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SCHOOL-FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WITHIN THE SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

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SPECIAL SESSION

SCHOOL-FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WITHIN THE SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

Current federal legislation in the United States and empirical research strengthen the need for developing school-family partnerships in improving the educational outcomes of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students with disabilities. However, most of the emphasis has been given primarily on establishing such partnerships at the individual student level. With the rapid expansion of the Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) framework in the United States (Sugai & Horner, 2002) and internationally (Ogden, Sørlie, Arnesen, & Meek-Hansen, 2012), the role and contribution of school-family partnerships are now re-conceptualized. In this article, we review the current research evidence and school practices regarding the development of school-family partnerships within the continuum of supports in SWPBIS for all students, including those with disabilities. Specific case study examples are provided based on the continuum of supports for CLD learners with disabilities.

Keywords: culturally and linguistically diverse students, schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports, school-family collaboration

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INTRODUCTION

Strong partnerships between schools and families are critical to positive educational outcomes for students in today's schools. The diversity among students and their families can create challenges for teachers trying to build relationships between school and home. Demographic data from the National Center for Educational Statistics reveal the growing student diversity in the United States, with rapid student population increases in specific ethnic groups (e.g., Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander), in low socio-economic status (African Americans, American/Indian/Alaska Natives, Hispanics), and in English language status. It is estimated that about 8.7 percent of U.S. public school students are English language learners, with the largest group being Spanish-speaking (Kena et al., 2014).

Additionally, over-identification of specific ethnic groups (e.g., American Indian/Alaska, African Americans) in special education has added another challenge to school-family collaboration (Kena et al., 2014). Disproportionality of students from ethnic minority groups in special education has been most problematic in high incidence disability categories such as specific learning disabilities, cognitive impairments, emotional disabilities, and speech and language disabilities (Sullivan & Bal, 2013). Contributing factors to special education over-identification are related more to social differences (e.g., gender, age, English language status, socioeconomic status) rather than students' learning problems (Sullivan & Bal, 2013). For example, Hispanics who were English language learners were 55% more likely to be identified with speech and language disabilities. Students whose parents had less than a college education were more likely to be placed in special education. Further, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students have been found to be overrepresented in exclusionary discipline practices, which have been linked to grade retention, juvenile justice involvement, drop-out, and poor post-school outcomes (Skiba & Sprague, 2008).

IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL-FAMILY COLLABORATION IN THE U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

With the increased diversity in the U.S. student population, teachers are facing great challenges in meeting the needs of CLD students. Successful school-family partnerships allow educators and families to work collaboratively in achieving maximized educational benefits for students, particularly CLD learners with disabilities (Esler, Godber, & Christenson, 2008). Two federal laws highlight the importance of school-family collaboration for students with disabilities in the U.S. educational system. First, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2012) stresses shared accountability between schools and families for high student achievement by (a) offering

expanded public school choice and supplemental educational services for eligible children in lowperforming schools, (b) supporting local development of family involvement plans, and (c) building family's capacity for using effective practices to improve their children's academic achievement. These provisions allow families to become active participants with well-informed choices and shared responsibilities. Second, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its reauthorizations (IDEA, 1997, 2004) include parental involvement as one of its six fundamental principles and offer specific procedural safeguards designed to protect the rights of parents and their child with a disability with equal participation throughout the education of their child. Since its reauthorization in 2004, the U.S. special education law makes a clear reference to the term "Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports" (PBIS) in order to direct school practices to follow only this positive-based approach for addressing challenging behaviors of students with disabilities. Furthermore, IDEA (2004) clearly emphasizes the use of functional behavioral assessment and positive-based instructional approaches to promote good behavior in the individualized education program (IEP) of students with disabilities. In short, the federal provisions from NCLB and IDEA capitalize the roles of families in supporting all children, with or without disabilities, in achieving high academic standards and social competency while at the same time setting clear guidelines for schools to adopt a positive approach for addressing behavioral problems of students with disabilities.

