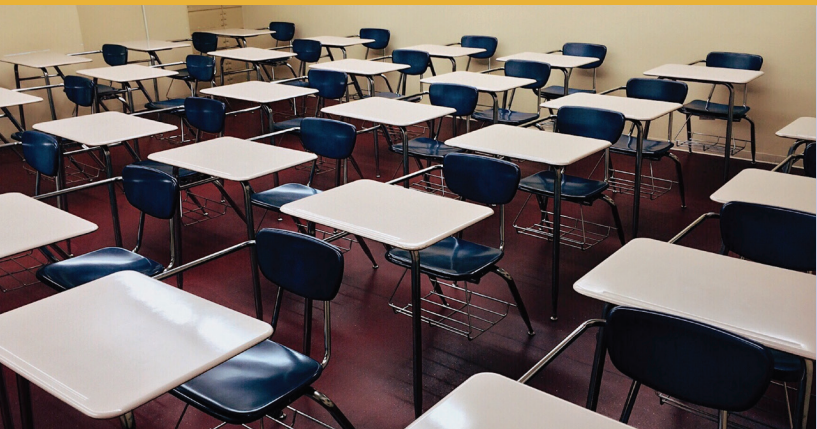




**Executive Summary of the
13th Annual
Program Evaluation of Pennsylvania's
School-Wide Positive Behavioral
Interventions and Supports Initiative**



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**December
2021**



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Data analytic interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations expressed within this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the funding agencies or Pennsylvania Department of Education. Endorsements by the funding agencies or Pennsylvania Department of Education should not be inferred.

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Introduction and Overview

This is an executive summary of the 13th annual program evaluation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This is not a condensed version of that report. Rather, it provides a brief background and the significant findings and conclusions. The complete program evaluation consisted of answering a series of questions in each of five domain areas as recommended by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2020). This executive summary does not address each of the questions, though it does address each of the five domains. The complete report can be found in *13th Annual Program Evaluation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Pennsylvania Schools* (Runge et al., 2021).

The SWPBIS framework is an example of a multi-tiered systems of support, characterized by the use of systematic assessments, preventive core instruction, and tailored assessments and interventions for students with intensive needs. The application of multi-tiered systems of support in the areas of social, emotional, and behavioral functioning is commonly referred to as SWPBIS.

The SWPBIS framework includes three tiers of assessment, instruction, and intervention based upon the identified needs of students in the school community. Tier 1 has been described by Sugai and Horner (2009) as the assessment and instructional practices provided to all students. These assessments and practices are designed to prevent or minimize barriers to learning while also promoting inclusive educational practices for all students. Students for whom tier 1 is not effective, typically 15-30% of the school population, will require tier 2 services layered on top of the tier 1 preventive efforts. Finally, approximately 5-10% of the students do not respond positively to tier 1 or tier 2 so additional interventions are provided in tier 3, which are student-centered and family-oriented.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, PaTTAN, and collaborating Intermediate Units began scaling-up SWPBIS efforts across the Commonwealth in the mid-2000's. PaTTAN has contracted with the IUP Research Institute and the two primary authors of this report to complete this and earlier annual evaluation reports and executive summaries as commissioned by the CoP SBBH and the PAPBS Network. Annual evaluations have been conducted since 2008-2009. The Center on Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (2020) provides the structure for the most recent annual report and this executive summary. Five areas of review are presented below: (a) Reach; (b) Process, (c) Capacity, (d) Fidelity, and (d) Outcomes.

Reach

The scale and potential benefit of the SWPBIS initiative is evaluated by describing who is participating in the initiative, including schools and community partners. Reach can be evaluated by the questions in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Reach of Large-Scale SWPBIS Evaluation and Associated Common Questions

