



# 3J - Strengthening Educator Learning in Rural Settings Through Regional Communities of Practice

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- **Topic:** District, State Schoolwide & Classroom PBIS
- **Keywords:** Rural, Implementation, Tier 1



# Learning Objectives

*Participants will:*

- 1. understand the strengths and barriers associated with PBIS rural implementation*
- 2. learn strategies to increase access to educator professional development*
- 3. recognize how building an educator community of practice can support educator efficacy, reduce burnout, and enhance retention*
- 4. be introduced to resources available through the Center on PBIS that support implementation of PBIS in rural settings*





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# Who's Here?



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# The Rural Reality

**28%**



Schools in  
rural locales

**19%**



Students in  
rural schools

**20%**



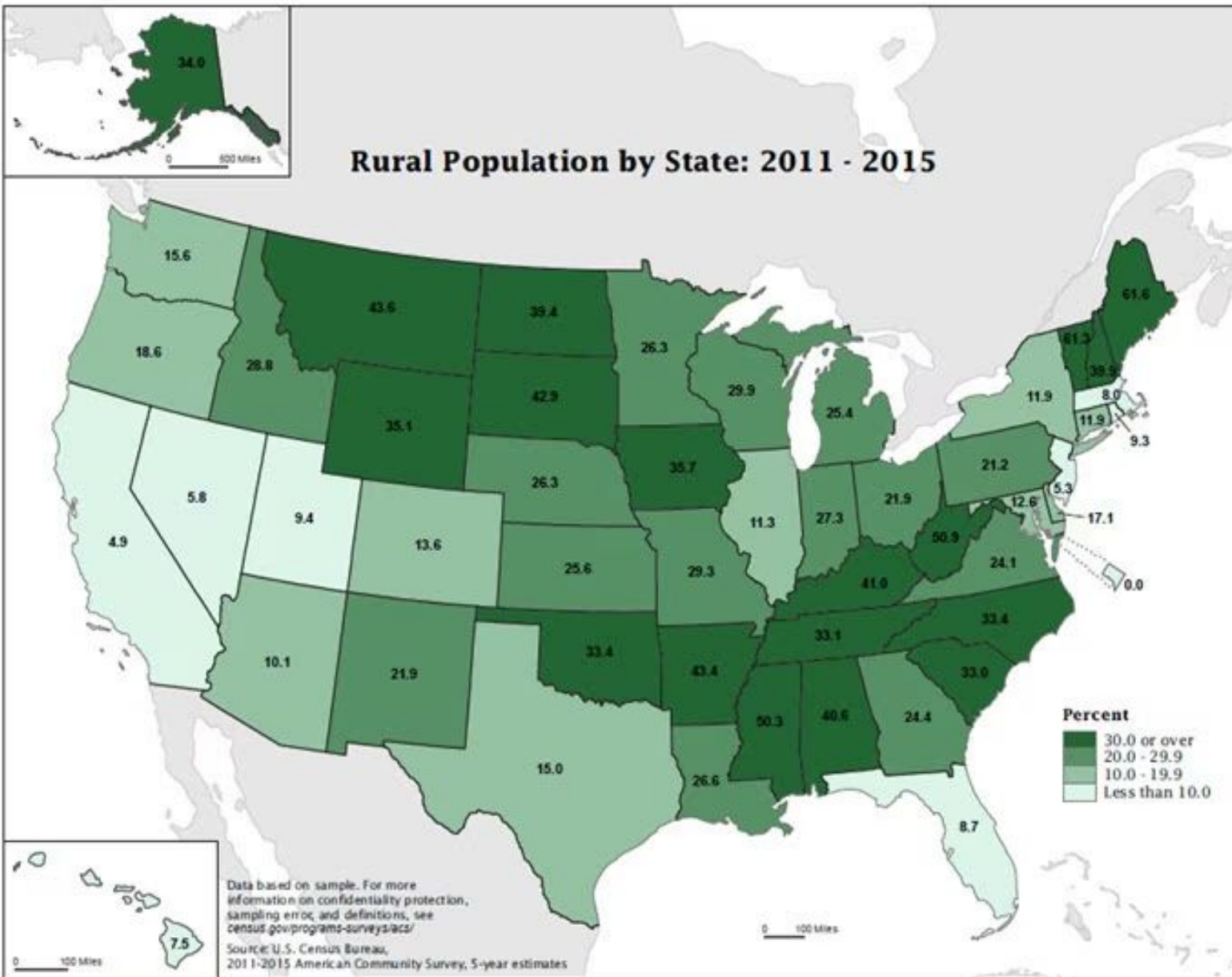
PBIS  
implementing  
schools

Center on PBIS, 2022; NCES, 2023)



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# The Rural Reality



	30% or more
	20-29%
	10-19%
	Less than 10%

[https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2016/12/life\\_off\\_the\\_highway.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2016/12/life_off_the_highway.html)

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# The Rural Reality



The close-knit nature of small rural schools improves consistency in communication among school staff

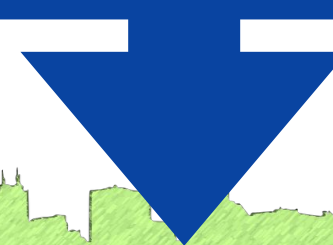
Strong sense of social identity and common purpose

Long-term relationships can be established which leads to more visible signs of educator efficacy and impact

Majority of rural counties have high rates of child poverty with continuous increase

Experience teacher attrition and difficulty in filling teaching positions at higher rates than non-rural schools

Limited available resources due to funding, geographical barriers, and access



Farmer et al., 2021; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023; Rude & Miller, 2018; Weiss et al., 2023)



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# The Rural Reality

Challenge of meeting student needs increases

Increasingly hard to recruit and retain educators

Students receive less effective and consistent instruction

Provisionally or emergency-licensed practitioners in classrooms

Educators less likely to be well prepared for circumstances and diverse student needs

