourage learners to use and develop their SEB and academic skills	• Provide educators with access to curriculum modified for remote learning • Provides educators with guidance on how to provide and differentiate explicit and systematic academic instruction and intervention remotely • Provide educators with access to professional learning opportunities (e.g., training, coaching) for remote learning instruction • Provide educators with opportunities for grade level, department level and/or cross-school collaboration	• Provide educators with access to curriculum with focus on key skills necessary for student success • Provide educators with access to professional learning opportunities (e.g., training, coaching) that focus on high leverage practices to promote academic and SEB skills • Provide educators with opportunities to collaborate in support of cross-class groupings of students to maximize focused learning
Monitor	• Regularly review data to monitor students' academic and SEB progress, in accordance with district plan, during periods of remote and/or in-person learning • Utilize instructional coaches or a peer coaching model to support learning in remote classrooms and build cohesion among grade level teams	• Implement district plan for virtual progress monitoring[53] • In virtual grade-level and school-wide teams, review progress monitoring data to (a) adjust instruction and intervention and (b) identify students who require more support • Evaluate fidelity of implementation of remote learning practices for academic and SEB content within MTSS	• Implement district plan for progress monitoring • In grade-level and school-wide teams, review progress monitoring data to (a) adjust instruction and intervention and (b) identify students who require more support • Evaluate fidelity of implementation of in-person learning practices for academic and SEB content within MTSS

Note: IT = information technology; MTSS = multi-tiered systems of support; PDSA = plan-do-study-act; SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 6. School considerations for supporting implementation of key practices, with examples during periods of remote and in-person instruction.

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Guidance for School Leadership Teams *continued*

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS	CONTEXT/SETTING				
	Hallway	Classroom	Bus	Online Group	Online Independent
Respect	• Smile with your eyes and wave to acknowledge adults & peers • Use kind language	• Greet adults & peers at beginning & end of activity • Use kind language	• Talk kindly to students sitting in your area • Wait turn to board/exit	• Mute when listening • Use kind language	• Take turns if others waiting • Wear headphones
Responsibility	• Maintain 6' (big) personal space bubble • Take care of your materials as you transition in the hallway	• Stay in assigned spot to maintain 6' distance • Do your best • Engage in learning	• Let bus driver know if unsafe behavior seen • Sit in assigned seat & maintain distance	• Log-in/off on-time • Actively participate • Have materials ready for each lesson/activity	• Stay engaged • Keep device charged • Ask for help (via email, chat, or with help of a parent) when you're stuck
Safety	• Wear mask • Follow 1-way direction arrows	• Wear mask • Disinfect desk/table before & after use	• Wear mask • Disinfect seat • Keep hands to self	• Keep password private • Let teacher know if private chat is inappropriate	• Disinfect keyboard & mouse • Take short breaks from your seat and screen
All Context & Settings	• Model & prompt expected behavior • Provide positive & informative (i.e., behavior, context) feedback when expected behavior observed • Pre-teach expected behavior before entering problem setting /contexts • Re-teach when expected behavior when not observed • Intensify supports for chronic problem settings/contexts				

Table 7. Example school teaching matrix of expectations within routines/settings.

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Guidance for Educators

At the **classroom level**, educators implement key practices across academic, social, emotional, and behavioral domains in an integrated manner. Teachers monitor their own implementation and outcomes of students in their classroom to ensure they are implementing key practices intentionally and at an intensity that students benefit. Before the school year, plan ahead (e.g., develop communication plan, revise teaching matrix); and continue to monitor and adjust/enhance supports based on changing context and data throughout the year (see school table for additional suggestions). Recognizing that some schools may plan to resume the year in remote, in-person, and/or hybrid models, we provided overall considerations, examples for remote learning, and examples for in-person learning. When hybrid models occur, prioritize actions from each context that maximize strengths of that mode of instruction. *Table 8* presents considerations for classroom action steps to support implementation of key practices.

