Equity-focused PBIS Approach Reduces Racial Inequities in School Discipline: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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U.S. Schools Using PBIS
August 2020

- 29,083 Schools Using PBIS
- >30% of all Schools
- 16,286,480 Students
Statistically Significant Outcomes of PBIS

- **Reduced problem behavior**
  (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Flannery et al., 2014; Gage et al., 2018; Horner et al., 2005; Metzler et al., 2001; Nelson, 1996; Nelson et al., 2002; Solomon et al., 2012)

- **Increased prosocial behavior**
  (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001; Nelson et al., 2002)

- **Improved emotional regulation**
  (Bradshaw et al., 2012)

- **Improved academic achievement**
  (Horner et al., 2009; Lassen, Steele, & Sailor, 2006; Nelson et al., 2002)

- **Improved perceptions of school safety**
  (Horner et al., 2009)

- **Improved organizational health**
  (Bradshaw et al., 2008)

Statistically Significant Outcomes of High School PBIS

- **Reduced problem behavior**
  (Bradshaw et al., in press; Flannery et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2015a)

- **Reduced alcohol and other drug use**
  (Bastable et al., 2015)

- **Improved attendance**
  (Flannery et al., 2020; Freeman et al., 2015b)

- **Improved student engagement**
  (Flannery et al., 2020)

“If you ran a hospital, but you were only known for serving people who are healthy, well, then you wouldn’t be a very good hospital.”

- Pedro Noguera

How inviting are our schools for every student?
Effects of PBIS on Disciplinary Equity

https://www.pbis.org/topics/equity

A 5-point Intervention Approach to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

https://www.pbis.org/topics/equity

5-point Intervention Approach

1. Collect, use, and report disaggregated discipline data
2. Implement a behavior framework that is preventive, multi-tiered, and culturally responsive
3. Use engaging academic instruction to reduce the opportunity (achievement) gap
4. Develop policies with accountability for disciplinary equity
5. Teach strategies to neutralize implicit bias

https://www.pbis.org/topics/equity
Effects of Equity-focused PBIS on Discipline Gaps

- Fox et al., in press
- Gion et al., 2020
- McIntosh et al., 2018
- McIntosh et al., in press
- Muldrew & Miller, 2021
- Payno-Simmons, in press
- Swain-Bradway et al., 2019

Project ReACT

- **Funding**
  - 3-year Institute of Education Sciences (IES) NCSER Development & Innovation Grant
- **Aim**
  - Develop and test an intervention to reduce racial disproportionality in school discipline
- **Intervention**
  - Professional development to achieve Racial equity, through
    - Assessing data to identify root causes
    - Culturally responsive behavior strategies
    - Training in strategies to neutralize implicit bias

Project ReACT Team

- **PIs/Developers**
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  - Erik Girvan
- **Methodologist**
  - Keith Smolkowski
- **Trainers/Developers**
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What is Project ReACT?

- Using the **PBIS framework** to use school discipline data to increase Racial equity through these steps:
  - Assess data to identify root causes
  - Culturally responsive behavior strategies
  - Teach about implicit bias and strategies to neutralize it
Assess data to identify root causes

- Assess racial inequities in:
  - Discipline data (e.g., ODR, ISS, OSS)
  - School climate perceptions
- Identify possible causes of inequities
  - Assess PBIS systems
    - Fidelity
    - Hidden biases in systems
  - Conduct surveys and walkthroughs
  - Identify VDPs and EDPs

What is a Vulnerable Decision Point (VDP)?

- A specific decision that is more vulnerable to effects of implicit bias
- Two parts:
  - Elements of the situation
  - The person’s decision state (internal state)

What is an Equitable Decision Point (EDP)?

- A specific decision situation that school data shows is not influenced by bias

SWIS Equity Report
www.pbisapps.org
SWIS Drill Down (www.swis.org)

Add demographic group of interest as a filter (click to “Include in Dataset”).

Click each graph and compare to overall patterns.

Using Local Data to Find VDPs

What is Project ReACT?

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Culturally responsive behavior strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEFINE</th>
<th>TEACH &amp; PRACTICE</th>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGE</th>
<th>RESPOND INSTRUCTIONALLY</th>
<th>MAKE DECISIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>school-wide expectations (i.e., social competencies)</td>
<td>expectations</td>
<td>prosocial behavior</td>
<td>to unwanted behavior</td>
<td>based on data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Expectations and matrix review
  - Obtain student & family input

- Personal Matrix activity
  - Student Neutralizing Routine

- Praise Preference Assessments
  - Positive greetings at the door

- Adult Neutralizing Routine
  - Wise feedback

- Review equity data at meetings
  - Assess fidelity of strategies
What is Project ReACT?

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  - Assess data to identify root causes
  - Culturally responsive behavior strategies
  - Teach about implicit bias and strategies to neutralize it

Neutralizing Routines for Reducing Effects of **Implicit Bias**

8 Elementary schools
- Rural Southeastern US
- Implementing PBIS with adequate fidelity
- Still experiencing racial disproportionality in school discipline
ReACT Professional Development Scope and Sequence

- **Day 1 (full day with SCHOOL PBIS TEAMS ONLY)**
  - Intro to Implicit Bias, data/VDP review, overview of CR strategies
- **Day 2 (full day)**
  - Intro to Implicit Bias, data/VDP review, CR strategies (e.g., neutralizing routines)
- **Day 3 (half day)**
  - Personal matrix (complete for self)
- **Day 4 (half day)**
  - Personal matrix review (students)
- **Day 5 (full day)**
  - Data/VDP review, OTRs, acknowledging positive behavior
- **Day 6 (half day)**
  - Data review, responding to unwanted behavior, maintenance plans

ReACT RCT Outcomes

**ODR Risk Index: Black Students**

- **ODR Risk Index**

ReACT RCT Outcomes

**ODR Black-Other Risk Ratio**


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