**Rural Schools  
Need  
Professional  
Development  
Opportunities**

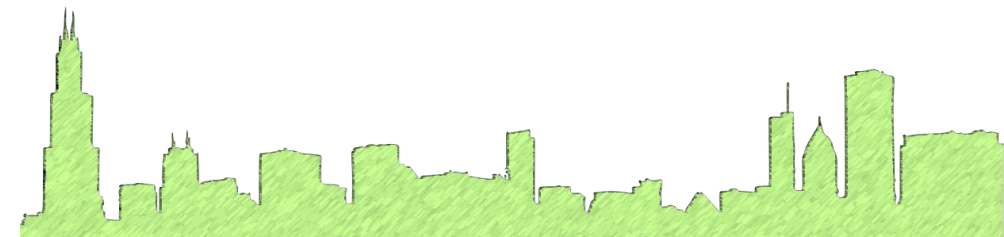
Weiss et al., 2023)



# The Rural Reality

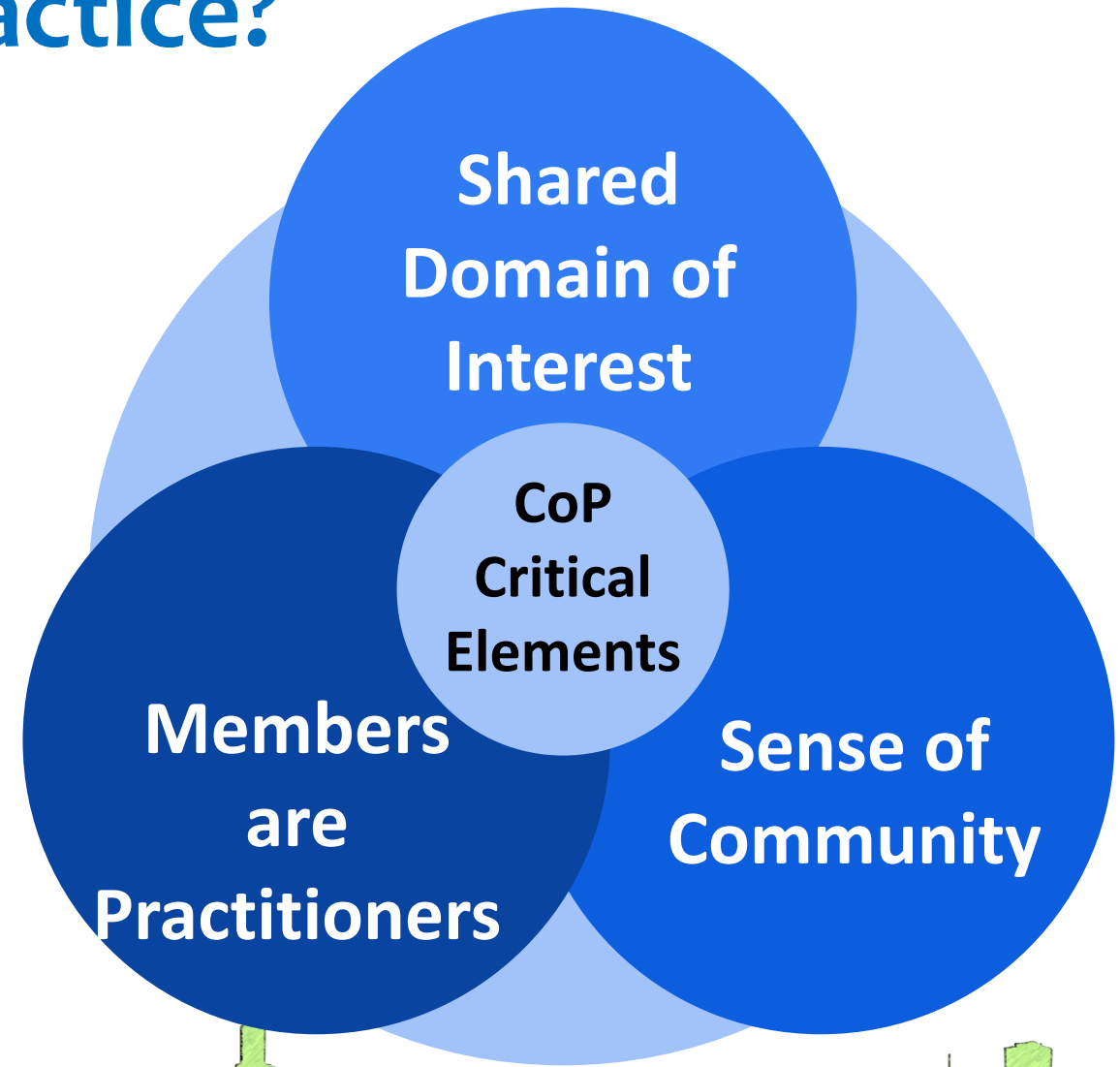
Meeting professional development needs of educators in rural communities may be challenging due to factors, such as:

- access to specific expertise
- access to facilities
- travel restrictions
- limited personnel and financial resources to supply substitutes



# What is a Community of Practice?

Communities of practice (CoP) are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.