Critical Practices	Considerations for All Environments	Examples for Remote Learning	Examples for In-Person Learning
Connect	• Regularly communicate with students and families to build **positive relationships** and enable collaboration throughout the year. • Provide opportunities for students to **communicate and collaborate** with each other to develop and/or enhance positive peer relationships during remote, hybrid, or in-person instruction • Use **asset-based language** that highlights student strengths in ways that promote physical, cultural, intellectual, social and emotional safety and inclusion	• Check in 1:1 with student and their family regularly, and consider a variety of communication tools (e.g., social media, email, videos from teachers) • Provide clear, consistent, accessible ways for communicating with students and families, including structures for outgoing communication, incoming communication, and two-way communication, so that students and families can predict where and how communication will occur • Keep consistent routines, schedules, and methods for participating in remote learning • Provide structured opportunities for students to interact with teachers and peers to promote connection and oral language development • Modify positive greetings at the door[54] to "positive greetings at login" to ensure each student starts instruction with a positive interaction	• Positively greet students at the door as they enter the classroom and provide brief reminders of routines/expectations • Provide opportunities for students to use language throughout the day in pairs, small groups, and in whole-class settings to promote connection and oral language development • Maintain active bi-directional communication with families during in-person learning to reduce the impact of disruptions • Use positive greetings at the door[55] to ensure each student starts with a positive interaction and provide quick daily check-in

SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 8. Educator considerations for implementing key practices, with examples during periods of remote and in-person instruction.

Guidance for Educators *continued*

Critical Practices	Considerations for All Environments	Examples for Remote Learning	Examples for In-Person Learning
Screen	• Implement **district screening plan** • Use a rapid and strategic approach to address student needs in order to promote student progress and success • Increase support based on magnitude of student need	• Implement district screening plan for remote learning • Use formal and informal methods to identify students who require additional or intensified supports • Virtually collaborate with grade-level and school-wide teams to identify students who require additional support	• Use existing screening assessments and procedures identified through the school and district to screen students for SEB and academic need • Collaborate with grade-level and school-wide teams to identify students who require additional support
Support	• Arrange the classroom to create a **safe environment** for learning and incorporate considerations of current context of new normal • Teach, prompt, and acknowledge positive classroom **expectations** in the context of predictable **routines** • Maintain a **5:1 ratio** of positive to corrective feedback	• Adapt PBIS teaching matrix for remote instruction,[56] and explicitly teach predictable routines and positive expectations for remote learning • At the start of each learning activity, prompt or remind students of expectations for that routine • Monitor ratio of positive to corrective feedback (maintain or exceed a 5:1 positive to corrective ratio) for each student • Collect informal data on student engagement to inform instruction	• (Re)teach expectations in the context of classroom and school-wide routines at the beginning of the year and following each period of disrupted learning • Consistently prompt and remind new and difficult routines • Enhance recognition for critical health and safety behaviors (e.g., hand washing, maintaining safe distance, wearing mask) and key SEB skills • Monitor ratio of positive to corrective feedback (maintain or exceed a 5:1 positive to corrective ratio) for each student

SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 8. Educator considerations for implementing key practices, with examples during periods of remote and in-person instruction.

