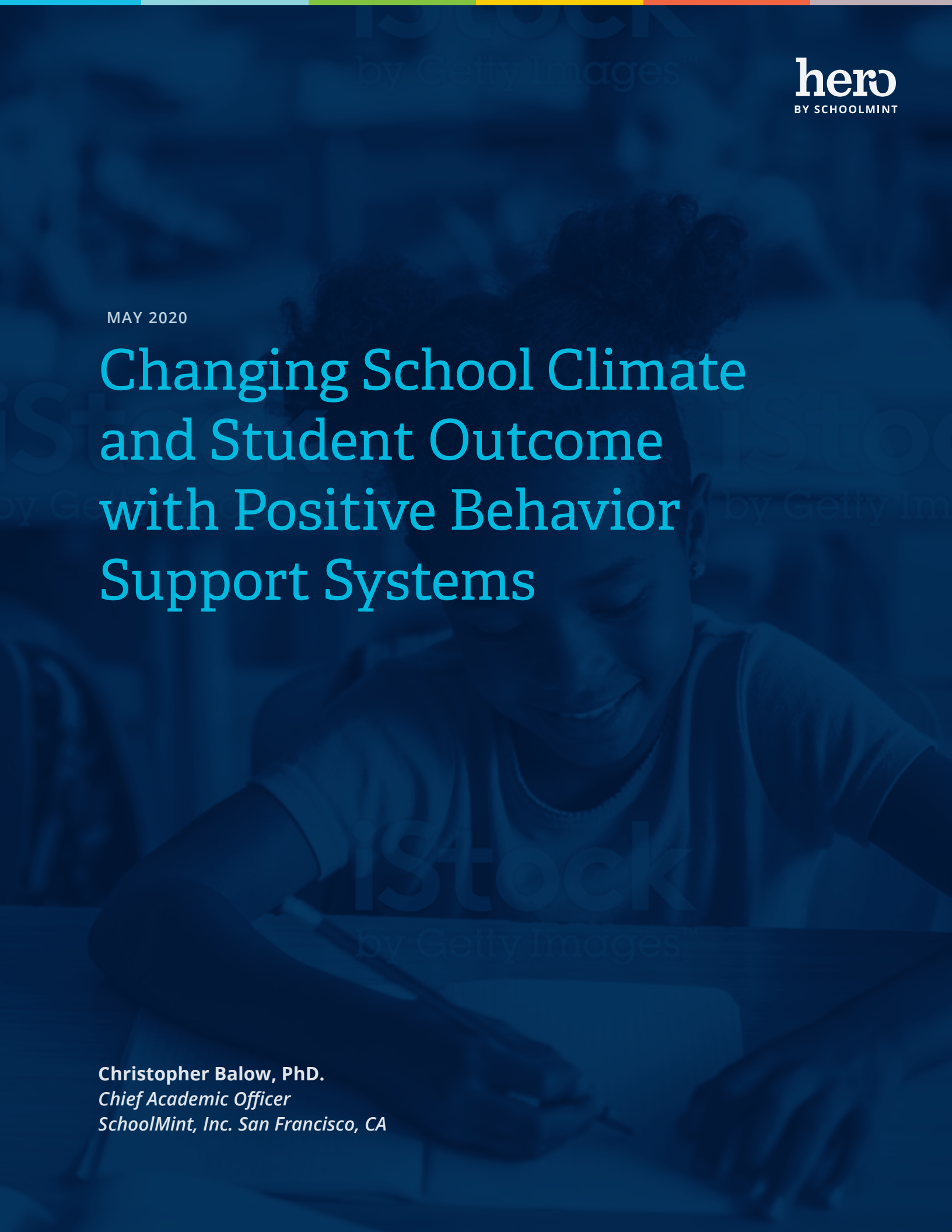

hero
BY SCHOOLMINT

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Changing School Climate and Student Outcome with Positive Behavior Support Systems

