Lessons Learned After Five Years of PBIS Implementation in Cyprus Elementary Schools

Lefki Kourea, University of Nicosia Eleni Papanicola, Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture





Session's Purpose

Describe main lessons learned over a 5year period towards establishing PBIS model demonstration sites



Cyprus Context

- Centralized educational system
- Ministry's organizational chart does not allow for interdepartmental collaboration and communication (e.g., Psychological Services, School Violence Observatory, Direct Intervention Team)
- Teachers are civil servants (hired by the Government)
 - Teacher evaluation policy implemented since 1974
- No standardized national student academic and behavioral assessment data
- Administrators teach in primary schools
- School sizes: Primary school ~200 students, Middle school~300, High school ~600
- National academic curriculum has been reformed after 10 years







Public schools mirror the centralized nature of the educational system

- School administrator's main responsibility is student and staff safety
- School scheduling is not flexible nor adjustable
 - fixed number of breaks, fixed number of teaching hours per subject
 - does not allow for teacher collaboration among grade levels
- Health experts are not housed in a school nor do they provide systematic support to staff and students (e.g., school counselor, social worker, school psychologist)
- No standardized data are utilized to determine student needs and outcomes at classroom level







History of PBIS Implementation in Cyprus to Establish Model Demonstration Sites

2015-2016 (2 primary schools)

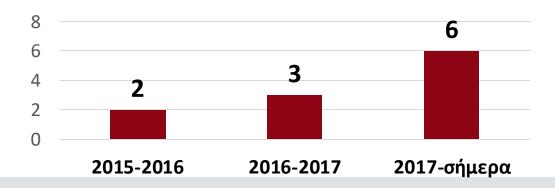
2016-2017

(2 primary schools, 1 early childhood setting)

2017-now

(5 primary schools, 1 early childhood setting)

Number of PBIS Model Demonstration Sites





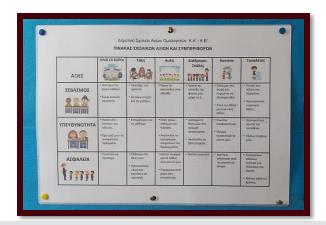
Lesson 1: PBIS provides a structure for student behavior management

- Ministry circulars and directives sometimes create confusion and ambiguity among school administrators on how to manage student behavioral problems
 - Existing policies promote a traditional punitive school discipline approach



- Take ownership in organizing their policies and practices on managing student behavior
- Redefine discipline approach and staff beliefs on school discipline
- Invest in universal prevention in a meaningful and concrete way







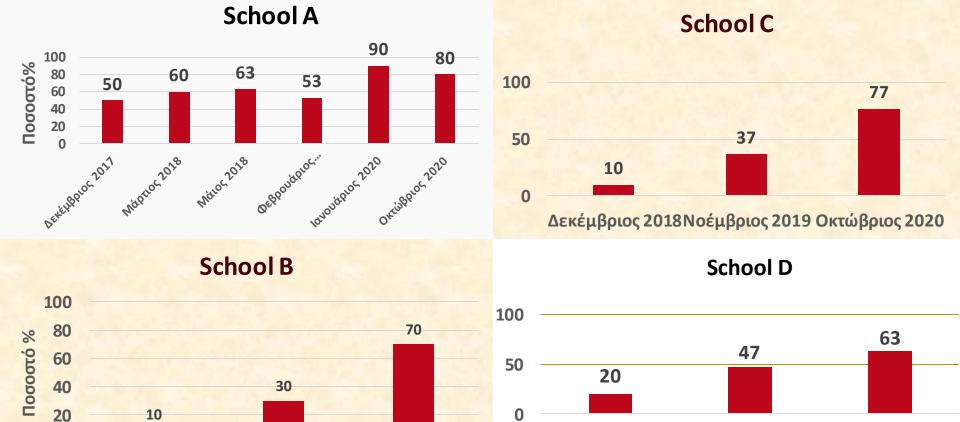


Lesson 2: Making PBIS fit in the Cypriot cultural context (1/2)