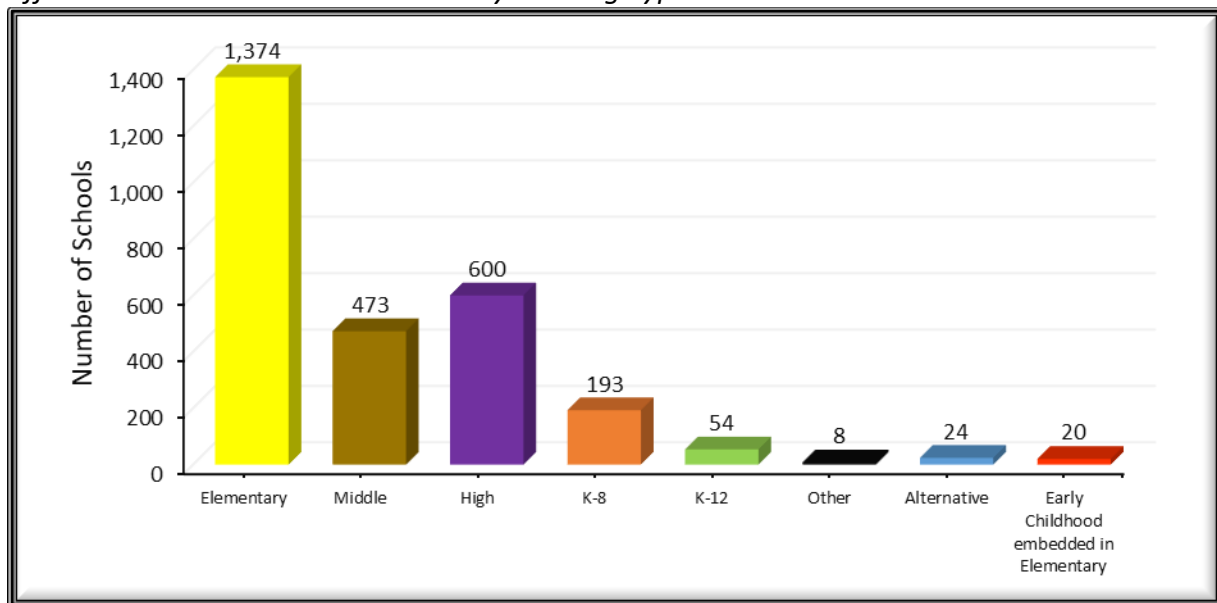
Area	Common Questions
Reach <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Who is participating in SWPBIS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How many schools and districts are involved?- What are the trends in PAPBS Network affiliation over time?- How many collaborating agencies are involved with SWPBIS implementation?

Note. PAPBS = Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Supports; SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; modified from original source (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2020).

During the 2020-2021 academic year, 2,746 schools were affiliated with the PAPBS Network, representing approximately 36% of all preK-12 schools in Pennsylvania. The number of affiliated PAPBS schools in 2020-2021, by building type, appear in Figure 2. The number of sites has grown from 209 in 2011-2012 to the 2,746 in 2020-2021. The cross-sectional data over these 10 years appear in Figure 3. Please note that these data reflect affiliation with the PAPBS Network, not necessarily fidelity of implementation.

Figure 2

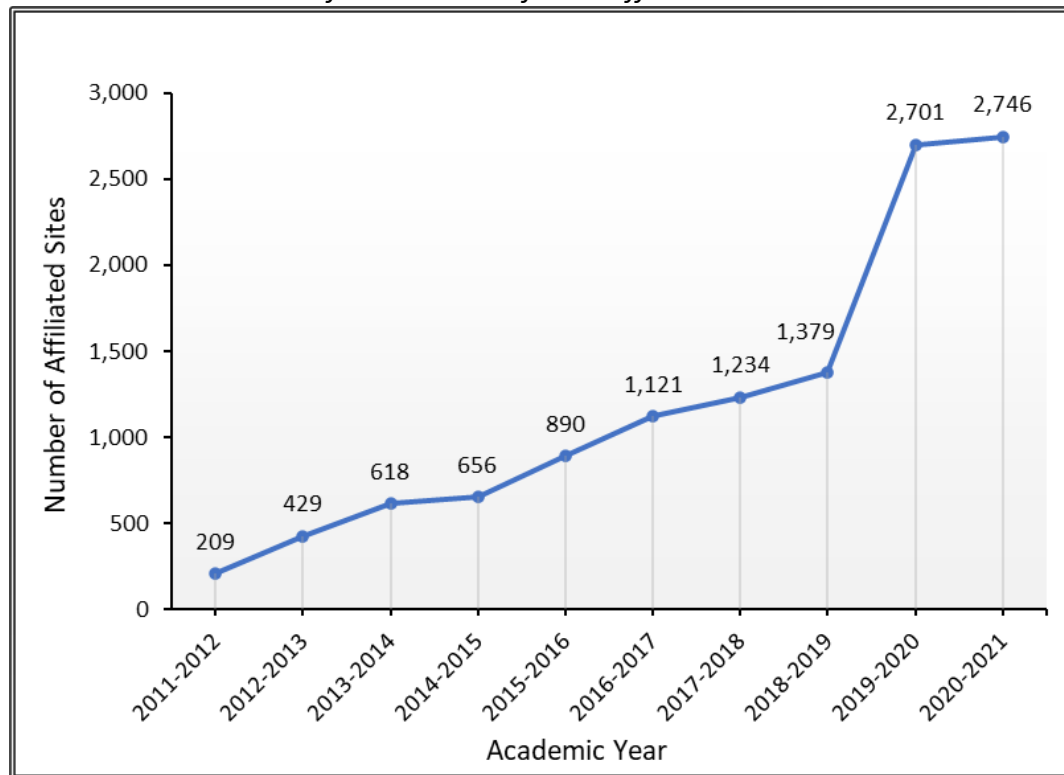
Affiliations with the PAPBS Network by Building Type in 2020-2021