Guidance for Educators *continued*

Critical Practices	Considerations for All Environments	Examples for Remote Learning	Examples for In-Person Learning
Teach	• Focus instruction on the **key academic and SEB skills** needed at this time to improve competency. Teach important vocabulary and provide examples of what words are and are not. Also use rules that students can apply to better understand concepts • Consider a **lesson plan** format that **facilitates integration** of key academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills (e.g., prompt expected behavior at start of each academic routine, teach critical SEB skills prior to cooperative group work) • Provide frequent opportunities for students to respond (**actively engage** students during instruction) • Ensure that students receive informational **feedback** that is positive and reinforces competency	• Adapt instruction for remote learning platform, still ensuring pre-requite skills are taught before new skills are addressed • Use a gradual release of responsibility to introduce new content (I do, we do, you do), and promote learning by presenting the construct, rationale, multiple examples/non-examples, rules for understanding, practice with the content, check for understanding, and remediation when additional learning is needed • Use a variety of methods to engage learners, such as electronic thumbs-up/thumbs-down, polling options, chat box • Use verbal and written methods to provide positive and constructive feedback to promote student growth	• Follow guidance in curriculum, and teach prerequisite skills before new skills are addressed • Use a gradual release of responsibility to introduce new content (I do, we do, you do), and promote learning by presenting the construct, rationale, multiple examples/non-examples, rules for understanding, practice with the content, check for understanding, and remediation when additional learning is needed • Use variety of methods such as choral responding, response cards, thumbs-up/thumbs-down • Provide specific positive feedback that is timely, understandable, and directly describes what the response was and why it was appropriate
Monitor	• Regularly **review data** to monitor students' academic and SEB progress, in accordance with district plan, during periods of remote and/or in-person learning • Use assessments and procedures that monitor student progress and also provide information for intervention effectiveness and intervention modification	• Frequently reviewing various data sources to inform academic and SEB supports of remote learning, and match the features of intervention to identified student need • Implement district plan for virtual progress monitoring[57] • Collaborate with virtual grade-level and school-wide teams to review progress monitoring data to (a) adjust instruction and intervention and (b) identify students who require more support	• Frequently reviewing various data sources to inform academic and SEB supports of in-person learning, and match the features of intervention to identified student need • Implement district plan for progress monitoring • Collaborate with grade-level and school-wide teams to review progress monitoring data to (a) adjust instruction and intervention and (b) identify students who require more support

SEB = social, emotional, behavioral

Table 8. Educator considerations for implementing key practices, with examples during periods of remote and in-person instruction.

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Additional Considerations

Build on strengths. Consider potential protective factors that may benefit students, including family involvement, key knowledge and skills, connections to school, positive relationships with teachers and staff,[58] and positive peer relationships,[59] and work with schools to build supports to enhance those. For example, suggest schools develop plans to strengthen family connections, proactively teach key academic and behavioral routines needed for success, maintain relationships between staff and students (consider identifying preferred adults vs assuming assigned teacher is preferred) and develop new staff/student relationships that will facilitate transition back to school (e.g., introduce new grade level teacher), and maintain supportive peer relationships and consider ways to develop new protective peer relationships to support transition back (e.g., introduce new classmates).

Differentiate transition supports for students who need targeted or intensive support. As schools to consider young students (e.g., pre-K or K) who have not experienced transitions between teachers and classrooms, consider students changing schools in the absence of traditional transition activities (e.g., students moving up from elementary to middle or middle to high school), and consider students with known or anticipated challenges as they develop their transition plans including students with intensive behavioral needs[60].

Promote positive and effective school climates. When students are able to return to in-person school, a primary focus will understandably be health and safety. However, to support health and safety efforts and create a positive and effective school climate, district leaders can leverage their PBIS/MTSS framework and "double down" on positive and proactive supports. This is a time for schools to re-teach and re-emphasize positively stated expectations, provide reminders, increase acknowledgement for appropriate behavior. Engage in activities that foster relationships between and among educators, students, and families. In addition, districts may help schools anticipate concerns with bias or disrespect. Support schools in developing a plan to explicitly teach respect and directly respond to instances of bias related to race, illness history, health condition, disability, or related issues that are heightened in the current context by (a) teaching[61]

students an effective "stop" response, how to respond if they observe bias, and how to disengage and (c) providing support for educators to teach, prompt, and respond to bias in a swift, instructionally-focused way.

Maximize benefits of in-person instruction. Because in-person instruction may be limited, the time together will be precious. Clearly communicate the need to be intentional with instruction, and provide district guidance that (a) emphasizes key SEB and academic skills to be taught; (b) supports educators in increasing the frequency, specificity, and intensity of instruction; and (c) ensures educators provide many opportunities for students to engage, practice, and receive feedback on key skills. Sequence and align practices within and across the tiers so that practices within each tier are implemented in a coordinated way, and transitions among tiers are seamless.