# Benefits of Communities of Practice

Promotes  
teacher-leadership

Supports differentiated  
learning opportunities

Reduces feelings  
of isolation

Improves access to  
high-quality resources

Increases collaboration  
and reflection

Offers mutual support

**These are factors  
known to  
support  
teacher retention  
in rural areas!**

(Boada, 2022; Ghamrawi, 2022); Ingersoll & Tran, 2023)

# Professional Development



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# PD Challenges in Rural Schools

- Limited personnel
- Lack of financial resources
- Travel difficulties
- Need for expert coaches for sustained support
- Substitute teacher shortages

Weiss et al., 2023

# Elements of Effective Professional Development

Element	Core Features
Content-Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Context-specific and job embedded</li><li>● Aligned with school and district priorities</li><li>● Appropriate content based on what teachers teach</li></ul>
Active Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Must address how teachers learn in addition to what teachers learn</li><li>● Opportunity to choose learning opportunities based on interest and needs</li><li>● Opportunities to try, analyze, and reflect on use of new practices</li></ul>

Darling-Hammond et. al, 2017

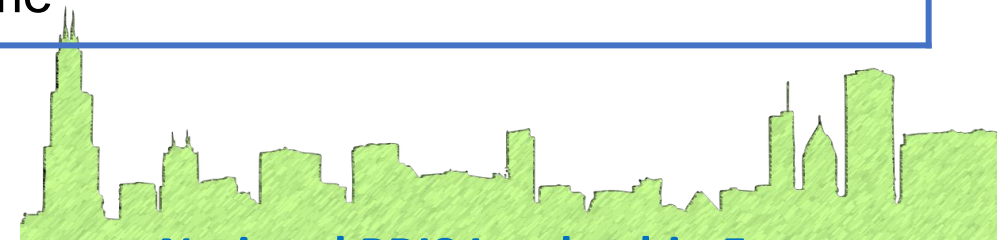


# Elements of Effective Professional Development

Element	Core Features
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Space for teachers to share ideas</li><li>• Opportunities to develop community that can lead to a positive change in culture</li><li>• Collaboration can be 1 to 1, grade/ team level, school, or district-wide</li><li>• Can be supported by technology</li></ul>
Use of Models and Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video or written cases of teaching</li><li>• Demonstration lessons</li><li>• Peer observations</li><li>• Sample plans, materials, work samples</li></ul>

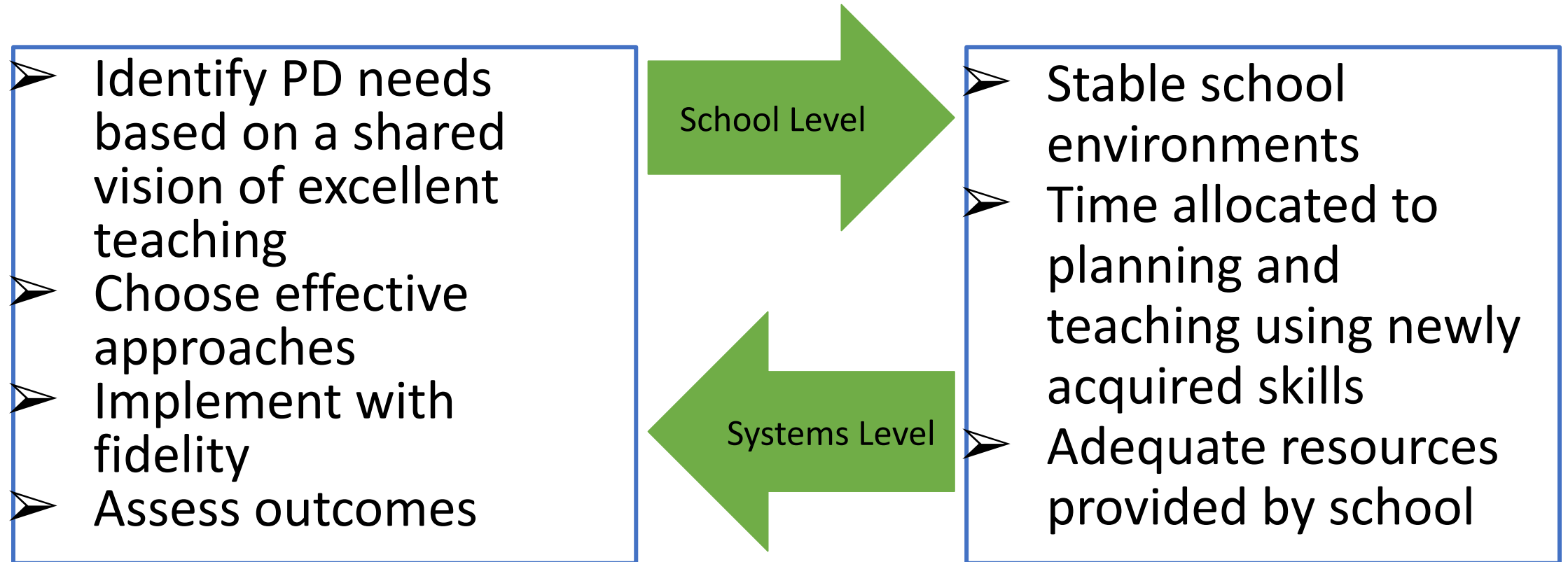
# Elements of Effective Professional Development

Element	Core Features
Provides Coaching and Expert Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sharing of expert guidance and feedback about content and evidence-based practices</li><li>● Target teacher's specific, individual needs</li><li>● Provided in various formats: 1-1, group, virtual, peer</li></ul>
Offers Feedback and Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Time allocated for thinking about practice and soliciting feedback</li><li>● Guided reflection, specific feedback</li></ul>
Sustained Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Adequate time provided for training</li><li>● Happens over time</li></ul>





# Conditions for Effective Professional Development



# Statewide CoP in Maine

## MAINE PBIS TIER 1 COHORT TRAINING MODEL

*Ongoing external coaching and technical assistance support at district and school level*

