

What Is High School PBIS?

High school PBIS is simply PBIS implemented in high schools. The same critical features apply. A representative school leadership team works with administrators, school personnel, and students to:

- Identify and monitor school-wide outcomes
- Develop systems to support and sustain implementation
- Implement evidence-based practices to create positive social and learning environments
- Develop data management systems to monitor progress and make decisions

The difference with high schools is: The school's context carries an equally important weight. There are three primary contextual influences to consider in high schools:

School Size

High schools are large and complex. With big administrative teams and school personnel divided by departments, a challenge for PBIS implementation is to build consistency and predictability across so many folks.

School Culture

The organizational culture in high schools is made up of the values, expectations, attitudes, and beliefs held by the people inside. Sometimes high school personnel prioritize academics and feel less of a responsibility to teach things like social skills or study strategies.

Age of Students

High school students expect to have input on decisions impacting their experience. High school PBIS leadership teams have to find ways to get students more involved in their process.

Why Address High School PBIS?

When implemented with fidelity, high school PBIS is associated with reductions in office discipline referrals, frequency of tardy behavior, and in- and out-of-school suspensions. High schools also see increases in attendance and improved student perceptions of school climate and safety. These outcomes are particularly important at the high school level because they are conceptually and descriptively related to reducing dropout risk.[1][2][3]

Foundational Systems

High school contextual factors – size, culture, and student age – have an impact on three foundational systems:

- Leadership
- Communication
- Data systems

Leadership

Leadership teams include representation from administrative teams, PBIS teams, and other leadership roles in the building – deans of students, department heads, etc. Including representation from these teams ensures everyone works together to accomplish the school's overall goals.

Communication

This system includes plans for what needs to be communicated, how it should be communicated, and when it will be communicated to the school's various stakeholder groups. Communication should be two-way and include students.

Data Systems

It's important to know how high schools will collect, summarize, and use data to drive decisions. Because high schools collect lots of information, the systems need to be clear and run by school personnel who understand how these data connect with each other in meaningful ways.

Tiers of High School PBIS

Just as with PBIS implemented at lower grade levels, high school's implement a multi-tiered system of PBIS practices in their setting.

Tier 1

At Tier 1, leadership teams focus on building systems to support staff buy-in and student voice. In addition to focusing on foundational systems, teams integrate practices for supporting academic performance alongside both positive behavior, and improved attendance. The transition from middle to high school is a difficult one for many students. Success during freshman year is critical. Leadership teams may consider proactively intensifying support for freshman.

Tier 2

Tier 2 supports function the same in high schools as they do in lower grade levels. The only small difference is Tier 2 supports include a focus on improving attendance and academic performance in addition to addressing a student's behavior needs.

Tier 3

Tier 3 supports at the high school level are student-focused with a clear connection to transition and career/college readiness goals.

Assessing High School PBIS

In addition to using the Tiered Fidelity Inventory to assess fidelity of implementation, high school leadership teams should consider at least four types of data to inform their implementation:

- Attendance
- Behavior
- Course Performance
- Climate