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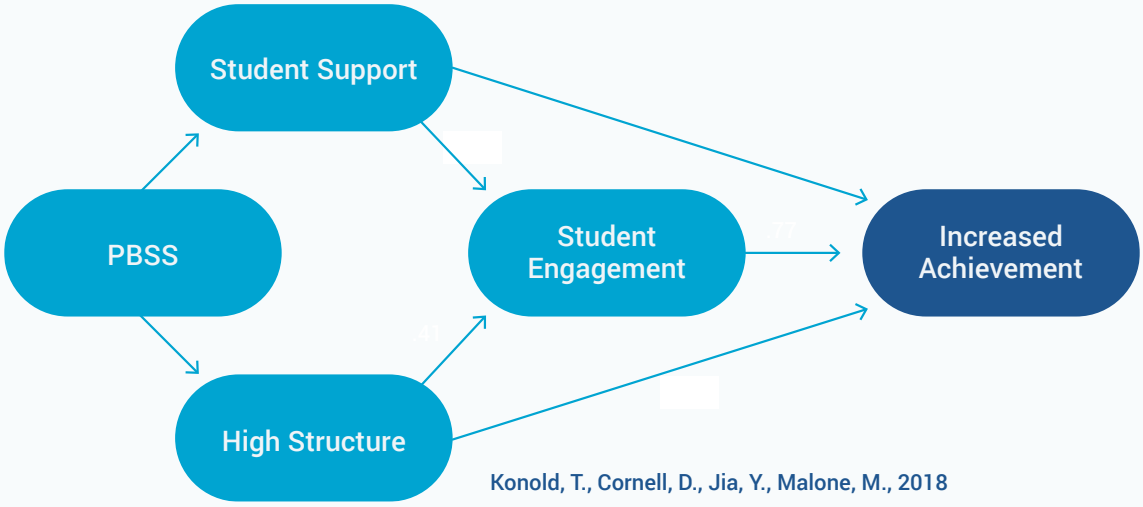
Executive Summary

Hero by SchoolMint is an enterprise-level behavior management solution that can serve any size school district and number of students. Hero is specifically designed to help districts and schools implement systemic evidence-based behavioral practices from a multi-tiered perspective and offers flexibly to institute a positive behavior support system (PBSS) or a PBIS framework. This research summary will outline the linkages of PBSS to improved school climate and increased student engagement which leads to improved academic outcomes. Additionally, this paper will outline the research evidence that PBSS efforts will also reduce student suspensions and reduce chronic absenteeism. This paper will also describe the benefits of employing Hero by SchoolMint as the platform to synchronize and support organized campus-wide PBSS or PBIS efforts.

The path model below is described in the literature as the "Authoritative Climate Model" and is shown below with significant effect sizes indicated (Konold, T., Cornell, D., Jia, Y., Malone, M., 2018). Student support and high structure in the model below are two central components of PBIS.

Authoritative Climate Model (ACM)
Multilevel multitrait-multimethod model



Konold, T., Cornell, D., Jia, Y., Malone, M., 2018

School Climate

Hero will help schools improve climate through several mechanisms as supported in the research literature (Konold, T., Cornell, D., Jia, Y., Malone, M., 2018). One of the most powerful mechanisms to improve climate is the increase of positive interactions among and between staff, students and families. Hero will help schools reduce inconsistent negative and punitive responses to student behavioral issues by helping staff increase the frequency of positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior and general positive interactions. Climate will also be improved with Hero in place through a consistent and expected application of discipline and reinforcement as delineated in the platform. Students will have a sense of positive climate as teachers are viewed as fair and equitable in their responses. Improved communications with families will also improve climate as communications can be received through frequent. Research supports that when schools use positive behavioral support systems, as supported by Hero, there will be increased teacher efficacy and autonomy which will enhance their perceptions of school climate. Hero helps institute repeatable, consistent and coherent actions around your common responses to student discipline, defining a clear behavioral matrix or expectations and providing positive reinforcement to students in tier 1. Students in need of strategic or intensive support at tiers 2 and 3 can be assigned to intervention groups and progress monitored. Hero will allow schools to create behavioral monitoring systems such as "check-in/check-out" for students receiving more intensive interventions.

