

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN CREATING SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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School-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) has been identified as an effective and efficient method to teach students prosocial skills. It requires both effective behavior support practices and systems that will support these changes, including data-based decision making among the school leadership team. There are many practical and systemic factors that school personnel should examine before they consider themselves ready for systemic school-wide changes, including those associated with the (a) leadership team, (b) staff, (c) administration, (d) coach/facilitator, and (e) district. Practical considerations in each of these areas will be identified and discussed so that practitioners can anticipate their needs as they create effective SWPBS, particularly in low performing urban schools. © 2007 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

In recent years, school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) programs have been accepted by practitioners and researchers as an effective and practical method to teach social skills to students (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005; Putnam, Luiselli, Handler, & Jefferson, 2003; Safran, 2003; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Most of these programs include the development of positive behavioral expectations, specific methods to teach these expectations to staff and students, proactive supervision or monitoring of behaviors, contingency management systems to reinforce and correct behavior, and methods to measure outcomes and to evaluate progress (Luiselli, Putnam, & Handler, 2001; Luiselli et al., 2005; Putnam, Handler, & Luiselli, 2003; Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000). Successful implementation of these changes in behavior support practices by administration, staff, and a leadership team often requires both training and technical assistance as staff members learn proactive approaches to change student behaviors; however, effective programs consist not only of effective practices but also require the development of systems that will support these changes and data-based decision making among the school leadership team. Changes to SWPBS practices support student behaviors, changes to the systems support staff behaviors, and the use of a data-management system supports data-based decision making. It is the interrelationship among these three areas (i.e., practices, systems, and data) that will dramatically affect outcomes (Horner & Sugai, 2000; Sugai & Horner, 1999, 2002).

Although research clearly supports the use of SWPBS, practitioners must be aware of several practical and systemic factors before attempting universal (i.e., those interventions applied to all students in a given population, such as school-wide) changes in practice. These factors include (a) the development and functioning of a leadership team, (b) staff participation and involvement, (c) administrative support, (d) the development of competent coaching capacity, and (e) district support. Every school and/or district that considers implementing SWPBS will need to address these factors. Our experiences over the past several years providing systemic behavioral consultation in urban schools across the country have yielded several challenges which impact on the aforementioned factors and can significantly affect a school's readiness for systemic change, degree of implementation, rate of progress, and sustainability of school-wide practices.

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A large number of the urban schools we have worked with have implemented SWPBS because they were experiencing high rates of disciplinary problems, violent behaviors, suspensions, or were identified as “persistently dangerous” according to *No Child Left Behind* standards. The majority of students at these schools come from single-parent families, receive free or reduced meals, and are from minority backgrounds. These urban schools have faced many challenges associated with poverty (e.g., limited resources, low parental involvement), poor staff satisfaction (e.g., high staff turnover and absentee rates, low ratings of school safety), and low student academic performance (e.g., identified as “low-performing” schools, students performing well below grade level). This article will describe the impact of these challenges on the factors listed earlier related to successful implementation of SWPBS.

TEAM FACTORS

Several initial steps need to be completed before schools are ready to begin the process of SWPBS. After administration demonstrates a commitment to universal changes, it must establish a team of “stakeholders” who will receive training and consultation from consultants or district coaches with expertise in behavior support practices. Important practical considerations for establishing a core leadership team with competencies in the area of positive behavior support and systemic support of this team’s activities are presented next.

Establishing a Leadership Team

The successful completion and initial presentation of the SWPBS plan is dependent on a team of dedicated staff members who possess credibility and leadership among their colleagues. These might be staff members who are active in the teachers’ union or veteran staff who have acquired extensive knowledge and expertise in education and/or classroom management. The team also should include representatives across various school communities (e.g., general and special educators, teachers across grade levels, specialists, paraprofessionals, support personnel, and community liaisons) to increase staff participation.

The team functions more effectively when team members are equipped with skills in effective communication and team building. Given that the work of the leadership team primarily involves the review of school information and the assessment of intervention effectiveness and need for modifications, this process requires effective problem solving. Team members who can effectively communicate their perspectives and allow for useful dialogue toward resolving identified problems help to contribute to a team-building process that leads to satisfied, unified, and effective teams. Pupil support personnel, such as school psychologists or counselors, are often helpful team members in this regard. These individuals may possess a high level of respect among staff, knowledge of PBS strategies and problem-solving skills, and skills in facilitating team process.