Empirical evidence on school-family partnerships for CLD students with disabilities has shown that family involvement can be predictive of student's academic success as well as school-related attitudes and motivation. For example, Huntsinger and Jose (2009) found that Chinese American parents included skill-building and practice-oriented teaching methods at home. These families believed that it was their responsibility to help the child learn academics as well as to monitor and correct the child's behavior. Chinese American parents also reported that their children liked the school subjects and had positive attitudes about school. Parents vary in their approaches to involvement. While some families may use more informal play-oriented approaches and only monitor homework, others take a more structured formal approach to teaching at home (Huntsinger & Jose, 2009).

In their literature review on the impact of family and community involvement on student achievement, Henderson and Mapp (2002) found three key successful practices for engaging CLD families. First, schools focused on creating and fostering collaborative, trusting relationships among teachers, families, and the community. Second, school and families shared responsibility and power was shared between school and families. Third, schools showed understanding and respect to family's diverse cultural needs and backgrounds. Moreover, the authors identified specific benefits students received from programs and interventions that foster family involvement, such as better student attendance, improved academic and social performance, and enrollment in advanced academic programs. In addition, research has systematically

demonstrated the significance of a two-way exchange of information and open communication when working with CLD families of children with disabilities at the individual level (Cox, 2005; Lucyshyn, Dunlap, & Albin, 2002). Both elements are particularly important when school teams follow a person-centered approach to develop an IEP based on the strengths and needs of the student with disabilities (see IDEA 2004).

Current federal legislation and research have been promoting family participation and involvement during the IEP planning of students with disabilities. Nonetheless, the role and contribution of family, as a school partner, is now revisited as more schools across the nation have been implementing the schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) framework, a multi-layered constellation of evidence-based interventions, practices, and processes for achieving an inclusive social culture for all children. In this article, we discuss the presence, logic, and empirical evidence of the SWPBIS and how the school-family partnership is re-conceptualized for CLD students with disabilities within such framework.

SCHOOL-FAMILY COLLABORATION WITHIN SWPBIS

Presence and Features of SWPBIS in the U.S. Schools

According to Bradley (2014), almost 20,000 U.S. schools are implementing SWPBIS. The SWPBIS originated from the implementation of positive behavior supports (PBS) as an alternative to punitive-based behavioral interventions (e.g., physical restraints, punishment, and seclusion) for managing challenging behaviors of students, including those with disabilities (Horner et al., 1990). PBS is considered as a holistic and person-centered approach to managing challenging behaviors because it utilizes positive behavioral interventions, which produce and promote socially significant behavior changes (Lo, Algozzine, Algozzine, Horner, & Sugai, 2010). Since its emergence in the mid-1980s, PBS has expanded rapidly from individual student applications to a multi-tiered framework for addressing student behavioral difficulties at the school-wide level. Hence, PBS has been termed Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) (Sailor, Dunlap, Sugai, & Horner, 2011). The SWPBIS, modeled after the U.S. Public Health Service's conceptual model of multi-tiered prevention, gives emphasis on the implementation of preventative, positive- and evidence-based strategies across a continuum of supports for managing effectively and efficiently managing student behaviors in school settings (Walker et al., 1996).

Empirical research documents the positive effects of SWPBIS on school climate (Caldarella, Shatzer, Gray, Young, & Young, 2011), organizational health (Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008; Bradshaw, Koth, Thornton, & Leaf, 2009), and student outcomes, such as social behaviors, academic performance, disruptive behaviors, bullying, and attendance (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Caldarella et al., 2011; Horner et al., 2009; Muscott, Mann, &

LeBrun, 2008; Nelson et al., 2009; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012). A particular significant outcome in SWPBIS research pertains to reductions of office discipline referrals for CLD students (e.g., Bradshaw et al., 2010; Muscott et al., 2008; Vincent, Swain-Bradway, Tobin, & May, 2011). Such an outcome is of importance as CLD students are often overrepresented in office discipline referrals (Kaufman et al., 2010; Raffaele-Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002) and exclusionary discipline practices, such as in-school and out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions (Losen & Gillespie, 2012). According to Sugai et al. (2010), the SWPBIS framework consists of four interactive key elements (outcomes, practices, systems, data) to support decision-making, student and staff well being, and student academic learning (for a detailed discussion of each of these elements see Sugai et al., 2010).