### Year 1 (3 school visits\*)

SUMMER

FALL

WINTER

SPRING

District  
Training

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 1

Team  
Training  
Day 2

District  
Training

ME PBIS  
State  
Conference

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 3

Team  
Training  
Day 4

District  
Training

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 5

Team  
Training  
Day 6

### Year 2 (2 school visits\*)

SUMMER

FALL

WINTER

SPRING

District  
Training

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 7

District  
Training

ME PBIS  
State  
Conference

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 8

District  
Training

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 9

### Year 3 (2 school visits\*)

SUMMER

FALL

SPRING

District  
Training

ME PBIS  
State  
Conference

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 8

District  
Training

Coach  
Meeting

Team  
Training  
Day 9

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Internal Capacity

\*May be  
adjusted  
based on  
needs

# Tier 1 Training Cohort-Fast Facts

**Who?**

Districts and schools interested in implementing a PBIS framework

**When?**

New cohorts begin each August, sessions held throughout the year

**What?**

Receive training and coaching support to get ready, get started and get better

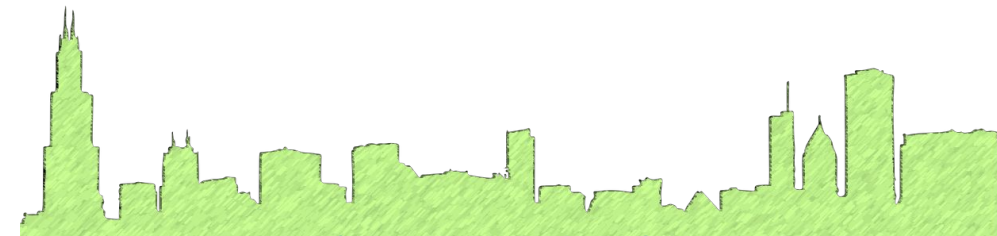
**Why?**

Create school environments where all staff, students and families can access and achieve positive outcomes



# Effective Features of PD

Element	Examples of Alignment
Content-Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● PBIS Implementation Blueprint driven model</li><li>● Embedded evidence-based resources (training, CoP, newsletter)</li></ul>
Active Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● District/Coach/Team Cohort training-2 way communication</li><li>● Debriefing opportunities</li><li>● Professional development opportunities</li></ul>





# Effective Features of PD

Element	Examples of Alignment
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cohort Model:1(16), 2(16), 3(21) - In-person training</li><li>● Annual Conference</li><li>● CoP-coach/teacher/SWIS</li></ul>
Use of Models and Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Exemplars embedded</li><li>● Debriefs during training/ CoP/Newsletter Acknowledgements</li><li>● Gallery Walks</li></ul>



# Effective Features of PD

## PBIS PROMPT

*A Quarterly Newsletter of Maine PBIS*

*Fall 2023*

Maine PBIS has shown significant growth in state level implementation fidelity over the past few years!

**2020 = 46%**

**2021 = 61%**

**2022 = 77%**

**2023 = 81%**

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Element	Examples of Alignment
Provides Coaching and Expert Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● District/school external coaching</li><li>● Monthly CoP</li><li>● Quarterly Newsletter</li></ul>
Offers Feedback and Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Embedded team time with trainer feedback</li></ul>
Sustained Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cohort provides gradual release of support and builds internal capacity along three year continuum</li></ul>

# Evaluation Research

**The TFI and School Climate Surveys (students, families and personnel) are completed biannually throughout the training sequence to determine if the training cohort is meeting the goal of supporting districts and schools with reaching fidelity and having meaningful outcomes.**

Meeting fidelity threshold of 70%:

