Centering Equity to Reduce the Impact of Implicit Bias in School Discipline

Keywords: Equity, Coaching

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Agenda: Creating Culturally Sustaining Systems

Purpose
This session will explore the Michigan Equity Pilot that utilizes the PBIS National Center’s five-point approach to prevent and reduce school disproportionality.

Intended Outcomes:
- Understand the socio-historical impact of structural racism on implicit bias and educational practices
- Explore promising components of a 5-Point intervention approach aimed at centering equity and addressing discipline gaps
- Examine the technical and adaptive strategies used by the MIBLSI equity specialists to support school leadership teams in increasing equitable discipline practices and outcomes
Levels of Engagement are at Work

PBIS National Center

MIBLSI Equity Team

Pilot School District Implementation Team

School Leadership Team & Staff
Acknowledge

- Michigan’s Integrated Learning and Behavioral Supports Initiative
- Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports National Technical Center, Oregon University
- Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, Indiana University Purdue
- Pilot Partners
- Equity Specialists’ Experiences and Expertise
• Demonstrate a **meaningful reduction** in discipline disproportionality with regards to race and ethnicity.

Implement and evaluate **effective practices** addressing disproportionality in a school utilizing School-wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports.

Implement a model for reducing disproportionality that is **durable, sustainable and scalable** over time.

80% of pilot schools implementing with fidelity will **show reduced levels** of exclusionary disciplinary practices & reduced risk ratios.
Activity: Turn & Talk

- Take 2 minutes and each share why you think discipline and academic gaps exists between Black and White students.
- Large group share
Understand the socio-historical impact of structural racism on implicit bias and educational practices
Continuing to Support All Students

While tremendous gains have been made in PBIS schools, disproportionality and exclusionary practices adversely affecting culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLDS), especially African American and Latino students, continues to exist across the country (Skiba et al., 2011).
Consequently, experts are reframing SWPBIS to consider issues of racial disproportionality, equity, and bias.
Recent National OCR Data

• African American preschool children are $3.6\text{ times}$ as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white preschool children.

• African American K-12 students are $3.8\text{ times}$ as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white students.

• African American K-12 students are $2.3\text{ times}$ as likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest as white students.

U.S. Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2013-14 (Released June 2016)
Prevailing Assumptions SES

- Poverty plays a role, but racial disproportionality remains, even when controlling for poverty
  - Anyon et al., 2014
  - Skiba et al., 2002; 2005
  - Wallace et al., 2008
Prevailing Assumptions about Families

- Not the homes or parents.
- Hattie’s synthesis revealed:
  - Some students come to school with circumstances that place them at risk
  - However, the effect sizes of what schools and teachers do are much higher than the circumstances that students face
Prevailing Assumptions about Race

“Aren’t Black boys just more violent?”

• There is no evidence of different base rates of behavior for any subgroups
  • Bradshaw et al., 2010
  • Losen & Skiba, 2010
  • Skiba et al., 2014
General Responses to Disproportionality

“Are you saying that all school staff are racist?”

- No! research from the PBIS field indicates that disproportionality comes from unconscious bias – that we’re not even aware of.
  - Girvan et al., in press
  - Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014
  - Van den Bergh et al., 2010
Assumptions vs. Research

Contrary to the **prevailing assumption** that African American boys are just getting “what they deserve” when they are disciplined, research shows:

- That Black boys **do not “act out”** in the classroom any more than their White peers.
- African American students are referred to the office for less serious and more subjective reasons.

(McFadden, et al., 1992; Skiba, 2000; Skiba et al. 2002; Skiba, 2010; Carter, Skiba et al. 2017)
Educational Inequities & Racial Bias

• Prevailing assumptions driving these discriminatory practices are due to:
  • Deficit model thinking
  • A cultural mismatch between students, their schools, teachers, and support staff.
• This mismatch is further exacerbated by a systematic and implicit racial bias that is pervasive in the use of exclusionary discipline

(Riddle, 2014; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002)
What is Implicit Racial Bias?