SWPBIS is a three-tiered framework whereby student needs and instructional delivery of behavioral interventions and supports are placed across a continuum of prevention (Sugai et al., 2010). As students move from one tier to the next, the frequency and intensity of instruction increases. Figure 1 shows a graphical depiction of the multi-tiered approach in SWPBIS, presenting student and teacher participation across the three levels (see left side). Specifically, Tier 1 is primary (or universal) prevention and consists of defining and teaching explicitly social expectations (e.g., be responsible, be safe, be respectful) across all school areas and involving all students and school staff. Rules for major and minor student disruptive behaviors are developed and a hierarchy of action steps is established for inappropriate behaviors. Frequent positive student feedback and a schoolwide acknowledgment system (e.g., tokens) are delivered when students meet schoolwide behavioral expectations. An assigned school team (a.k.a., SWPBIS team) is responsible for collecting and reviewing data for decision-making across the continuum of levels.

Students who exhibit frequent behavioral risk markers move on to Tier 2 with intensified interventions and supports (Sugai et al., 2010). During this secondary prevention, students receive targeted intervention in addition to what they have already been receiving in Tier 1. Targeted intervention is based on student strengths and needs as well as on school and community resources available. Instruction takes places in small groups and student behaviors are assessed more frequently. Continuous student non-responsiveness to Tier 2 intervention leads school staff to follow an individualized person-centered approach for such students. This is the focus of Tier 3, the tertiary (or selected) prevention, which involves individualized support for those students who do not respond satisfactorily to previous tiers. Due to the nature of the disabilities, many students with disabilities will likely participate in and receive more intensive individualized and explicit instructional support at Tier 3 while benefiting from the positive schoolwide culture across the continuum. Progress of students receiving Tier 3 supports is monitored frequently along with SWPBIS team's assistance.

Implementation research in SWPBIS has documented several barriers to the successful inclusion of the schoolwide framework (Kincaid, Childs, Blase, & Wallace, 2007). First, because SWPBIS is a systems approach, its successful implementation requires the staff's commitment and support, including administrators' leadership as well as teachers and other staff members' buy-in. Lack of buy-in and administrative support will result in ephemeral implementation and thus limited school improvement outcomes. Second, securing resources (e.g., materials, space, technology, training) can be often times challenging in school settings. When school staff is aware that such resources are available, they will feel more confident and supportive throughout all stages of SWPBIS implementation (Sugai et al., 2010). Third, successful SWPBIS implementation requires support at the district and state level. District and state level personnel often develop new initiatives and mandates. A commitment from district and state personnel often means that the effects on SWPBIS and ways to integrate new initiatives are considered before deciding and employing new initiatives. All these challenges can directly affect the successful establishment of family participation and active involvement within SWPBIS.

Student and Teacher Participation

Tier 3 - Tertiary prevention

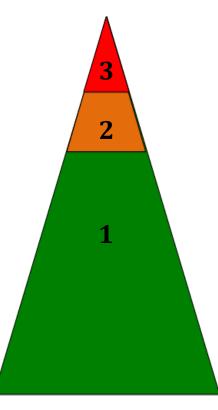
- Specialized individualized systems for students with highrisk and chronic behaviors
- Conducting holistic assessment
- Implementing a comprehensive intervention package including community-based supports
- Frequent student progress monitoring

Tier 2 - Secondary prevention

- Specialized small-group systems for students with atrisk behavioral markers
- Implementing a range of evidence-based interventions in small groups (check-in and check-out, self-monitoring plan, social skill instruction)
- Frequent progress monitoring of student behavior

Tier 1 – Primary prevention

- School- and classroom-wide behavioral expectations for all students and staff across all settings
- Universal acknowledgement system for following behavioral expectations
- Clear definitions of major and minor behavioral problems



Family Participation

Tier 3 - Tertiary prevention

Awareness

- Identify school- and communitybased services for child support
- Access and understand parental rights and supports when having a child with disabilities

Involvement

 Participate in student evaluation and individualized intervention

Support

 Participate in wraparound services within and outside of school to support the child

Tier 2 - Secondary prevention

Awareness

 Identify ways of accessing child supports

Involvement

 Participate in home- and schoolbased intervention selection and implementation

Support

 Implement home-based activities to support school intervention efforts

Tier 1 – Primary prevention

Awareness

 Identify and suggest school's behavioral expectations

Involvement

 Participate in schoolwide and classroom-based activities

Support

- Identify school and community supports
- Acknowledge and reinforce behavioral expectations at home and/or community

Figure 1. School-family collaboration within SWPBIS.