It is important that schools and prospective team members understand the time commitment necessary to achieve effective PBS implementation practices. Our unpublished data indicate that the leadership team needs approximately 40 to 50 hr of planning and development time during the first year to identify the schools’ needs, develop a plan, and present the plan to staff and students. Following the launch of the SWPBS plan, the leadership team members will need approximately 2 hr per month to discuss plan effectiveness and determine if the desired outcomes are forthcoming or if modifications to the plan are needed.

Administration will need to determine how to support PBS training activities and subsequent meetings during implementation by providing coverage for teachers during the school day or scheduling additional time outside of the school day. In addition, schools will need to set aside funds for professional development and the follow-up activities that are required for successful plan development and implementation. It is particularly helpful to offer additional incentives such

as professional-development credits or graduate-school credits given teachers' extensive involvement in the development of the program.

Leadership-Team Activities

Critical activities of the leadership team that can dramatically impact the rate of SWPBS implementation include (a) consistent reliance on PBS principles to guide decision making and practice, (b) an understanding of and skills for effective team process, (c) team activities (e.g., regular team meetings, the nature of team meetings, action-focused agendas, follow-up support), and (d) an ability to identify and achieve specific goals that contribute to sustained PBS implementation across the school. Because the leadership team often serves as the guiding force in the schools' reliance on PBS practices, it is essential that these members build and maintain competencies in PBS knowledge and skills. Once a team has been established, a training series is implemented to review key concepts about student development, discipline, and the PBS theoretical approach to changing behavior, improving school climate, and facilitating system effectiveness. Training then focuses on the guiding principles of PBS that provide the framework for the development of an individually tailored SWPBS plan. Team members' PBS knowledge and mastery of skills begin with an initial series of workshops and continues across each year through mini "booster" trainings, the purpose of which is to review key PBS principles and examples of their application in a SWPBS plan. When gaps in knowledge exist because team members have not developed a solid level of competence, they are directed to available resource guides and training materials or they are given opportunities for guided practice with a team member who is competent in the identified area. In this way, teams ensure a sustained level of competence and mastery in the necessary PBS-related skills to guide decision making and problem solving. These practices yield expert systems within the school, thereby increasing internal capacity for long-term implementation and sustainability.

The rate of implementation of a school's SWPBS plan is often linked to the leadership-team's ability to hold efficient and effective team meetings. Effective teams, for example, have systemic supports that promote regular team attendance and participation, and a structure for the meeting process (Horner & Sugai, 2004). Teams begin with regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., one or two times per month) at times conducive to full attendance and plan for methods to promote staff participation (e.g., financial support for time, prompts before meeting dates, engaging activity at start of meeting, shared roles/responsibilities across all members). An agenda is established for each meeting that follows from input by team members from previous meetings and allows for updates by all members to enhance participation and a sense of ownership whereby each member feels like a meaningful part of the process. Further, each meeting is characterized by a problem-solving process resulting in an action plan that consistently stems from the overall vision, the SWPBS, and specific target goals based on ongoing review of school data.

Our work has found that the development and completion of written action-plan steps by members of the leadership team contribute to more thorough implementation of PBS practices. For example, a leadership team may determine that the majority of their students cannot recite the school-wide rules. In response, the team might develop an action plan that includes a week of lesson plans to be taught to students as a review of the school-wide expectations. In this respect, team members understand that meetings are most effective when the focus is on data review, problem solving, and planning and follow-up activities to enact the identified solutions.

Planning for Team Attrition

Unfortunately, ideal members of the leadership team often serve on multiple committees and may not have the necessary time required to participate in training and ongoing team activities.

Thus, it is suggested that the leadership team begin with 8 to 10 staff members and solicit others who are energetic, enthusiastic, and committed to the long-term success of the school. These may be staff members who are willing to put in the extra time needed to develop and implement the SWPBS and are willing to passionately support the changes that will come from proactive PBS. Schools should plan for as much as 30% turnover and begin each year by presenting staff with an opportunity to join the team and to receive specialized training to participate in leadership activities.

Communication Between the Leadership Team and School Administration

Communication between the leadership team and administration is essential, as staff members are often reluctant to make decisions around school discipline policies (e.g., detention and suspensions procedures) and school procedures (e.g., staff walk students to and from lunch room, staff monitor hallways and stairwells during transitions) without the approval of administration. Moreover, most school administrators require updates regarding changes to school discipline policies and school procedures before the plan is completed and presented to the staff.