Plan for disruptions. Anticipate implementation gaps (due to individual absences, stay-at-home orders, etc.) and increase screening across time to identify changing risk status. Use screening data to organize needs and practices along a continuum, ensuring basic needs (e.g., safety, health, nutrition, shelter) are met first. Explicitly teach, practice, and reinforce skills that will enable educators, students, and families to navigate future disruptions. For example, if a district assigned a daily or weekly learning plan for students, use a similar format to communicate and assess homework. If educators used technology to facilitate remote learning, provide opportunities for students to practice using that technology for collaborative activities (e.g., collaboration with students in another school/classroom) during the school day. Anticipate, plan, and enact an equitable response and accommodations due to impact on vulnerable populations like students and staff with underlying medical conditions, students with disabilities for whom transitions are difficult, students with a history of more intense need (academic, behavioral, social-emotional, functional, technology) who may experience a greater number, duration, and/or impact of disruptions.

Only when needed to meet new or unique needs, select new evidence-based practices. A useful tool for use when considering whether to adopt a new program or practice is the Hexagon Tool[62] from the National Implementation Research Network. Use of this tool guides team discussion on the need, fit, capacity to implement, evidence, usability, and supports of the program or practice.

Consider integrity of and access to remote learning. Given the complexities of on-line learning, it is critical to consider (a) the integrity of instructional modification for on-line learning, platform, and technology infrastructure and (b) students' access to technology.

Integrity of instructional modification. Instructional modifications include changes made to typical instruction to accommodate remote learning (e.g., modifying instructional activities, procedures to be more conducive to on-line learning while staying true to the core features of the instructional strategy). To promote integrity, identify core features of the practice and create a variety of forms in which the core features are provided (e.g., touch screen with your finger rather than touch word on page in book).

Integrity of the online platform. The goal is to ensure that students can access and efficiently focus on material being presented and not unnecessary distractions on screen or background noise. Consider options to magnify words on screen, hide desktop background, and/or remove any graphic or wording on shared screen that is not relevant to lesson.

Integrity of technology infrastructure. In addition to considering how instruction is modified and the platform on which its delivered, consider the technology infrastructure (e.g., how do we adjust for video blips when streaming may lock up or the sound stammers or sound modulates when bandwidth is not sufficient). Provide frequent opportunities to respond to make sure each student is engaged and hearing/seeing the presented lesson. Have a routine for when computer may freeze and need to be restarted.

Access to technology. Given variability in access to technology and internet, consider ways to enhance and support access or provide a range of ways to access instruction (e.g., apps that may be opened on phones, tablets, or computers; reading materials accessible on-line or in print; learning packets available for pick-up or on google classroom; using free public radio or TV stations to deliver critical messages and content).

Embedded Hyperlinks

1. https://www.pbis.org
2. https://sisep.fpg.unc.edu
3. http://www.mtss.org
4. https://improvingliteracy.org
5. https://leadforliteracy.org
6. https://www.pbis.org/pbis/getting-started
7. https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/lesson-1-hexagon-tool
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9. https://www.pbis.org/resource/returning-to-school-during-and-after-crisis
10. https://www.pbis.org/resource/pbis-implementation-blueprint
11. https://www.pbis.org/topics/districtstate-pbis
12. https://intensiveintervention.org/taxonomy-intervention-intensity
13. https://www.pbis.org/resource/positive-greetings-at-the-door
14. https://www.pbis.org/resource/guidance-on-adapting-check-in-check-out-cico-for-distance-learning
15. https://www.pbis.org/resource/family-school-collaboration-in-positive-behavioral-interventions-and-supports-creating-a-school-atmosphere-to-promote-collaboration
16. https://www.pbis.org/resource/systematic-screening-tools-universal-behavior-screeners
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28. https://www.pbis.org/resource/classroom-integrated-academics-and-behavior-brief
29. https://www.pbis.org/resource/examples-of-engaging-instruction-to-increase-equity-in-education
30. https://www.pbis.org/resource/pbis-cultural-responsiveness-field-guide-resources-for-trainers-and-coaches
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progress-monitor

37. https://www.pbis.org/resource/pbis-forum-in-brief-tips

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