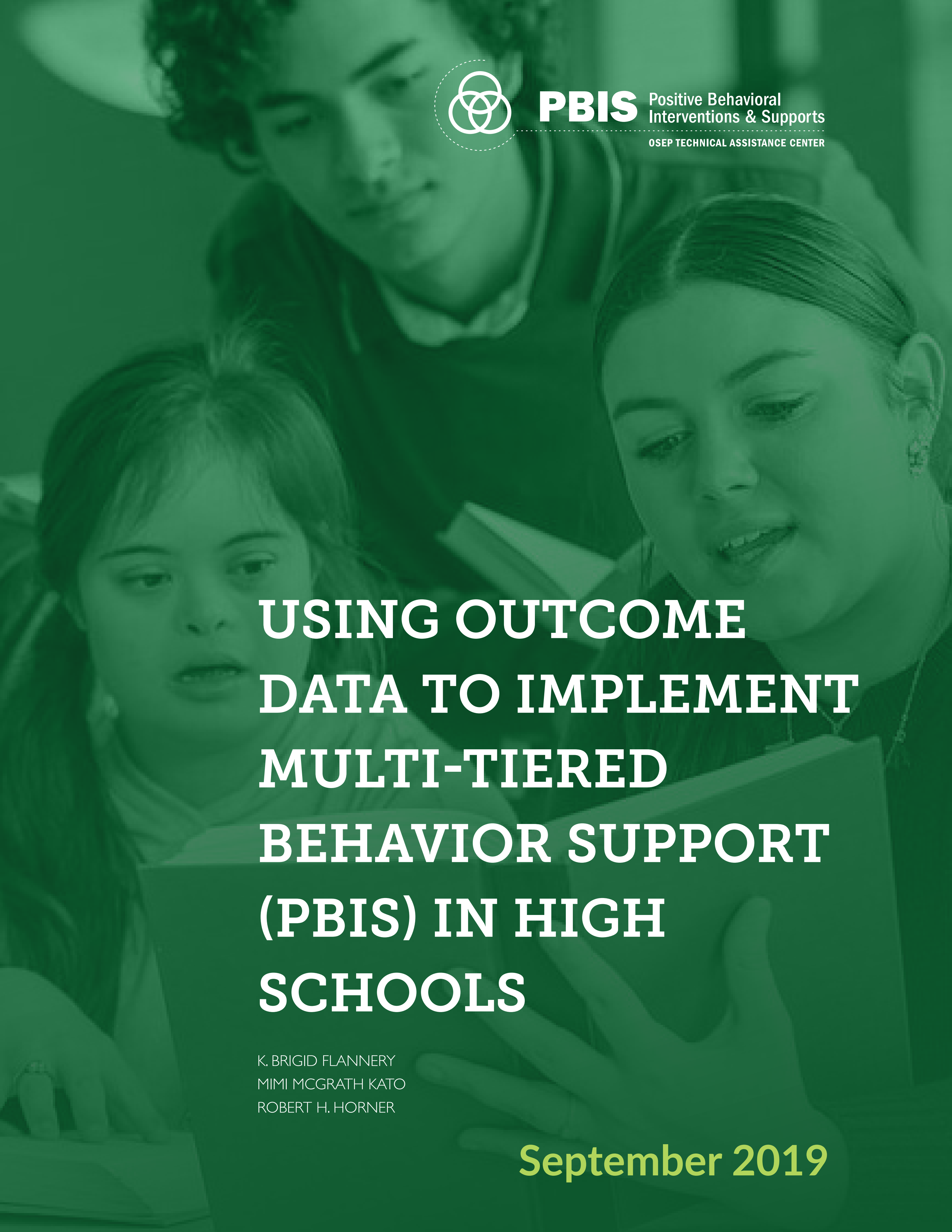


PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports
OSEP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

# USING OUTCOME DATA TO IMPLEMENT MULTI-TIERED BEHAVIOR SUPPORT (PBIS) IN HIGH SCHOOLS

K. BRIGID FLANNERY
MIMI MCGRATH KATO
ROBERT H. HORNER

September 2019

PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports
OSEP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER
SEPTEMBER 2019

# Using Outcome Data to Implement Multi-tiered Behavior Support (PBIS) in High Schools

Authors
K. Brigid Flannery
Mimi McGrath Kato
Robert H. Horner

## Introduction

Using data for decision-making is critical for schoolwide leadership teams and has been shown to enhance both social and academic outcomes for students (Faria et al., 2017). Using data effectively, however, requires that teams have a clear vision about the type of data, format of data presentation, and process for using data. To avoid expending resources on data collection that is not well used, we recommend building **decision-systems** rather than data systems. Start with the decisions a team will make, provide the team with the relevant data, and establish a protocol for using data in making team decisions. Teams need to have the right data in the right format at the right time in order to make efficient and effective decisions. In this Practice Brief we propose that there are at least four core types of data needed by high school PBIS Leadership Teams and that these data can be used to problem-solve at the (a) whole school, (b) at-risk group, or (c) individual student levels. We encourage each school team to review the data currently available in their school for effective decision-making and consider possible revisions to their information systems, as appropriate or if needed.