A team representative or chairperson can facilitate communication between the team and administration. The chairperson is typically appointed for the school year and should be capable of presenting progress to the administration and receiving feedback to discuss with the team. In our experiences, when schools develop teams with these characteristics, they tend to be more effective in completing the SWPBS in a timely manner and in having the strategies accepted by a majority of the staff.

STAFF FACTORS

Although the leadership team is responsible for the development of the SWPBS and overseeing implementation and evaluation of the plan, all school staff are responsible for the implementation of effective school strategies. Systemic support of these practices requires several considerations.

Resources for Staff Training

Just as school systems must support the leadership team by allocating time for training, they also must consider how whole-school trainings will take place. Some schools rely on professional-development (PD) time to train staff in the SWPBS and classroom behavior support strategies; however, if PD time is not available, staff must be prepared to stay after school, attend workshops on weekends, and complete assignments during nonschool hours, and the school or district must be prepared to compensate staff for this time. Prior to investing in the development of school-wide practices, systems should assess whether they can support staff development in this manner and set clear expectations with staff regarding participation.

Part of planning for staff training should include considering staff knowledge of behavioral principles and procedures to ensure that staff can fulfill the expectations set forth by the SWPBS plan developed by the school. Additionally, the SWPBS will affect how staff and administration execute discipline policies, school procedures, classroom management procedures, and the overall interactions between staff and students. Thus, the implementation of effective practices is dependent on arrangements to ensure adequate staff training.

Communication Between the Leadership Team and Staff

Good communication between the leadership team and the staff regarding plan development is important to ensure that staff are not “surprised” by any changes to school procedures and discipline policies when the SWPBS is launched. Additionally, frequent communication enables staff to discuss and provide feedback to the leadership team, ensuring a smooth transition to the

new SWPBS. Feedback to staff after implementation provides them with data that can be used to make informed changes about their practices as well as data on student behavior that can motivate staff to continue implementation of the SWPBS. For example, as part of the SWPBS, the team develops an incentive system whereby staff deliver a reward to students they observe following the behavioral expectations outlined in the SWPBS. Recording the number of rewards distributed during some interval of time (e.g., weekly or monthly tallies) and presenting that information to staff allows them to analyze their behavior regarding reward distribution and to determine if staff goals and expectations are being met. Dissemination of information to staff can be completed through the use of weekly bulletins, newsletters, staff meetings, or common planning times.

Depending on the organization and cohesiveness of the system, communication patterns and practices within schools often may be fragmented, subject to misinformation, or lacking a formal structure whereby staff may be “in the know” only if they are in the right place at the right time. To build the kind of communication infrastructure that will benefit effective implementation of PBS at all stages (e.g., initial introduction, invitation to participate, implementation guidance, feedback regarding effectiveness of the intervention), it is important that a formal system of communication be developed and enacted at the outset. The purpose of the communication system will be to provide information regarding the status and needs of SWPBS implementation, and to gather input and feedback regarding staff, student, and/or family issues and questions regarding SWPBS implementation. Again, effective implementation of SWPBS is characterized by schools that include, empower, and collaborate with all individuals in the process of change.

The frequency of communication may change as the school moves through various stages of development and implementation, but should occur at a minimum on a monthly basis. Communication during the development phase might include an initial letter regarding the program and information regarding an “input box” for questions and comments. Once implementation has taken place, communication to the staff should occur monthly, with additional communication as needed to staff, students, and family around particular implementation needs (e.g., additional announcements regarding the highlighted “rule of the month”).

Regardless of the frequency or mode of communication, information should include some content devoted to team responses to queries. Again, the focus is on the identified issues and proposed next steps/solutions based on the team’s review of school data and input from relevant stakeholders.

Assessment of Staff Buy-In and Resistance

Staff buy-in is an influential component for any intervention geared toward reforming school practices. A key principle of PBS implementation is utilizing data to guide decision making regarding needs for enhanced implementation. Therefore, it is useful for teams to assess buy-in regularly so that any necessary adjustments and/or needs for a response can be made. Assessment of staff buy-in (and resistance) can be accomplished using a formal method of assessment whereby (a) the school is evaluated in terms of observed staff practices and their link to the SWPBS and (b) a sample set of staff are interviewed regarding key SWPBS components to check for accuracy and consistency with the school’s SWPBS. These formal assessments can be scheduled to occur on a quarterly basis at the outset of implementation so that this data can guide any midcourse corrections, and then two or three times per year to track implementation progress and/or barriers.