- Unconscious, automatic
- Based on stereotypes **about a specific race**
- Biases are the stories we make up about people before we know who they actually are (Verna Myers, 2014).
- Racial biases are also the stories that are told to us.
- Sometimes we embrace these narratives because we have not spent time outside of our own cultures.
- We **ALL** have it, even those most effected by it.
Example of Implicit Racial Bias

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Implicit Bias in Early Learning

(Gilliamp et al., 2016)
Socio-Historical Context & Racial Bias

This basic target smart art communicates relational meaning. It is a bullseye diagram that displays 5 circles to describe each of the layers of racial bias. The first circle is labeled civilizational racism. The second inner circle is labeled societal racism. The third inner circle is labeled institutional racism. The fourth circle is labeled media. The fifth innermost circle is labeled individual. Because of our social historical context, we are all influenced by these layers of racism even if we don't have the values of someone who is overtly racist.

This Model is based on the work of Scheurich and Young, 2002
Technical and Adaptive Moves Made to Address Bias

Adaptive
- What would you do Video and Activity
- Verna Myers Activity
- White Fragility Activity
- Identity Activity
- Expanding critical awareness

Technical
- Looking at National Disproportionate Data
- Socio-Historical Context Activities (Redlining, GI Bill, Segregation, Housing policies, slavery, reconstruction, contextual histories)
Write, Reflect & Share

Educational Equity

• Write down your definition of educational equity.
• Turn and Talk
• Group Share out
Educational Equity

...is when educational policies, practices, interactions, and resources are representative of, constructed by, and responsive to all people so that each individual has access to, meaningfully participates in, and has positive outcomes from high-quality learning experiences, regardless of individual characteristics and group memberships.

(Fraser, 2008; Great Lakes Equity Center, 2012)
Core Constructs of Equity

**Access** — All students have entrance into, involvement with, and full benefit of quality learning opportunities (Paris, 2012).

**Representation** — Having presence in decision making and in content (Mulligan & Kozleski, 2009).

**Meaningful participation** — All students have agency and are empowered to contribute in effectual ways (Fraser, 1998).

**High Outcomes** — Solutions benefit all students towards self-determination and the ability to act as contributing citizens in a democratic society & global community (Waitoller & Kozleski, 2013).

(Fraser, 2008; Great Lakes Equity Center, 2012)
Explore promising components of a 5-Point intervention approach aimed at centering equity and addressing discipline gaps
### TA Coaching Goals for 2018-19

The DLT and SLT will decrease disproportionate discipline across racial subgroups by:

1. **Emphasizing results** by systematically examining data specific to understanding behaviors and disproportionality.

2. **Explicitly naming and understanding the role of race** in inequitable outcomes by engaging in ongoing learning around implicit bias and our socio-historical context.

3. **Deepening knowledge** of how core components of PBIS, VDPs and the Safe and Inclusive School Framework work together to create equitable experiences for all students.

4. **Fostering critical consciousness** amongst staff and administration.

5. Developing and carry out **action plans** specific to the data review process and aligning action items to **school/district improvement process** and plans.
During the three-year pilot, this middle school decreased their ODR gap between Black and White students from 3.95 to 0.43 and their overall ODRs for all student from 5,930 in 2015-2016 to 1,235 in 2018-2019.
1. Implement a Behavior Framework that is Preventive, Multi-Tiered, and Culturally Responsive

2. Collect, Use, and Report Disaggregated Discipline Data

3. Use Engaging Instruction to Reduce the Opportunity (Achievement) Gap

4. Develop Policies with Accountability for Disciplinary Equity

5. Teach Strategies for Neutralizing Implicit Bias in Discipline Decisions

McIntosh, Girvan, Horner, Smolkowski, Sugai, (2018)
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Implement a Behavior Framework that is Preventive, Multi-Tiered, and Culturally Responsive