## Four Sources of Data for Decision-Making

Leadership Teams in high schools should focus on data from four primary areas (the ABCs): Attendance, Behavior, Course Performance and Climate (Allensworth & Easton 2005; 2007; Rosenkranz, de la Torre, Stevens, & Allensworth, 2014). With each of these data areas, the team will first focus on data that may best guide prevention decisions: examining data patterns for all students to determine if basic supports are effective. Next, the team will look at the data to make early intervention decisions for at-risk groups (i.e., grade, gender, ethnicity, disability) and then consider decisions to match support level to individual student need for those students needing high-intensity, individualized support. When teams are clear about the decisions they must make, they typically become much better at defining the type and form of data they need. With the right data displayed in the right form at the right time, teams become much more successful at problem identification and problem solving. An important theme in this process, however, is that effective decisions are seldom guided by a single data source (e.g., attendance). In most cases, it is helpful to examine information for multiple data perspectives. We have found four primary areas of data to be most useful in this process.

### Attendance

Missing instructional time is a well-documented barrier to student success (both academic and social success). This can be missing a full day of school (excused or unexcused), missing a single class (skip) or being consistently late for classes (tardy). The “metric” for attendance is the proportion of classes in which students are present. These data are collected daily, summarized at least weekly, and reported to the team at each meeting. A team will address prevention concerns by first examining the proportion of all students attending 90% or more of their classes for the target time period (i.e., week, month, quarter, semester). The team will then examine the proportion of students from at-risk groups who attend at least 90% of their classes, and then the team will look at those students not meeting the attendance standard who may need more individualized and intensive support. A major risk in high school is to focus on school-wide behavior supports without adequate attendance data, or with attendance data that are inaccurate or out-of-date.

### Behavior

Students who repeatedly engage in behavior that places them in conflict with peers or adults are at-risk for school failure. The PBIS Leadership Team in a high school needs to have information about students who have engaged in behavior that resulted in removal from class. The metric is typically office discipline referrals, suspensions or any other intervention that involves removal from class. Data are collected daily, summarized at least weekly, and updated for a report at each team meeting. Many schools use data management systems such as the SWIS Suite (www.pbisapps.org) to track and summarize behavior-related data. An effective school team will look first at the proportion of all students with 0 to 1 problem behavioral events for any designated time period. The second look will be at the proportion of students in at-risk groups with 0 to 1 problem behavior events. The third look will be at those students with 2 to 5 problem behavior events, and those with 6 or more problem behavior events. From this information, a team can adjust the Tier 1 school-wide supports, the Tier 2 group supports and the Tier 3 individual student supports.

### Course Performance

Academic performance is a central focus of any high school, and monitoring ongoing course performance is important for both academic and behavioral success. Specific areas of course performance can be monitored by grading period and may include such things as passing rates, credit accrual, GPA, summative or formative assessments, etc. It is recommended, especially for freshmen, to monitor courses at-risk for failure. The metric most commonly used by PBIS Leadership School Teams in high schools is progress toward graduation. At the whole-school level, the team assesses three to four times per year the proportion of students who are completing the course requirements and credits needed for graduation. This same metric is then used to examine proportions for students at each grade level, by gender, by ethnicity, and by disability who are progressing as expected for graduation. The emphasis on early identification and early intervention for students at risk of class failure is especially important, and places a high priority on ensuring that a team has the data needed to identify students falling behind early in each academic year.

### Climate

School climate is made up of the shared norms, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences that shape interactions and operations in schools. How students and staff perceive the quality of the environment (e.g., safe, supportive, inclusiveness) will impact their success and satisfaction. There are a number of school climate surveys available to measure school climate. One free such survey is available on the pbis assessment section of the pbisapps.org website. The basic metric for school climate is to assess the extent to which students find the school a predictable, consistent, positive and safe environment. As with each of the other data sources, this is first administered to all students in the school, and then for those students in at-risk groups. Student perception of climate is NOT summarized at the individual student level because this would violate the core commitment to anonymity when asking student perceptions.

## Establishing Team Access to Data

Most schools collect some, but not all, of the data recommended above. Some schools also collect much more data than they use. PBIS Teams in high schools that have developed efficient and effective decision-making practices have found it useful to start by answering four basic questions:

- What are the decisions the team needs to make?
- What are the data needed to make these decisions?
- Who collects and summarizes the needed data?
- How and when can the team access the data?

## Set Goals Within One or More of the Areas

Setting goals (for school, group or individual students) is a common decision made by PBIS teams. The examination of current data is important to ensure that goals are attainable. Examining the previous year goals allows school teams to establish new goals based on that performance. A school may have a long-term goal to achieve 94% attendance, but if they are currently at 75%, it may be unrealistic to think they could accomplish this big of a change in one year. Therefore, setting a lower goal is not only more attainable but it is also more likely to build the momentum for the faculty, staff and students as they work toward better attendance.