Defining Family Participation and Involvement within SWPBIS

Despite the fact that SWPBIS encourages the participation of family and community members, the research literature has not set a clear path on how such participation should look like. Conversely, Lucyshyn and her colleagues (2002) defined school-family collaboration with broad terms emphasizing such partnerships to be guided by mutual trust, care, and respect of each party's expertise and knowledge. Recently, Lewis (2011) proposed a definition of family participation by following the three-tiered SWPBIS logic. Specifically, Lewis suggested that family participation and involvement should have three expected outcomes, including awareness, involvement, and support, all of which are translated into specific behaviors that family members may perform within each tier. Awareness pertains to information shared between parents and school about student behavioral performance and SWPBIS expectations and implementation procedures. Involvement entails making parents and caregivers active team members with assigned responsibilities to be performed in a specific timeframe across the continuum (e.g., volunteering, decision-making). Support refers to information family members may acquire about services within and outside school. Families may become active participants in family training workshops and home-based interventions to support in-school intervention efforts (Lewis, 2011).

As stated previously, each tier of SWPBIS represents a greater intensity of behavioral supports and problem solving as well as more frequent data collection and progress monitoring. When family participation is included in this multi-tiered system, each subsequent tier would denote more frequent communication and shared problem-solving among family and school members. In Figure 1, we present family's participation across the three-tiered continuum of the SWPBIS framework. For every outcome (awareness, involvement, and support) within each tier, there are recommended behaviors describing more specifically the family's participation. For example, in Tier 1 family members are asked to identify and suggest social behavioral expectations their children should perform across school areas. Families should reinforce those schoolwide expected behaviors by participating in school- and classroom-wide events (e.g., volunteering, parent training workshops on SWPBIS, assisting with SWPBIS assembly celebrations) and by identifying community and school resources that would support their children's learning (e.g., working together on homework / extracurricular activities, seeking community support on their children's learning). In Tier 2, family's participation increases given that students at this tier would require additional behavioral support to reduce identified social skill difficulties. For this reason, families should communicate frequently with teachers for obtaining and understanding information on how to access supports for their children. Families could take part in selecting, implementing and following up with possible behavioral interventions either at home and/or school. In Tier 3, families are asked to work together with school staff and community agencies for developing a comprehensive education plan for their child with chronic behavioral difficulties. Families receive information on the range of available supports provided within and outside of the school, provide feedback on their child's short- and long-term academic and social goals, and take part in coordinated and time-based activities to execute these goals. As indicated above, these activities could take place at school, home or in the community.

Ballard-Krishnan and her colleagues (2003) described a successful story of active family involvement in Michigan SWPBIS schools. In efforts to increase family participation in SWPBIS schools, the Michigan State Board of Education endorsed a family involvement policy and is committed to the promotion of a personnel development model for widespreading the SWPBIS approach to families and communities. Thus, the Michigan State Board of Education invested on training not only educational professionals but also parents, who had been financially contracted to serve as full-time SWPBIS trainers in school teams. SWPBIS parent trainers co-presented with educational professionals at conferences within and outside of schools contributing equally and qualitatively to the dissemination of SWPBIS values. As a result of such family involvement, SWPBIS parent trainers are now advocates of SWPBIS efforts with legislators as well as strong discussion partners in student issues across the continuum of supports.

The SWPBIS framework is built on the premise of establishing and promoting positive relationships among school and community members. When positioning the school-family collaboration within the SWPBIS framework, the emphasis is placed on the development of a positive trusting relationship between school and families. Within the cultivating positive climate of SWPBIS, schools tend to understand that families do not intentionally disengage from their child's schooling. Conversely, schools set up a range of proactive practices and systems of supports through the three-tiered framework, in which the goal is to promote the academic and socio-emotional growth of CLD students with disabilities (Muscott et al., 2008). As a first step to building such mutually respectful relationship, PBIS schools assess school-family collaboration in order to acquire information for the design of family-centered approaches.