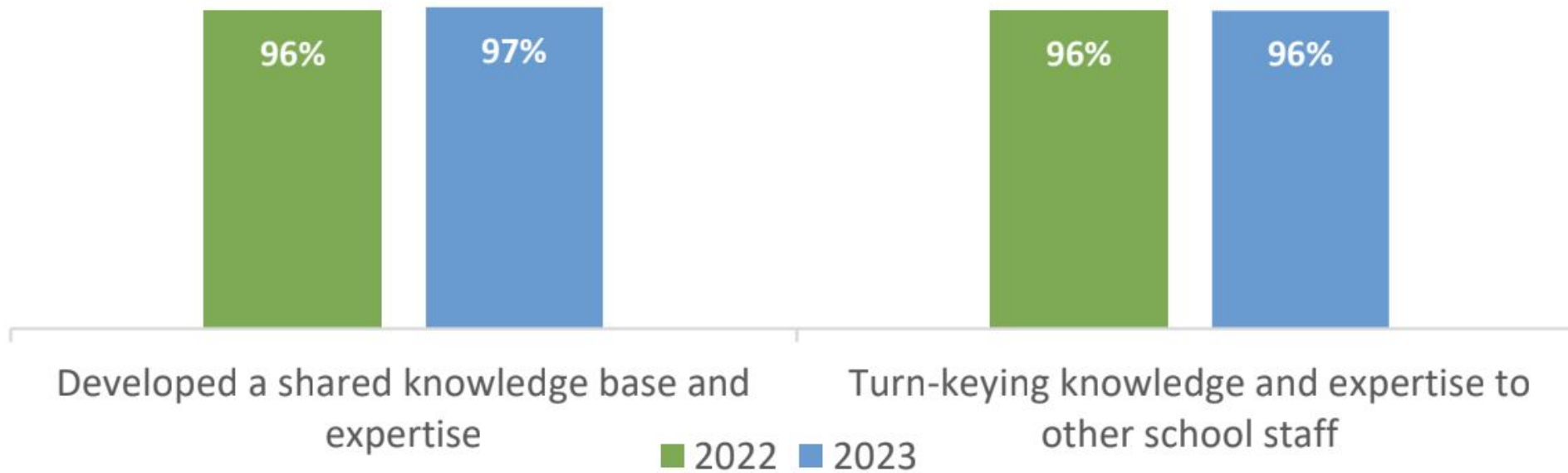
25% end of Year 1

50% end of Year 2

80% end of Year 3

School Climate Surveys indicated improvement in 75% of schools





**93-99%** of participants  
report increased understanding and use of data to support decision-making





# Participant Comments

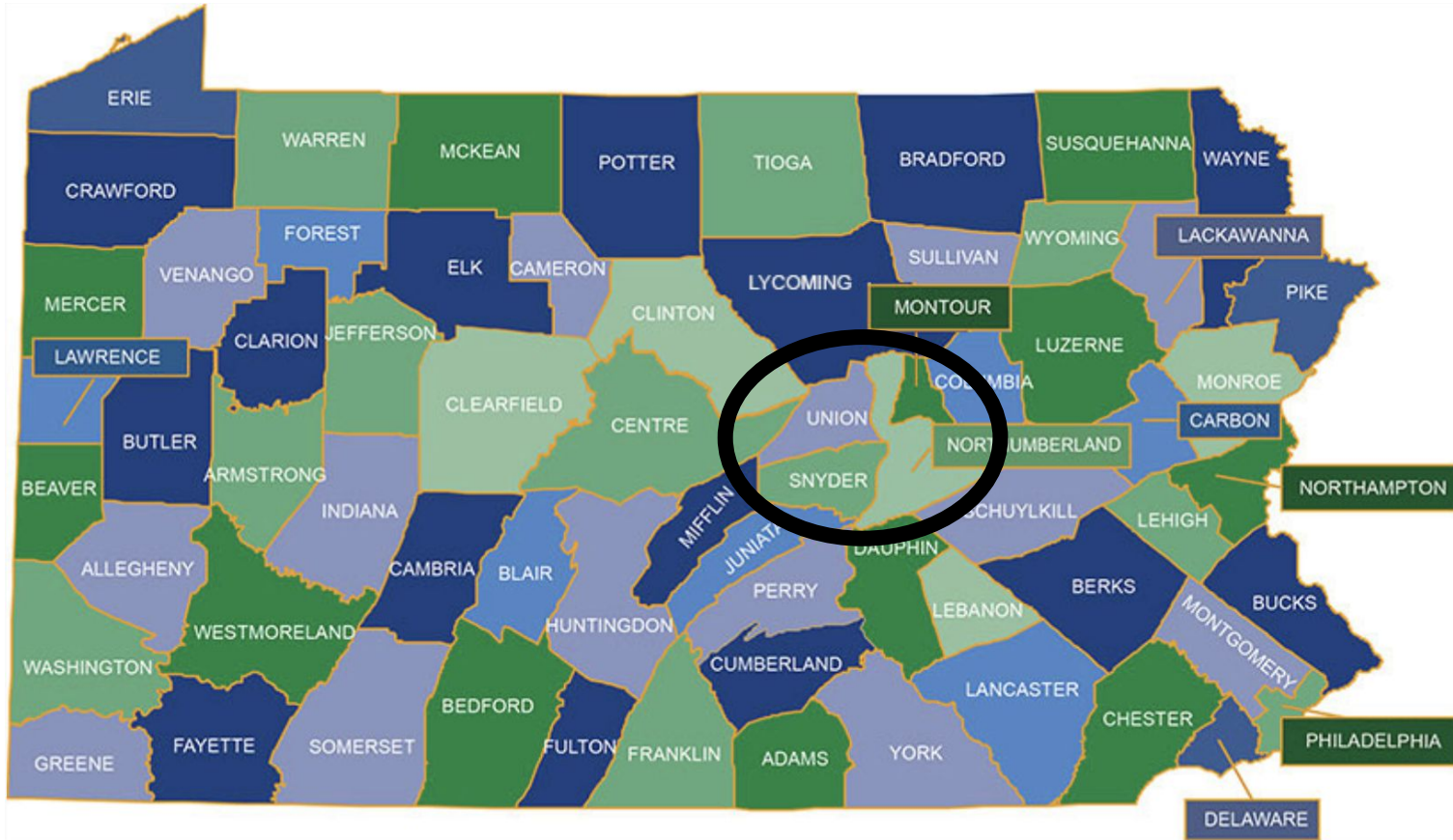
"I think one of the primary strengths has been all the interactions different members of the cohort are exposed to. Seeing what other schools are doing has been highly motivating. I also think the team trainings have been fantastic for imparting information."

"I would like to see more interactions between schools, so people can hear more about what other schools are doing or the different schools can help one another."

"I really appreciate being able to see/hear what other schools and districts are doing and how they are solving problems. It's always a very positive experience."

"Gaining knowledge and hearing how it has worked for other schools has given us the drive to dig in and try it, to be brave."

# University/ District CoP in Pennsylvania



Teacher Prep to  
Practice Grant

Project: Developing  
Culturally Relevant  
Aspiring Teachers

# Summer Institute: Fast Facts

Who?

40 in-service teachers, 2 pre-service teachers,  
2 facilitators, research team

When?

June and August '23, 2, 3-day sessions.  
Follow-up sessions in Fall '23

What?

Training in positive behavior supports, trauma-informed practices, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and effective coaching strategies

Why?

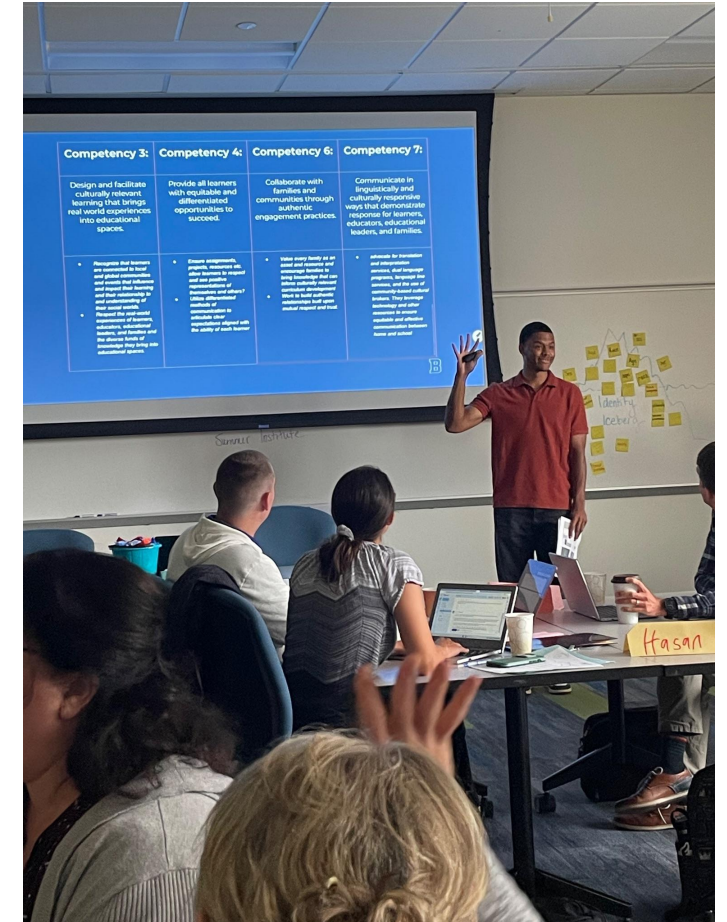
Develop a cohort of trained mentors to sustain support for university-based pre-service teachers and district-based early career teachers