Big Ideas of PBIS

Increasing Culturally Responsive SWPBIS

Complete the TFR    Use the TFI Companion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>4/26/19</th>
<th>9/17/19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Behavioral Expectations: School has five or fewer positively stated behavioral expectations and examples by setting/location for student and staff behaviors (i.e., school teaching matrix) defined and in place.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4. Teaching Expectations: Expected academic and social behaviors are taught directly to all students in classrooms and across other campus settings/locations.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Problem Behavior Definitions: School has clear definitions for behaviors that interfere with academic and social success and a clear policy/procedure (e.g., flowchart) for addressing office-managed versus staff-managed problems.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>6. Discipline Policies: School policies and procedures describe and emphasize proactive, instructive, and/or restorative approaches to student behavior that are implemented consistently.</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>7. Professional Development: A written process is used for orienting all faculty/staff on 4 core Tier 1 SWPBIS practices: (a) teaching school-wide expectations, (b) acknowledging appropriate behavior, (c) correcting errors, and (d) requesting assistance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>8. Classroom Procedures: Tier 1 features (school-wide expectations, routines, acknowledgements, in-class continuum of consequences) are implemented within classrooms and consistent with school-wide systems.</td>
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<td>9. Feedback and Acknowledgement: A formal system (i.e., written set of procedures for specific behavior feedback that is (a) linked to school-wide expectations and (b) used across settings and within classrooms) is in place and used by at least 90% of a sample of staff and received by at least 50% of a sample of students.</td>
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<td>10. Faculty Involvement: Faculty are shown school-wide data regularly and provide input on universal foundations (e.g., expectations, acknowledgements, definitions, consequences) at least every 12 months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Student/Family/Community Involvement: Stakeholders (students, families, and community members) provide input on universal foundations (e.g., expectations, consequences, acknowledgements) at least every 12 months.</td>
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Feature 2 Total: 7 of 18  
15 of 18

Section II: TFI Cultural Responsiveness Companion

In its essence, SWPBIS is a framework for implementing practices that fit the values and needs of students, families, and staff (Sugai, O’Keeffe, & Fallon, 2012). This framework, with its focus on systems, teams, and data-based decision making, creates an ideal structure within which to embody the core components of cultural responsiveness. In fact, because contextual fit is a core principle of SWPBIS, SWPBIS cannot be considered fully implemented until it is culturally responsive.

This section includes a tool called the TFI Cultural Responsiveness Companion. It is an additional fidelity of implementation measure, but rather an action planning resource that teams can use to improve their implementation.

Teams may use this tool either before initial SWPBIS implementation to build cultural responsiveness into systems from the beginning or after initial SWPBIS implementation to enhance equity within existing systems. To use this resource, we suggest the following steps:

1. Complete the TFI. Teams can first complete the SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) available at www.pbisapps.org, a fidelity of implementation measure for SWPBIS. This measure allows teams to rate their implementation of the critical features of SWPBIS and identify next steps for implementation.

2. Use the TFI Cultural Responsiveness Companion. After completing the TFI, teams can use the companion to assess and improve the cultural responsiveness of their SWPBIS systems. Teams may choose to (a) review the entire companion, (b) consult items from the TFI that are in place but constructive, (c) assess items where the TFI indicates need for improvement, or other information indicates the need for enhanced cultural responsiveness. In our experience, it may be preferable for coaches to preselect a few items for the teams to consider rather than providing the entire companion at once.

3. Create an action plan. Use the information from the TFI and this resource to develop a detailed action plan (see the Additional Resources section) to implement core components of cultural responsiveness within SWPBIS.
Technical and Adaptive Moves Made to Address Bias

Adaptive
- Identity Activity
- Personal Behavior Matrix
- Voice

Technical
- Use of the Cultural Responsiveness Field Guide to align culturally responsive practices to the core components of SWPBIS
Collect, Use, and Report Disaggregated Discipline Data
Technical and Adaptive Moves Supportive to Build Fluency in Examining Data

<table>
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<th>Technical</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Naming Race</td>
<td>• Examining disaggregated data (SWIS, )</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Building Trust &amp; Relationships</td>
<td>• Risk Ratios</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Honoring past and current work</td>
<td>• TFI Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Expanding critical awareness</td>
<td>• Monthly Referrals per sub group</td>
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<td>• Meeting Mechanics</td>
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Facing Race

A conversation about race and discipline means talking about what we think automatically about “types of children,” even if those thoughts are undesired; who we react to with fear or harshness; and who needs more care inside our school buildings.