Chronic Absenteeism

Hero can support the efforts to reduce chronic absenteeism through two main avenues. Firstly, chronic absenteeism is highly correlated with a "high ratio of disciplinary offenses to the number of students in the school (Hannan, S., Davis, E., Tolin, D., 2016). Implementation of PBIS practices will significantly reduce disciplinary offenses (Childs, N., et al., 2016). Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports embraces several approaches and frameworks that are research-based and have proven to reduce certain academic barriers including chronic absenteeism (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Gottfried (2011) and Sheldon and Epstein (2004), who were some of the first to thoroughly examine PBIS, found that regular school attendance is important and necessary in order to achieve academic success. PBIS, when implemented correctly, may assist students in the development and acquisition of the intrinsic value of regular school attendance. Nelson, J. (2019) concluded that PBIS programs are beneficial and effective in reducing chronic attendance patterns if the PBIS faculty works in a school culture that provides comprehensive professional development and a creative student incentive program. The Hero

tool is designed to deliver PBIS practices insofar as the institution of consistent responses to behavior, positively reinforcing good behavior, providing corrective responses and tracking students in behavioral interventions. Therefore, improved attendance can be expected.

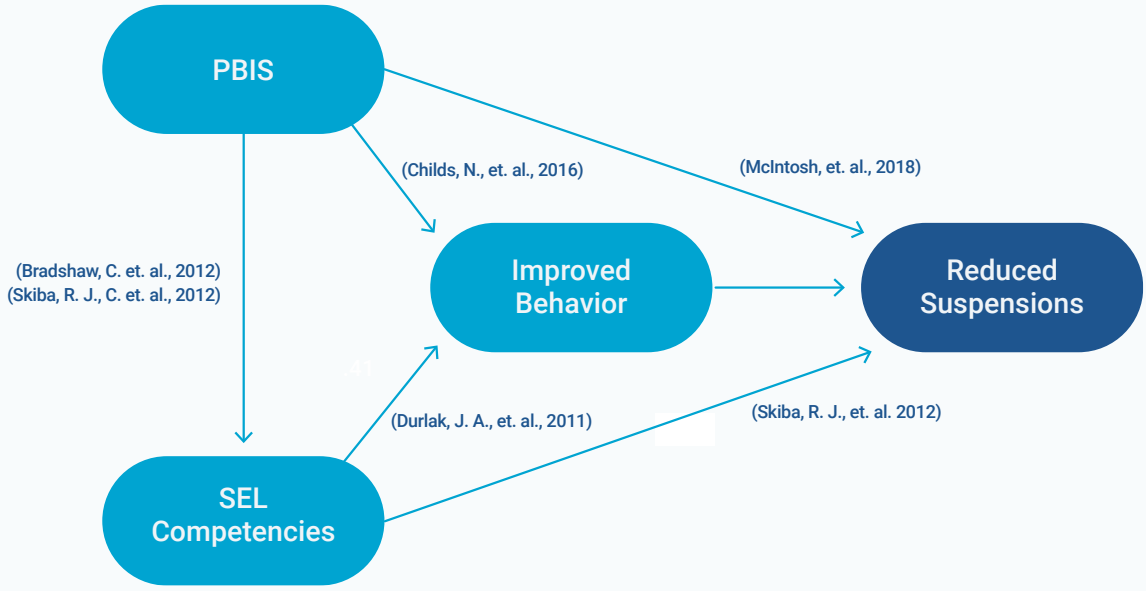
Secondly, tardiness is viewed as a precursor to chronic absenteeism. Students who eventually drop out of school actually begin disengaging from school long before formally dropping. Chronic absenteeism is a hallmark of the eventual school drop out. Smink and Schargel (2004) describe dropping out of school as a process, not an event. Tardiness often occurs throughout the process, beginning early in the student's educational career (Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 2001) and then leading to chronic absenteeism. Hero allows schools to effectively monitor, track and respond effectively to student tardiness to school and to class with dedicated software and supportive hardware solutions. These approaches will help schools decrease student tardiness and increase engaged academic instructional time.