# Effective features of PD

Element	Examples of Alignment
Content-Focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Behavior Supports, Trauma-Informed Practices, Culturally-Relevant Sustaining Practices, Mentoring Strategies</li> </ul>
Active Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video analysis activities: after learning about specific practice, teachers had an opportunity to analyze classroom instruction videos</li> </ul>



# Effective features of PD

Element	Examples of Alignment
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Time and dedicated to collaborative activities and sharing of ideas among teachers</li></ul>
Use of Models and Modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Facilitator modeling of practices</li><li>● Video modeling of practices</li></ul>





# Effective features of PD

Element	Examples of Alignment
Provides Coaching and Expert Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitators provide follow-up coaching and support individually and in small groups</li> </ul>
Offers Feedback and Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Participant Guide” reflections questions and action planning completed throughout training</li> </ul>
Sustained Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three day training with two follow-up sessions to review and monitor action plans</li> </ul>

Positive Behavior Supports: Considering your own Practice				
Key Practice(s)	Goal	Action Plan	Timeline	Monitor Progress
Reinforcing positive behaviors using regular verbal feedback	Increase ratio of positive to negative behavior responses, helping to create a classroom environment with clearer expectations and regular reminders of behavior, treating it as importantly as any academic skill	Make an intentional point to praise positive behavior, rather than treating it as a “baseline” expectation. Start by offering at least 5 verbal responses per class (tally on attendance sheet), and gradually increasing to 10-15	First semester of 2023-24 school year	
Proximity & Open Traffic Flow	Increase traffic flow in classroom to make every seat “the front” and increase OTR	Modify seating arrangement to create walkways, giving each student a “front row” seat, rather than focusing on group arrangements	Summer months, implement in fall	

Mentoring and Supporting Novice Teachers in Positive Behavior Supports.	
Explicitly model evidence-based practices? (consider: what PBS practices will you model? How will you be explicit?). You may include an example.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model all expectations (have students explain/ model if they join mid year)</li> <li>Explain to novice teacher why we do this</li> <li>Help build relationships with students</li> </ul>
Conduct high quality observations that inform feedback and goal setting? (consider: what PBS practices will you observe? How can you use your observations to determine appropriate feedback and set goals?) You may include an example.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take notes during each lesson</li> <li>Allow the student teacher time to discuss how what they believe went well, and what they would do different</li> <li>Make a plan for the next lesson together</li> </ul>
Provide specific positive and constructive feedback to promote growth in targeted areas? (consider: how will you determine appropriate target areas? How will you frame feedback to support growth?) You may include an example.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First I would ask the student teacher how they would like their feedback.</li> <li>Ask the student teacher what they believe went well/ what areas of growth would they like to work with on specific lessons</li> <li>Discuss one or two goals and celebrate those achievements, before moving on to new goals.</li> </ul>
Scaffold support through self-monitoring and reflection so that novice teachers can generalize skills? (consider: how will you use the gradual release model to support independence?) You may include an example.	Novice teachers should be given the opportunity to be part of the classroom community right at the beginning of their placement. Making a plan on when they will start taking over is also extremely important, so they are prepared, but also keeping in mind that this schedule may change and support will be removed only when comfortable.

# Related Research

**Attendees volunteered to participate in a mixed-methods research study to understand outcomes of the summer institute.**

*Knowledge, Confidence, and Use/ Expected Use of Practices*

	Pretest		Posttest		Paired <i>t</i> test (one-sided)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Positive Behavior Support Knowledge	3.87	0.48	4.71	0.22	7.43	36	.001*	1.22
Positive Behavior Support Confidence	3.73	0.51	4.50	0.23	6.55	36	.001*	1.59
Positive Behavior Support Use	3.76	0.56	4.41	0.28	5.50	36	.001*	1.33
Trauma-Informed Practices Knowledge	2.66	1.14	4.41	0.51	5.65	36	.001*	1.37
Trauma-Informed Practices Confidence	2.50	1.05	4.20	0.57	5.68	36	.001*	1.38
Trauma-Informed Practices Use	2.49	1.11	4.18	0.60	5.72	36	.001*	1.39
Culturally-Sustaining Practices, Knowledge	3.37	0.55	4.62	0.37	8.57	36	.001*	2.08
Culturally-Sustaining Practices, Confidence	3.27	0.53	4.44	0.40	10.01	36	.001*	2.43
Culturally-Sustaining Practices, Use	3.31	0.59	4.54	0.29	8.44	36	.001*	2.05
Mentoring Novice Teachers Knowledge	3.51	1.04	4.63	0.40	5.00	36	.001*	1.21
Mentoring Novice Teachers Confidence	3.59	1.03	4.55	0.45	4.87	36	.001*	1.18
Mentoring Novice Teachers Use	3.36	1.11	4.37	0.81	3.87	36	.001*	0.94

\**p*<.05

# Qualitative Research

I think people don't think that we have diversity in rural districts. But we are diverse. Our populations are growing just like they're growing across the country. And because we're rural,, we sometimes don't have experiences with students from a variety of backgrounds, and we may not know how to address those cultural differences. We're just not equipped.

I think that professional development needs to happen more about that this content. And then it needs to be recurring throughout the school year. I think right now as it is, it's resting on each individual teacher, on whether or not they want to start to be more aware and integrate those things and be culturally responsive which makes it in, not not equal across the board.

