

Widening the Circle

Celebrating Neurodiversity in Faith-based Schools

FOCUS

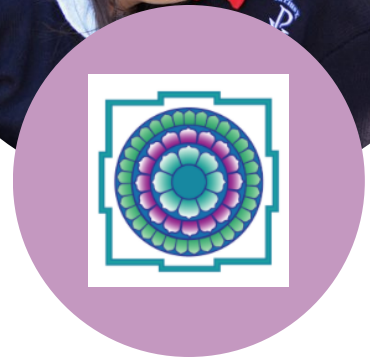
STRATEGY:

The Basics of PBIS

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which can also be referred to as Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) or School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) offer a comprehensive, preventative approach to managing student behavior. With this framework, the focus is on defining and teaching school-wide agreed-upon behavior expectations, promoted through positive reinforcement. PBIS schools collect behavioral data to identify students in need of additional supports and layer in the necessary interventions.

There are five steps to implementing PBIS which must be approached on the school level. All faculty and staff must be invested in the design and implementation. PBIS is not a program. It is a framework from which to approach your system for behavior management but must be tailored to each school culture and community.

■ **Define** – The faculty must explicitly define the behavior expectations for the school. This begins by developing three to five overarching school goals. Examples include, “Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe” or “Be Christ-like, Be Safe, Be Prepared.” Once the overall expectations are defined, the school will name the locations of the school where these behaviors should be demonstrated, naming the specific, observable behavior. For example, being safe in the hallway looks like “Students walk at all times; stay in line with face and eyes forward.” You will notice these behaviors are stated in positive terms, rather than saying “No running in the hallway.”



RESOURCES

Boyle, M. (2017) Ensuring a Place at the Table: Serving Students with Disabilities in Catholic Schools. Arlington, VA: National Catholic Education Association

Boyle, M (2010) Response to intervention: A blueprint for Catholic schools. Arlington, VA: National Catholic Education Association.

Brooks, C. and McCoy-Cejka, C. (2019) Setting the Table. Arlington, VA: National Catholic Education Association



*You aspire to great things?
Begin with little ones.*


Saint Augustine

■ **Teach** – The next stage is to explicitly teach all of the behaviors in the matrix. There are no more assumptions that kids should know how to behave in school. Every single expectation is explicitly modeled for students, so students are able to practice the behaviors and receive feedback from faculty. The first teaching experience typically occurs as a part of a school-wide Teach Day. This is a day, usually toward the start of the school year or semester, planned by the faculty in which students travel to all of the locations on the matrix to learn the expected behavior.

■ **Celebrate** – Numerous studies confirm the efficacy of positive reinforcement to change behavior, child and adult alike. Yet more specifically, research confirms that when teachers provide positive attention exactly when students are engaged in the desired behavior, students are more likely to repeat that behavior). With the PBIS model, teachers will look for opportunities to praise students positively, instead of point out the misbehavior. For example, a teacher may say, “Nathan, you have your math book and pencil and are sitting quietly. I can tell you are prepared!” PBIS schools often choose to accompany verbal praise with a system of tangible rewards. Reinforcing every behavior in the matrix with positive reinforcement would be unmanageable for teachers, so instead teachers use the verbal praise and tangible rewards strategically, to target behaviors that are challenging for groups or individuals.

■ **Remind** – Teachers also must provide frequent cues and reminders to students of the desired behaviors. For example, teachers can say, “We are about to go to a school assembly. Who can remind me of the behavior expectations while we are at a school assembly?” The five minutes spent discussing and even modeling the desired assembly behavior immediately before the students are expected to demonstrate those behaviors is extremely effective.





■ **Correct** – While the emphasis is on praise, there are certainly behaviors which necessitate correction. Within PBIS there must be a uniform system of correction. This means that one teacher should not send a child to the office for being out of uniform while another teacher ignores it. All teachers must agree what misbehaviors are considered “minor” and can be handled by the classroom teacher and what behaviors are considered “major” and would require an office referral and possible additional consequences. The use of logical consequences is suggested. These would be consequences that are reasonable and related to the problem. Therefore, teachers shouldn’t issue a one-size-fits-all consequence, such as loss of recess, for misbehaviors ranging from missing homework to disrespecting a peer, to leaving the bathroom messy. Instead, recess may only be taken away in the moment as a result of unsafe play at recess. This helps the student connect his/her misbehavior with the consequence. More than anything, correction should be approached through the lens of “re-teaching” rather than “punishing.” Major misbehaviors are also tracked school-wide so that data is available to identify students in need of additional support.