In cases where students are chronically absent due to emotional distress, Hero can help by creating learning environments with high levels of predictability, which research has shown they are more likely to experience reduced levels of stress (Havik et al., 2015) and higher probability of attending class. Additionally, students in highly predictable classrooms have an increased awareness of the rules and expectations that are established concerning the attendance policies established at their schools (Havik et al., 2015)

Suspensions and Exclusions

Suspension has proven to be ineffective for reducing behavior issues in all students but also students with disabilities and students of color (Hemphill, Toumbourou, Herrenkohl, McMorris, & Catalano, 2006). Moreover, suspension has been associated with a variety of negative educational and social outcomes including future disciplinary infractions, repeated suspension, academic failure, school disengagement, and dropout (Arcia, 2006; Scott, Nelson, & Liaupsin, 2001; Skiba & Noam, 2001). Multiple studies have shown that PBIS significantly reduces both antisocial behavior of students and the use of suspension by school personnel (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Leaf, 2012; Nelson, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2002). Due to this overall effectiveness, the framework has been viewed as a potentially effective approach for not only reducing overall suspensions of special education students and also reducing racial disparities in suspensions (Gregory, Skiba, & Mediratta, 2017; Tobin & Vincent, 2011). Research has found that implementation of the school-wide positive behavioral support your SEL initiatives. Results from a large recent study by McIntosh, Gion, & Bastable (2018) showed that overall suspension rates were 20% lower for schools implementing Tier 1 positive behavior supports with fidelity and was also related to decreased suspension disproportionality for black students. In general, there appears to be a high probability that, when implemented with fidelity, positive behavior supports can contribute to reductions in school suspension and expulsion (Kramarczuk, Fergus, Thorius, 2017). The Hero digital platform is aligned to the best practices of PBIS to provide consistency and fidelity of implementation and to reduce ineffective exclusionary discipline for students. Below is a path model for reducing suspensions using PBIS with specific directional impacts and citations.

Reducing Suspensions: PBIS Model



Academic Performance

Research studies have supported that the use of positive behavior approaches can improve the academic performance of students. A comprehensive review of studies dating back to the year 2000 suggests that positive climate (which is supported by PBIS) can successfully disrupt the associations between low socioeconomic status (SES) and poor academic achievement, although the directional and causal relations still need to be clarified (Berkowitz, R., Moore, H., Astor, R., Benbenishty, R., 2017). A 2017 analysis revealed that student academic outcomes were significantly higher at high- and medium-fidelity PBIS schools than low-fidelity PBIS schools (Houchens, G., Zhang, J., Davis, K., 2017). These approaches will improve student-teacher relationships by increasing the frequency of positive interactions and students will therefore be more highly motivated to learn. Clark (2009) found student achievement improved on Measures of Academic Progress tests (MAP) after implementing PBIS as a result of changed teacher and student behavior. Hero was designed to efficiently implement these evidence-based approaches with consistency, therefore academic gains would be expected. Many Hero customers, using non-experimental procedures, have reviewed their student outcome data and report increases in academic performance and prosocial behaviors while reducing negative behavioral incidents (e.g., Boynton Beach Florida High School findings are available upon request).

Parental Engagement

Parental involvement is a key component in addressing behavioral issues and chronic absenteeism. Hero has a parent smartphone application (depicted below) to keep parents well informed of their students' status at school. Parents can receive push notification of student behavior based upon a schools' unique desires (i.e., only positive behaviors) and assignment of corrective responses (i.e., detention) or into intervention groups. Parents can receive instant notifications if their student is absent from school or tardy to class.

The transition from elementary to middle school can be difficult for all students as they experience decreases in academic motivation and achievement, but particularly for students with chronic behavior problems (Young, Caldarella, Richardson, & Young, 2012). In middle schools, teachers report that problem behaviors are of primary concern with issues such as disruption, defiance, and aggression, and are major roadblocks to student achievement and performance (Harrison, Vannest, Davis, & Reynolds, 2012).