At the outset, it is recommended that at least 80% of all school staff agree to and commit to SWPBS implementation; however, our experiences in urban school settings have indicated that it is still possible to attain positive outcomes in schools at levels less than 80% at the outset. Therefore, individual school administration may decide to proceed with SWPBS implementation, but institute action-plan steps to increase the level of “buy-in” (e.g., more education about the principles

related to SWPBS, obtain survey data regarding staff perceptions of pros and cons elicited by grade-level and/or team-based leaders). In practice, a majority of staff committing to the process of systemic change tends to help create the momentum necessary to engage additional staff. Fortunately, in our experience, when other factors are in place such as an effective leadership team and administrative and district support for the initiative, some schools have realized positive changes even when there is less than full staff commitment at the onset of the process.

ADMINISTRATOR FACTORS

Based on research related to how managers create effective work environments, Sugai (2005) suggested that certain leadership characteristics can help administrators successfully implement and sustain SWPBS practices. Some of these include redesigning school settings to change both adult and student behavior, actively and frequently monitoring and acknowledging staff and students who are meeting expectations, establishing a small number of specific priorities, and building capacity such that individual staff members contribute to the school organization and the durability of the SWPBS. Thus, it is expected that administrators consider the SWPBS initiative a priority, are knowledgeable about PBS practices and systems change, participate in the leadership-team meetings, and support implementation of new practices by modeling and reinforcing staff as they implement the SWPBS.

Ideally, a district or state is committed to systems change ahead of time and approaches training, development, and implementation with an administrator prepared with at least the following: (a) behavior support as one of the top three school-improvement goals, (b) a budget to support the implementation of SWPBS, (c) a leadership team representative of the school, and (d) 80% or more of the staff agreeing to implement SWPBS practices. There are situations in which a district or a state agrees to have a PBS initiative and schools (and administrators) are encouraged to participate. In our experience, when schools are asked to participate after being identified as low performing or persistently dangerous, they may perceive participation as punitive.

When participation is not truly voluntary or it is not clear that administrative support is present, the following recommendations can increase administrative support and staff “buy in.”

Rapport Building

In circumstances when an outside coach or facilitator is responsible for guiding training, development, and implementation of the SWPBS, it is essential that the coach/facilitator take time to build a relationship with the administrator. It is important for the consultant to know the administrator’s vision for the school, his or her leadership style, and the history with his or her staff and district personnel even if this interferes with projected training and development time lines. During the rapport-building phase, communication between the coach and the administrator may be more frequent, and may include more on-site visits as a show of support. It also is helpful to reduce the number of demands placed on the administrator while establishing rapport.

Knowledge of Systems Change and PBS

When an SWPBS initiative is not sought out by the administrator, it is helpful to take the time to ensure that the administrator has a complete understanding of PBS. Consultants or coaches can provide the framework for systems change, the defining characteristics of PBS, time lines, expectations, and anticipated costs. When an administrator has a solid foundation, he or she can take an active role in teaching the staff about PBS and presenting the initiative as one on which the school is embarking (e.g., “We’re doing this.”) rather than one that might be imposed on the school by others (e.g., “This is being required of us.”)

Attendance and Participation at Leadership-Team Meetings

We have found that the administrator's attendance during training and development is critical. First and foremost, it is an indicator of support for the initiative. Second, during initial training and development, there will be key decisions made regarding changes to discipline policies and school procedures requiring input from the administrator. Although attendance at leadership-team meetings is still important during implementation, given the multitude of responsibilities an administrator encounters in a school year, there is flexibility in the frequency and duration of attendance for an administrator at these meetings. Leadership style and stage of implementation (e.g., initial implementation vs. sustainability) will factor into these decisions.

Schools that are initially implementing PBS strategies will want the administrator present and participating during portions of the meeting in which action-plan items involving the administrator are discussed, data are reviewed, and decisions are made regarding changes to policy and school-wide procedures. It is helpful when an administrator accepts responsibility for specific action-plan items, especially those related to scheduling and disseminating information to the entire school staff. Preparing an agenda with an anticipated time frame corresponding to each item will help administrators plan accordingly.

In contrast, schools that are more fluent in the SWPBS process and are sustaining behavior support practices may accept a less involved level of participation from their administration. These teams may be able to designate a team member to follow up with the administrator. In addition, administrators attempting to promote leadership skills in others may want to see their role more as a facilitator rather than as a decision maker. In these situations, it is important to recognize whether there is an overall collegial climate in the school where training and feedback from peers (leadership-team members) is accepted or whether predetermined job descriptions may prevent team members from feeling comfortable "training" their peers.