Assessing School-Family Collaboration within SWPBIS

Assessment of school-family collaboration within SWPBIS is important for monitoring the type and quality of such collaboration. Such a type of assessment provides stakeholders with data from which they can (a) identify measurable goals for collaboration, (b) identify barriers to attainment of those goals, (c) identify a plan for goal attainment, and (d) evaluate the plan against the identified goals. For example, a SWPBIS school that aims at increasing communication with parents may decide to send home a weekly newsletter with each student. Identifying possible barriers to attaining this goal may include high costs of newsletter production and distribution. As a result, the school's plan for an efficient way to communicate with parents could focus on creating an electronic newsletter distributed via email communication for parents who sign up

for its distribution. To evaluate the efficiency of such plan, the school will evaluate data on the number of parents who sign up for the electronic newsletter compared to the school's parent population. We recommend that communication avenues be delivered in multiple forms (electronic, verbally, visually) and be presented in a language that families could attend and participate. This is especially important for parents, who come from non-English speaking backgrounds, who might be less likely to become actively involved at their child's school.

Researchers have suggested several assessments to measure school-family collaboration within SWPBIS. The Family Engagement Checklist, created by the New Hampshire Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports, allows schools to assess the climate of the school as it relates to school's ability to (a) involve families in learning activities at home, (b) communicate with families, and (c) involve families in school activities as well as in the decisionmaking process. This assessment is completed by school personnel and serves as a self-evaluation tool for schools to assess their efforts in engaging families (Mann & Muscott, 2004). Another assessment of family engagement is the New York State's PBIS Team Implementation Checklist C: Family Involvement and Family Support. The checklist assesses meaningful family representation in the SWPBIS process (e.g., participation on the SWPBIS team, attendance in trainings), effective communication between the family and school, and the schools' ability to support families of students in need of support beyond the universal level (New York State Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Initiative, 2004). Schools that are promoting school-family partnerships may find these assessments useful in evaluating the degree of family participation and involvement and use the assessment results to determine means to enhance school-family partnerships within SWPBIS.

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL-FAMILY COLLABORATION WITH CLD STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WITHIN SWPBIS

Federal requirements of IDEA are clear on parental involvement throughout the education of their children with disabilities. Many CLD families of students with disabilities have participated in individual positive behavior support planning. Involving CLD families effectively at all levels of SWPBIS can be challenging; however, their involvement is integral to meaningful student improvement (Minke & Anderson, 2005). In the following section, we present three case studies documenting the positive outcomes of school-family partnership for CLD students with disabilities across the three tiers of SWPBIS.

Tier 1 School-Family Collaboration with a Hispanic Student: Javier's Story

Javier was a 9-year-old Hispanic male student identified with specific learning disabilities in the areas of reading comprehension and vocabulary. Both of Javier's parents spoke only

Spanish and Javier was an English language learner. In efforts to increase Javier's family involvement, the SWPBIS team designed and implemented a schoolwide family engagement strategy known as the "Family Buzz Passport" (Lewis, 2011). The school developed a short booklet, whereby three categories of school- and family-based activities were listed. One category included activities that focused on family awareness about Javier's school performance (e.g., attend parent-teacher conference). A second category entailed activities that emphasized family involvement during school and after-school hours (e.g., have a "No TV" night at home). The last category included family support during school- and home-based activities (e.g., play a board game with family members). Javier's family was asked to complete a certain number of activities from each category and present the completed passport to school staff for validation. As a consequence, Javier's family earned a free pizza delivered to their home. Both Javier and his family were encouraged by school's Tier 1 initiative and were able to become active participants using the "Family Buzz Passport" for the entire school year.

Javier's case is an example of a Tier 1 school-family collaboration with emphasis on all three expected family outcomes: awareness, involvement, and support because Javier's parents were introduced to the SWPBIS expectations and were asked to participate in home- or school-based activities by acknowledging their son's positive behaviors and supporting his learning.

Tier 2 School-Family Collaboration with an African American Student: Jaquita's Story

Jaquita was a 16-year-old African American female student identified with a mild intellectual disability. Because of Jaquita's nonresponsiveness to Tier 1 instruction, her teachers suggested that she would benefit from a Tier 2 culturally relevant social skill intervention due to frequent behavioral problems (Brophy & Lo, 2014). During school, Jaquita participated in a small group receiving social skills instruction targeting three social skills (i.e., responding to teasing, using self-control, and standing up for your rights). These were the social skills with which Jaquita had previously been identified as having difficulties. Jaquita's Tier 2 intervention included active family participation. Specifically, Jaquita's mother received a brief training session from the classroom teacher about the social skill instruction program and her roles. The parent then received a weekly letter and scripted role-play social skill activities in a workbook based on the social skills practiced at school. Jaquita's mother was asked to work with her daughter three times a week on supplemental activities by reviewing the skill lessons, discussing appropriate usage, and role-playing scenarios found in the workbook.