We do have professional development days. But it's like hundreds of teachers in one room. You sit and you listen. And, to be honest, I'm zoning out, or I'm doodling, or my brain is somewhere else planning something else. But this was very engaging, and the aspect that I really enjoyed was that it wasn't just my school, my colleagues. It was people from all over that had different perspectives. We did have time to actually sit and talk and realize that everybody's facing these things, and then we could bounce ideas off each other and that was like very relevant and important.

The time flew by as we collaborated with our own colleagues and those from other districts. There was a strong sense of community and a shared desire to grow and challenge our existing beliefs. The fact that this summer institute takes place immediately after the end of my school year, when I have felt max burnout, but STILL inspired me and motivated me to learn and reflect speaks volumes about the efficacy of this program.



# Northeast PBIS Network Virtual CoPs



**Classroom PBIS**



**High School**



**SWIS Facilitators**



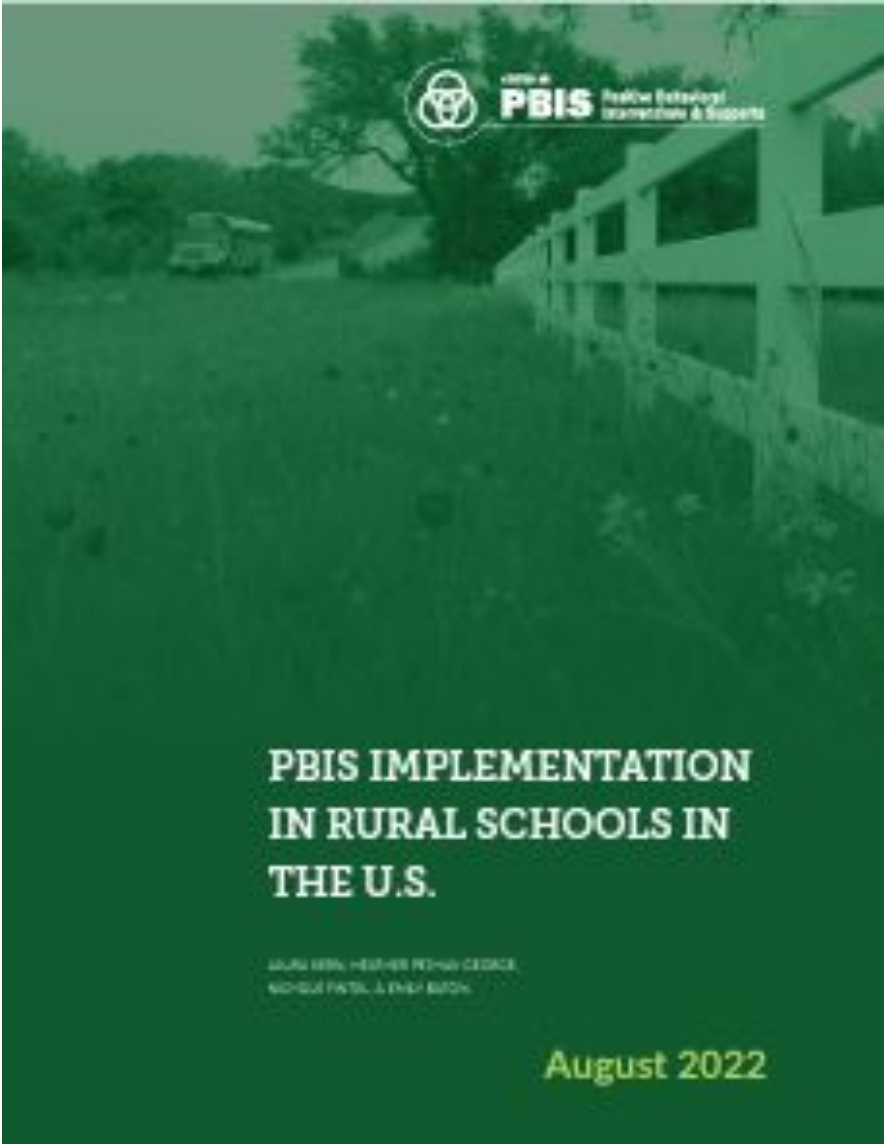
**Inpatient Settings**

nepbis.org



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# Resources

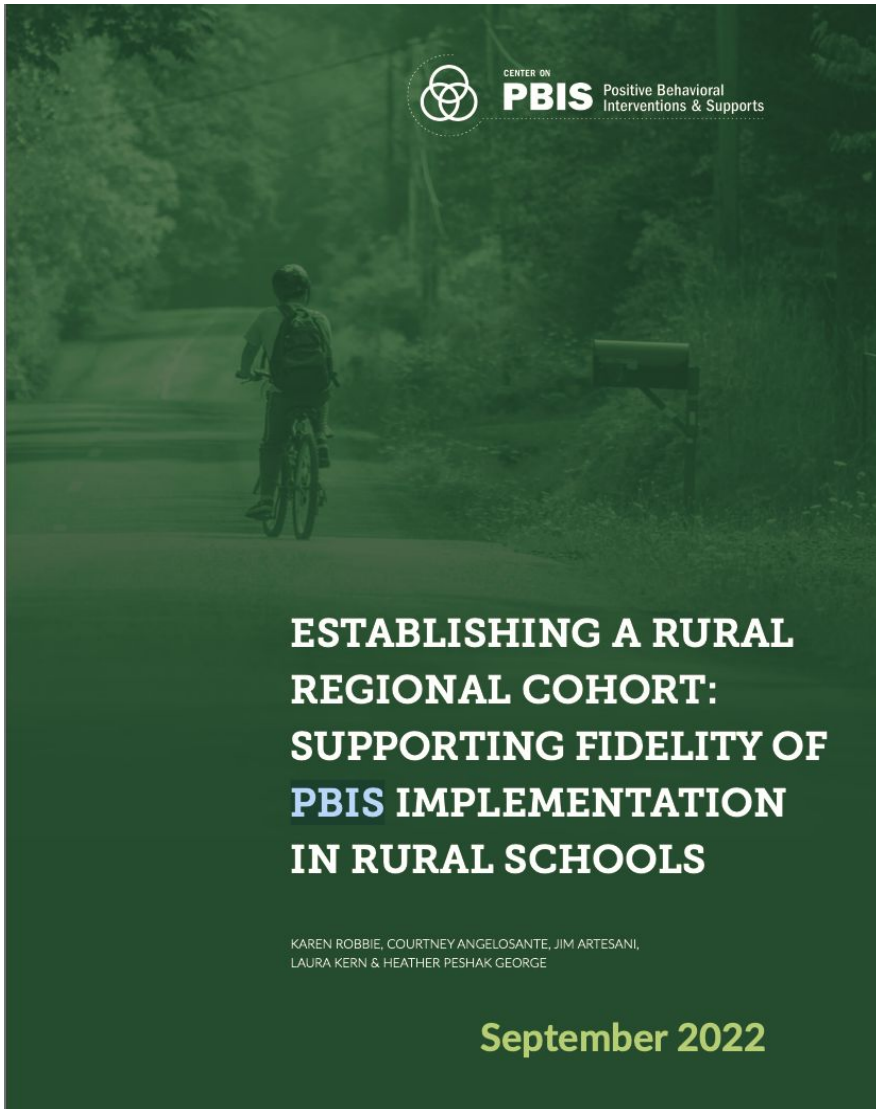