Participation in the SWPBS Program

Participation includes visibly implementing PBS practices. The administrator needs to be active in modeling the practices staff are expected to implement. Administrators should be seen distributing the school-wide tokens and using the school-wide rules and expectations as part of their language with students, staff, and parents. One example of administrative support was observing a vice-principal distribute bags of tokens to staff with a memo encouraging them to hand out at least 25 tokens that week.

Monitoring Implementation

To build capacity within a school, leadership-team members will take on roles of training and assessing implementation of SWPBS practices. When members of the leadership team become uncomfortable recommending strategies to colleagues, the administrator must take responsibility for holding staff accountable for implementation. While the leadership team can be successful at providing support to peers who have bought into the school-wide discipline program, administrators will need to develop a plan for responding to staff who do not implement school-wide practices.

Establishing a commitment from an administrator before training and development will facilitate quicker completion of action-plan items during implementation. Formal assessment of administrator leadership in a school's effective PBS implementation can be measured using the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001). Our experiences in eight middle schools in an urban school district indicate that after 2 years of services, schools with at least one administrator who met at least 80% of the "Leadership" factors (e.g., administrator has convened a representative team, administrator is an active member of leadership

team, meetings occur regularly) realized higher levels of overall SWPBS plan implementation (83 vs. 66%). Notably, a higher percentage of action-plan items (68 vs. 57%) was completed by the leadership teams in schools meeting the necessary level of overall PBS implementation (i.e., at least 80% implementation score as measured by the SET) as compared with schools that did not meet this implementation benchmark.

In addition, the schools that had better administrative support and teams that completed more action-plan steps had 10% fewer out-of-school suspensions during the implementation of their SWPBS program. Therefore, when administrators participated in and monitored implementation of SWPBS practices, there was an increased likelihood that these practices would be implemented with fidelity by other staff, as evidenced by the greater precision with which behavior support action-plan goals were achieved.

COACHING/FACILITATOR FACTORS

System-wide reform efforts within education often require the presence of at least one person who can take on the role of a coach in terms of having a clear vision of the direction and goals of the intervention for the school and/or district. For implementation of SWPBS, this coaching role requires competencies not only in PBS-related technical skills but also skills in team development and strategies to inspire team effectiveness through modeling and reinforcement of effective team processes. This might include establishing strategies with the school team to encourage full and timely attendance, participation, completion of action-plan steps, and efforts to work collaboratively across groups (e.g., with teachers and administrators). The coach may serve as a facilitator at the outset, providing the leadership and guidance for teams to establish a positive and effective team structure and process. Ideally, this coach then gradually fades his or her role as facilitator and allows other team leaders to emerge and fulfill this role.

The coach can be characterized as someone with technical skills and as a cheerleader who helps remind teams of the overall vision and specific details necessary for the team to stay on track. Coaches should attend monthly team meetings and be on site at the school at least twice per month during plan development and initial implementation. This presence often serves as a prompt for teams and allows opportunities for the coach to guide teams through data-based decision making. This can be a difficult task when school teams are overwhelmed with multiple initiatives and swayed toward spending time venting rather than action-oriented problem solving. Coaching is often critical during those phases when teams may feel a lack of support in their efforts. By establishing a formal position with at least two individuals trained as coaches, there is always someone who can celebrate team accomplishments, provide feedback on accountability when the team veers off course, and give additional technical assistance.

Depending on the resources available within the system, coaches might be identified within the school to work with an external coach (e.g., district personnel, outside consultant) who can provide oversight and additional support to the school coach and/or directly to the team. Decisions regarding when to establish or utilize an internal versus an external coach are determined by the competencies and mastery of skills related to PBS implementation. Schools may decide that an internal coach is most helpful in guiding the regular school-leadership-team activities, but that external coaches are better prepared to provide training to coaches and leadership-team members and/or guiding district-level reform efforts.

DISTRICT FACTORS

When determining potential resources and barriers for the implementation of SWPBS implementation, it is important to look not only at systems within the school but also at the district level. The district's commitment to change can be a critical variable that can either support or delay the

ability of a school to implement PBS. There are several district-level factors such as readiness, financial commitment, and historical factors that a school should identify prior to starting a SWPBS initiative.