OUR COMMITMENTS FOR ENGAGING IN COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

- Stay engaged
- Speak your truth
- Experience discomfort
- Expect & accept non-closure

- Read each definition
- Why might these commitments might be important when discussing race and centering equity in our work.
- Turn and Talk
- Large Group Share

(Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 18)
Teach Strategies for Neutralizing Implicit Bias in Discipline Decisions

Class wide “Reset” Routine

• **TRY** for students
  • Take three deep breaths
  • Reflect on your emotions
  • You got this!

• Social-emotional Theme
  • Mistakes are part of the learning process
  • We won’t always do it right the first time
  • We can’t succeed unless we **TRY** and keep **TRYing**

Critical Questions to Consider for Four Components: Safe and Inclusive School Environments

- **Physical**
  - Analyze school environment and architectural features
  - Ensure physical safety and security
  - Prevent incidents and address them quickly

- **Intellectual**
  - Provide academic support for all students
  - Foster an inclusive learning environment
  - Address differentiated instruction needs

- **Cultural**
  - Celebrate cultural diversity
  - Promote respect and understanding
  - Support cultural responsiveness in curriculum and instruction

- **Social-Emotional**
  - Create a supportive and welcoming atmosphere
  - Enhance social skills and emotional intelligence
  - Promote healthy relationships and conflict resolution
A Multidimensional View of Implicit Bias

Implicit Racial Bias

Disproportionate Discipline

Situation

Vulnerable Decision Points

Subjective Behavior

Hunger

Vague Discipline System

Fatigue

Classrooms

Unfamiliar with Student
What is a Vulnerable Decision Point?

• 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)
Elements of the Situation

- Subjective behavior (disrespect)
- Unfamiliar with the student
- Cultural/identity assumptions
- No clear guidelines
- Highly charged situation
- Lots of spectators
- Need to quickly handle the situation
Situations:
Possible culturally-based behaviors

- Talking out (aka “overlap”)
  - *Origin*: churches and desired group responses to leader
  - Demonstrates engagement

- Ignoring requests
  - *Origin*: need for academic support?
  - Functional alternative to defiance?
  - Rather look bad than stupid

- Culturally-based behaviors are functional, and appropriate behaviors that are needed outside of school.
Situations:
Responses to culturally-based behaviors

• May be desirable/adaptive outside of school
• May work/be reinforced in other settings
• Not necessarily “wrong” – just not for school

• Solutions
  1. Be explicit in teaching situational specificity (“code-switching”)
  2. Incorporate opportunities where culturally based behaviors can be used in the school setting.
Decision States

Setting Events

• An event occurring before or with an antecedent that increases likelihood of a behavior

• Sets it up (slow trigger)

• Sometimes is present and **sometimes is not**

• Does not require one’s awareness
  • Getting up on the wrong side of the bed!
  • You look in their eyes and you just know!
# Technical and Adaptive Moves Made to Address Bias

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<tr>
<td>• Safe and Inclusive Practices</td>
<td>• Data based decision making to identify VDPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased awareness of adult emotional states</td>
<td>• Improved SWPBIS implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased awareness of how unconscious racial bias can affect decisions</td>
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Examine the technical and adaptive strategies used to support SLTs in increasing equitable discipline practices and outcomes
Intentional DIT Decisions

- Board of Education Goal
- Belief System Aligns with the Work
- Re-Allocation of Resources
- PBIS and Equity are Priorities
- Monitoring Progress

District Implementation Team (DIT)
17th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

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