Kern, L., George, H. P., Fintel, N., Baton, E.  
(August, 2022). PBIS Implementation in Rural  
Schools in the U.S. Center on PBIS, University  
of Oregon. [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)





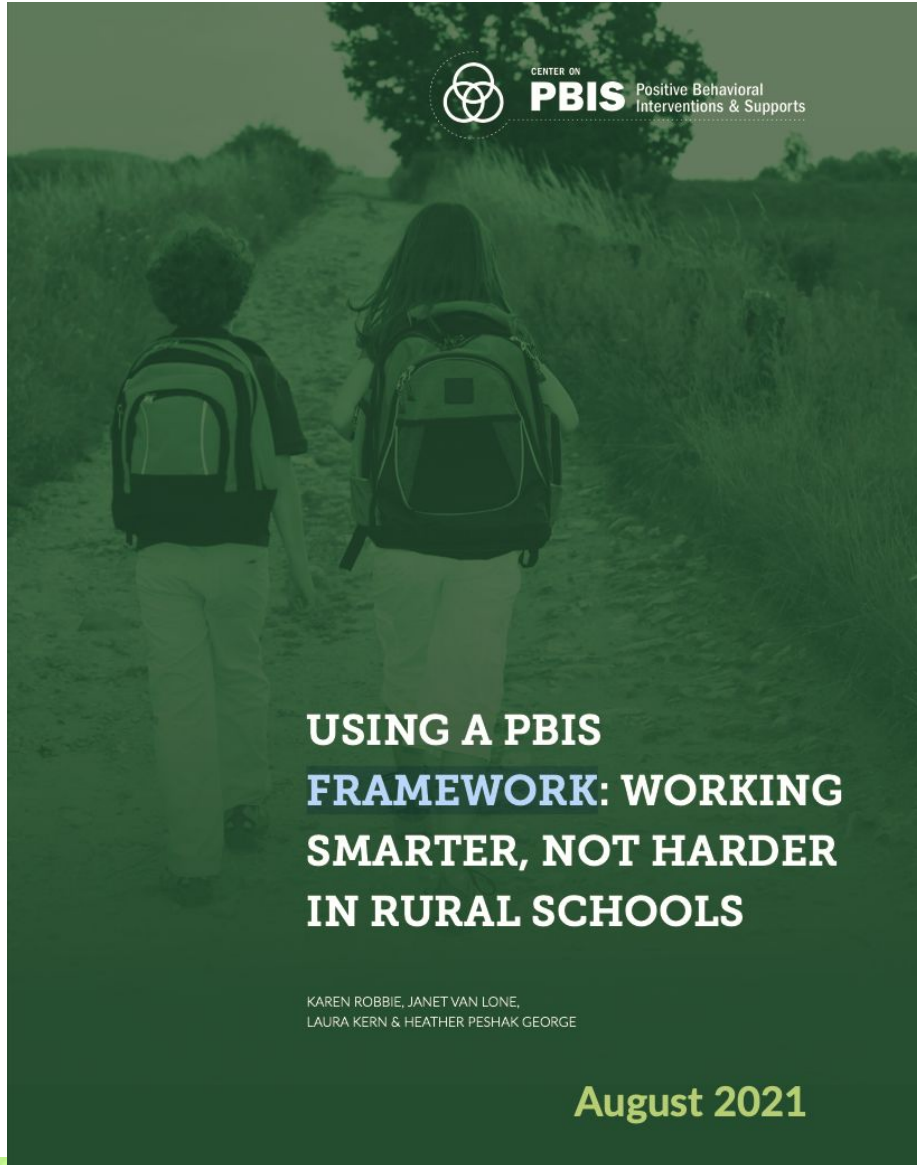
# Resources



Robbie, K., Angelosante, C., Artesani, J., Kern, L., & George, H. P. (September, 2022).  
Establishing a Rural Regional Cohort:  
Supporting Fidelity of PBIS Implementation in  
Rural Schools. Center on PBIS, University of  
Oregon. [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)



# Resources



Robbie K., Van Lone, J., Kern, L., & George, H. P. (August, 2021). Using a PBIS Framework: Working Smarter, Not Harder in Rural Schools. Center on PBIS, University of Oregon. [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).



# Resources



## Effective Teacher Professional Development

Linda Darling-Hammond, Maria E. Hyler, and Madelyn Gardner,  
with assistance from Danny Espinoza



JUNE 2017

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E.,  
Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective Teacher  
Professional Development*. Palo Alto, CA:  
Learning Policy Institute.



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10/26/2023

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