District Readiness

District readiness can be defined as the understanding by district personnel that systemic change will require a multiyear commitment of time and resources intended to produce changes in adult and student behavior. The district or system needs to accept the notion that a systemic approach, rather than continuing only with individual and classroom-wide supports, would be the best way to improve the school's performance. Next, it is helpful if district personnel clearly identify attainable goals of the PBS process and have a general understanding of SWPBS principles. Finally, it is important that the district recognizes that systemic change in schools is a long-term commitment and will require effective action planning (Curtis & Stollar, 2003). To best assess district readiness, it is important to conduct interviews as well as self-assessments, such as the PBIS Implementation and Planning Self-Assessment (Sugai & Horner, 2002), and develop a time-line analysis that is reviewed and supported by district personnel.

Financial Commitment

This article has described various areas where school-level resources need to be available to support the change process prior to initiating SWPBS. It is inevitable that financial resources will need to be identified to support various components of the process as described (e.g., teacher training, planning time, and/or incentives). These financial supports may include direct funds from the district or outside sources such as grants, donations, or fundraising. Without some degree of financial commitment from the district, however, the rate of implementation can be impeded as schools attempt to support the specific components. It is paramount that school-level administrators plan with their district to identify sources of available funding, ideally prior to beginning the implementation process. Over time, as the SWPBS is fully and effectively implemented and disruptive behaviors decrease, an administrator's time for nondisciplinary activities and classroom instructional time increases (Scott & Barrett, 2004). This could help administrators restructure the way they allocate resources to allow for less district-level commitment as the program continues.

Previous Initiatives

A third factor which could impact district readiness is the district's previous success with school-wide initiatives. Schools that have tried other initiatives unsuccessfully will generally be more resistant toward future initiatives. They may perceive the initiative as yet another reform effort presented by the district that may or may not be present the following year, and thus not fully commit to the plan. Conversely, schools which have had past success with previous initiatives or teachers who already utilize PBS strategies in their classrooms are more likely to have whole-school support. Given that acquiring staff commitment is an essential component of SWPBS, interviews with administration and staff are potential sources of information regarding past initiatives and their perceived effectiveness. Data can be reviewed to address staff concerns and reinforce SWPBS as a multiyear, systemic change process to increase staff participation.

Other Current and Competing Initiatives

Similarly, it is critical to identify any parallel and potentially competing school-wide initiatives. Competing initiatives, such as a new reading curriculum, will require sharing resources (e.g., staff time, training) and will likely result in staff members who are less likely to implement either program with the integrity needed for success. Additionally, it is important to identify other

initiatives which are in place for the same purpose. For instance, a district may be considering an SWPBS program when they already have a social skills program at several grade levels. Thus, it is important to identify all school-wide initiatives in place or those planned for the future, and compare potentially competing goals across initiatives to utilize resources more efficiently.

District-Level Communication

As schools assess outcomes and attain changes in staff and student behavior, it becomes important to communicate these outcomes to district-level stakeholders. As district personnel typically have final approval in continuing or terminating school-level initiatives, it is critical that successful outcomes be celebrated and barriers to implementation be evaluated and shared with district-level staff. It is recommended that regularly scheduled meetings occur whereby outcomes related to the current initiative are summarized and reviewed with school administrators and district staff.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the SWPBS plan will affect how staff and administration execute discipline policies, school procedures, classroom management procedures, and the overall climate and interactions between staff and students; however, many systemic factors influence the degree to which schools can effectively implement an SWPBS. Although the considerations presented are not exhaustive, the goal of this article was to present some of the leadership-team, staff, administrator, coach, and district factors that can affect the successful development, implementation, and sustainability of SWPBS. Staff knowledge of PBS principles, communication among staff, administrators, and leadership-team members, financial support, and administrator support are among the most important variables in the systems-change process.

Although all schools must be cognizant of these factors and plan ahead so that the system can support changes in practice, it appears that urban schools have a unique set of challenges and tend to have more difficulty addressing these issues (Knoster, Carr, Dunlap, & Horner, 2003; Putnam, Handler, Ramirez-Platt, & Luiselli, 2004; Warren, Griggs, Lassen, McCart, & Sailor, 2003). Yet, when schools have high levels of administrator support and effective leadership teams, coaches can provide training on the technical skills that teams need to develop, implement, and evaluate SWPBS practices. In addition, our experience suggests that SWPBS is easier and more successful when school administrators and staff voluntarily participate in the process and when the system supports changes in practice. When neither is possible, coaches should assess the degree to which the school will be ready for systemic modifications and remain creative and highly flexible in terms of time lines to accomplish these goals.

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