 Cypriot cultural norms do not promote an outcome-based problem-solving approach

- Incorporating the PBIS implementation fidelity process to school teams has strengthened their efforts in moving forward and reaching expected outcomes
 - Fidelity data are used for problem-solving and action planning
 - Next implementation steps are taken based on existing evidence





Οκτώβριος 2020

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Δεκέμβριος 2018

Νοέμβριος 2019

Δεκέμβριος

2018



Οκτώβριος

2020

Δεκέμβριος

2019

Lesson 2: Making PBIS fit in the Cypriot cultural context (2/2)

 Cypriot cultural norms do not promote an outcome-based problem-solving approach

- No student behavioral data can be collected
 - High teacher resistance
 - Incorporating instead a mixed-method methodology: recording of major problems and eliciting staff views via open-ended questions



Lesson 3: A leadership team is more important than a leader

 Most ministry school initiatives depend on a school leader's support and active involvement

- We came across with different school leadership styles that were positive towards PBIS and gave space to teams to take on a leadership role
 - Strong teams supported administrator's effort to meet SW improvement goals
 - Investment on skill training and coaching



Lesson 4: Teacher training AND coaching

- Current teacher practices are overloaded with opportunities for Professional Development trainings
- Limited attention is given on teacher coaching and support

- We learned that Cypriot leadership teams request coaching and support to move on forward
 - Coach's presence serves as a friendly prompt to teams to continue on building up universals
 - Coach's role is a system of support to school teams



Lesson 5: Working as a Team

- Existing ministry policies provide some guidelines for team collaboration
- Due to school scheduling and lack of goal-oriented mindset, teams tend to meet seldomly
- At the beginning stages of PBIS implementation, school teams learn to establish routines and procedures on how to work as a team. This setup:
 - Increases their motivation to keep working together
 - Develops a sense of ownership to meet SW improvement goals



Lesson 6: Teach Social Skills

 Cyprus national curriculum mandates teaching social skills as part of a subject matter (i.e., Health Promotion)

- PBIS schools define social skills and expectations based on school context
 - Social skills are taught directly and explicitly throughout the school year, across various subjects and with the involvement of all staff















1. Στέκομαι στη γραμμή του 🔒 🗎 σωστού παράθυρου της τάξης μου, πάνω στα σημαδάκια.

2. Διατηρώ απόσταση.

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3. Έχω χέρια και πόδια κουτά

ΓΡΑΜΜΗ ΜΕΤΑΚΙΝΗΣΗ

Βγαίνω έξω από την τάξη, με τη σειρά, περπατώντας.

Εχω επίπεδο φωνή!

Κρατώ τα χέρια και τα πόδια, κοντά στο σώμα μου.

Βρίσκω τη θέση μου στη γραμμή

Περπατώ και διατηρώ την απόστας

Κοιτάζω μπροστά.

Akohou8i o8n)



ΣΗΜΑ ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗΣ

Δάσκαλος: «1, 2, 3»

Μαθητές: « Απόλυτη ησυχία» (επίπεδο φωνής 3)

- Σταματώ ό.τι κάνω.
- Σταυρώνω τα χέρια.
- Κρατώ το επίπεδο φωνής μου στο 0.
- Έχω τα μάτια στον δάσκαλο/δασκάλα.

τα φώτα





Lesson 7: Strengthening teacher classroom management skills

 Existing ministry efforts have not invested sufficiently in teacher trainings around behavior management and preventative practices at universal level

- In PBIS, teaching staff uses evidence-based classroom practices (e.g., behavior-specific praise, correcting student errors in an instructive manner, teaching behaviors), which:
 - Allows them to be more systematic and explicit
 - Empowers them in managing student behavior proactively and positively









Moving forward under COVID-19 era and beyond ...

- PBIS schools have been able to teach COVID-19 behaviors easily and successfully
- Expand and scale-up efforts across schools (e.g., secondary)
- Refine procedures and systems of support for teachers
- Increase intensity of behavioral supports for non-responders to universal support







Thank you!

Kourea.l@unic.ac.cy