Results indicated that Jaquita made significant gains in performing the target social skills during small-group and home-based role-play situations. Jaquita also reduced the number of office disciplinary referrals she received after participating in the school-based and home-based social skills instruction. When asked how she felt about the program, Jaquita stated, "I loved doing this, I hope to do it again in the future 'cause it is fun." Additionally, Jaquita's mother

acknowledged the social significance of Tier 2 targeted intervention and stated, "I think this was a great program and I think it will be effective for other children dealing with the same problems."

Jaquita's case is an example of a Tier 2 school-family collaboration with a particular focus on family awareness and involvement. Specifically, Jaquita's mother received information about her daughter's behavioral difficulties during peer interaction. The parent agreed on participating in the Tier 2 social skill instruction by working with Jaquita on supplemental activities and role-play scenarios at home.

Tier 3 School-Family Collaboration with an African American Student: David's Story

David was a 13-year-old African American male student identified with reading difficulties and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Frankland, Edmonson, & Turnbull, 2001). David's significant impeding behaviors across school and community settings and his chronic nonresponsiveness to previous school-based intervention efforts in Tiers 1 and 2 initiated the active involvement of a PBIS counselor, who coordinated a group for action plan involving David, his teachers, and his family members.

During group action planning, the PBIS counselor and teachers shared information about the range of supports and services within the school and the community that David and family members could consider. All team members discussed David's needs and strengths. His family determined David's short- and long-term goals with respect to peer social interactions and improved academic performance. The action planning concluded with specific measurable steps to be taken by all parties for supporting David's long-term goals. Family members became active participants by proposing specific steps they could carry out for helping David meeting his long-term goals. For instance, David's father would enroll him in a community youth program that provided structured opportunities for peer interaction. David's grandmother would help David enroll in the church chaperone program and she would help him develop and monitor a money budget program. Teachers and family members would work together on following a behavioral monitoring system that would be implemented across all settings. The PBIS counselor monitored the progress of such action steps.

By the end of the school year, David reduced his rates of impeding behaviors and progressed in his peer social interactions. David's case is an example of a Tier 3 school-family collaboration with a clear focus on the active involvement of family, community and school services for supporting effectively David's behavioral needs.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF SWPBIS IMPLEMENTATION

Given the extensive empirical evidence of SWPBIS implementation in the United States, several other countries across Europe, Asia, and Australia have incorporated the PBIS framework.

Although the international shift to PBIS is recent, efforts should also be tailored on promoting family engagement in a culturally responsive manner during school practices. For instance, researchers in Norway have documented significant school problem reductions and student social improvement for almost a decade when they examined the effectiveness of PALS ("Positive behaviour interactions and learning environment in school"), a cultural adaptation of the PBIS, in more than 153 elementary and secondary schools (Ogden et al., 2012). In their culturally adapted model, the Norwegians have given extensive focus on family engagement at the early school years. Likewise, researchers in the Netherlands adapted the PBIS model in Dutch schools. They found that classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools implemented the PBIS's primary level with high integrity and evidenced positive student behavioral outcomes (Blonk et al., 2011). Further, researchers in the Asia Pacific region reported the implementation of positive behavior strategies at classroom and schoolwide levels (Du & Liu, 2007) as well as at the individual level (e.g., student with autism) (Liu, 2007). More specifically, Chinese researchers have argued that SWPBIS and its characteristics could become a reference for promoting inclusive educational practices for students with disabilities in the educational system of China (Liu, Wei, & Liang, 2012).

CONCLUSION

In this paper we discussed the strengthening of school-family collaborations within the SWPBIS framework. This three-tiered system is an opportunity to bring about meaningful and socially significant changes in school-family partnerships by cultivating a common understanding on students' social expectations and setting up a preventative systematic action plan where both educators and families would work together for increasing positive student learning outcomes.

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