Compounding the problem, a study by Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri, & Goel (2011) found that 65% of teachers report receiving little or no training in managing difficult classroom behaviors. Teachers without classroom management skills will frequently use harsh verbal reprimands and these untrained teachers report higher levels of disruptive student behavior, personal discouragement, and emotional exhaustion than their peers (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Also, many teachers will alternatively rely on punishments for classroom problem behaviors and very offer few positive and proactive strategies which results in escalating suspension rates in middle schools (Owen, Wettach, & Hoffman, 2015). Another concerning statistic is that suspension disproportionately target youth of ethnic minorities and students with disabilities (Skiba, Shure, & Williams, 2011).

The correlation between academic achievement and classroom behavior is evident and it is understandable as classroom behavior problems can cost teachers and students hundreds of instructional hours each year and the average office referral wastes 20 minutes of instructional time (Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008; Scott & Barrett, 2004).

Positive behavioral support systems (PBSS) applies a multitiered system to efficiently address the behavioral needs of all students. PBSS begins by organizing the school environment for effective, efficient, and relevant use of research-based behavioral interventions (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Clear classroom expectations are a cornerstone to effective classroom management (Kehle, Bray, Theodore, Jenson, & Clark, 2000; Sailor, Dunlap, Sugai, & Horner, 2013). In this process, teachers must identify both desired and undesired behaviors; as they reinforce expectations, student engagement in desired behaviors will increase (Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, & Weaver, 2008). A recent study of 1,200 schools in Florida found statistically significantly fewer behavioral incidents and suspensions in schools implementing PBSS with fidelity along with decreasing trends of ODRs, ISSs, and OSSs. Schools with the most robust implementations realized lower ODRs and had corresponding fewer ISSs and OSSs (Childs, N., et. al., 2016). But despite the demonstrated efficacy of PBSS, secondary schools have been less likely to adopt such practices compared to elementary schools, particularly at the classroom level (Freeman et al., 2016).

A new study by Willis, H., et. al (2019) looked at PBSS and the use of "interdependent group contingencies" in middle schools as a behavior management strategy in which positive reinforcement depends on the behavior of an entire group of students (Alberto & Troutman, 2017). Interdependent group contingencies have been shown to be highly effective for improving behavior and time on task (Trevino, Maack, Kamps, & Wills, 2015). Within the framework of PBSS there are clear classroom expectations taught through structured lessons, structured behavior-specific praise paired with the interdependent group contingency. The group contingency component included (a) dividing the class into teams (b) using a unique class reward menu to support differential reinforcement, and (c) providing students with positive, constructive teacher feedback (behavior-specific praise) to recognize and reward desired behavior and eliminate potential reinforcement for problem.

The results of this middle school study indicated improved rates of on-task behavior at both class-wide and individual student levels, with corresponding increases in teacher praise and decreases in teacher reprimands. This classroom management strategy shows promise for increased student on-task behavior, increased teacher praise rates and decreased teacher reprimand rates.

Many schools and districts will require a digital platform that is aligned to the best practices of positive behavior support systems if they wish to achieve overall consistency and fidelity of implementation which is critical for efficacious outcomes. The Hero platform from SchoolMint is just such a platform and is well suited to deliver the interdependent group contingency intervention and to track and increase the ration of positive feedback to negative reprimands described in the Willis study.

Hero by SchoolMint, is a software platform that is designed to support the improvement of your school climate, particularly from the authoritative climate model perspective and positive behavior support systems. Hero allows schools to deliver on the promise of high structure and student support by putting into place consistent rules, norms and expectations coupled with consistent corrective responses to behavior. Therefore, students will experience a highly predictable and equitable environment. With the help of Hero, students will also experience increased levels of support from their teachers and an increase in positive interactions, which will result in greater student engagement and academic success.

Dr. Christopher Balow from SchoolMint will provide your school a free 1-hour video conference to help you get started.

Contact Dr. Balow at: chris.balow@schoolmint.com or 651-210-5732

Citations

Improving Student Behavior in Middle Schools: Results of a Classroom Management Intervention.
Howard P. Wills, PhD, Paul Caldarella, PhD, Benjamin A. Mason, PhD, Amanda Lappin, PhD., and Darlene H. Anderson, PhD. Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions 2019, Vol. 21(4) 213–227

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