When setting goals, the team must be specific and refrain from just setting an aggregate rate across the high school. Instead, examine the percentage of students, faculty or staff that you want to achieve a specific goal. This will provide a more accurate accounting for the status in your school. However, using an overall average does not provide an accurate picture of student attendance, for example. A school can meet a 92% average attendance and still have only 71% of their students actually meet that criteria. Also, consider monitoring progress toward these goals for specific subgroups such as freshmen or students on IEPs.

Teams should focus on priority areas and be careful on the number of goals set. A well-established team may set goals in all four areas whereas a newer team may initially focus on one area. Developing action steps and monitoring progress toward any set goals is important to maintain accountability, make adjustments as needed and moves beyond "just admiring the problem."

Data should be reviewed by teams on a regular basis. The schedule for review of data will depend on your goal and the availability of data. Data collected daily such as attendance and behavior need to be reviewed at least monthly, whereas course performance and climate data may only be collected and summarized each term. It is important to note that any goal needs to be set based on current and previous performance trends at the school. For example, if a school currently has 83% of students on track to graduate, then an ambitious but realistic goal of 87% might be set. Setting a goal too high will only frustrate stakeholders and cause your efforts to lose momentum. Some example goals might be:

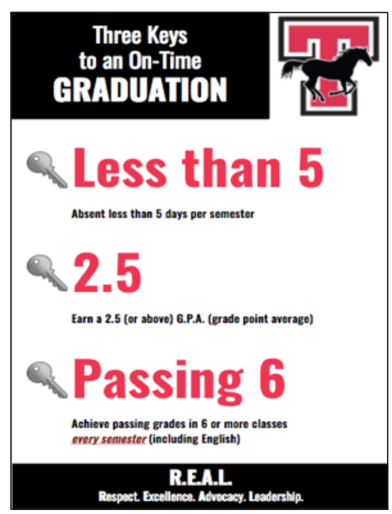
- 85% of students with 0-1 office discipline referrals
- 85% of minority students with 0-1 office discipline referrals
- 90% of students with 90% or higher attendance (missing 18 or fewer days in most districts; http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources)
- 92% of students on track to graduate (credit accumulation)
- 75% of students with no Ds or Fs
- 85% of students who know the school expectations

## Communicate Early and Often with Stakeholders

It is important that PBIS Team members communicate the status of implementation on a regular basis. A standard might be to communicate with the staff monthly but communicate with students and families on a quarterly basis. The team should report on the goals and status, as well as the fidelity of implementation of systems and practices. These reports do not need to be longer than a page and can even be a quick email. Some schools have reported with brief statements about their progress (e.g., change in data outcomes) or have reported using tables or graphs. Others have found creative ways to share the data using symbols related to their expectations.

Some schools have translated their goals into quick statements for teachers and students and built posters for the school to remind themselves of these goals throughout the year.

The communication of the goals and status may take different forms depending on the stakeholder group. For example, the team may talk about "85% of 9th graders with zero F grades" and also use this language with faculty. When communicating with students and family, on the other hand, communications might say "85% of 9th graders are passing grades in all classes!"



## Resources

Kennedy, M. J., Horner, R. H., McNelly, D., Mimmack, J, Sobel, D, Tillman, D. R. (2010 ). Data-Based Decision Making in PBIS High Schools: Informed Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Support. In K. B. Flannery & G. Sugai, *School-Wide PBIS Implementation in High Schools: Current Practice and Future Directions.* Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, Educational and Community Supports. Available on http://www.pbis.org

## References

Allensworth, E. M., & Easton, J. Q. (2005). *The on-track indicator as a predictor of high school graduation.* Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from www.consortium-chicago.org/publications/p78.html

Allensworth, E. M., & Easton, J. Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on track and graduating in Chicago Public High Schools.* Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=116

Faria, A.-M., Sorensen, N., Heppen, J., Bowdon, J., Taylor, S., Eisner, R., & Foster, S. (2017). *Getting students on track for graduation: Impacts of the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System after one year* (REL 2017–272). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. Retrieved from http://ies. ed.gov/ncee/edlabs

Rosenkranz, T., de la Torre, M., Stevens, W. D., & Allensworth, E. M. (2014). ***Free to fail or on-track to college.*** Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant #R305A150010 and by the Office of Special Education Programs Grant H326S130004 that were awarded to University of Oregon. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

**Suggested Citation for this Publication**

Flannery, K. B., McGrath Kato, M., Horner, R. H. (September, 2019). Using Outcome Data to Implement Multi-tiered Behavior Support (PBIS) in High Schools. Eugene, OR: OSEP TA Center on PBIS, University of Oregon. Retrieved from www.pbis.org.