Note. PAPBS = Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support.

Figure 3

Cross-Sectional Review of the Number of Sites Affiliated with the PAPBS Network

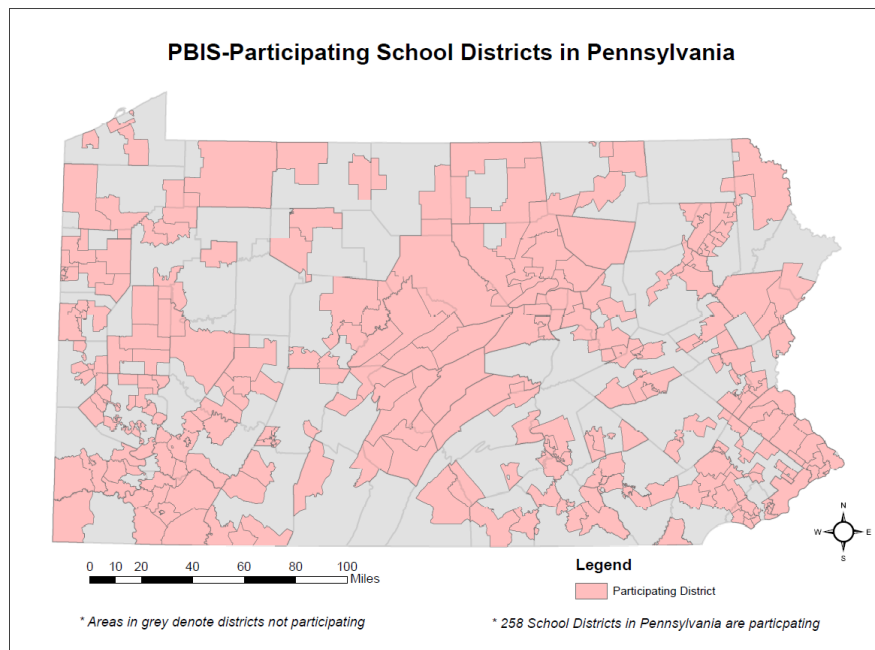


Note. PAPBS = Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support.

The extent to which SWPBIS has truly become a state-wide effort can be seen in Figure 4, a geographic representation of affiliated school districts as of spring 2020. While these data do not reflect implementation of SWPBIS directly, they do represent affiliation in the PAPBS Network. These 258 school districts affiliated with the PAPBS represent 52% of the 500 school districts in Pennsylvania.

Successful implementation of SWPBIS, particularly at the advanced tiers, requires expertise and services provided by collaborating community agencies. Such partnerships are undoubtedly helpful to schools given these services often cannot be provided by school staff due to limited resources and expertise (Putnam et al., n.d.). In total, 387 agencies have partnered with PAPBS Network schools. This represents an annual increase of 13% from the 341 agencies reported as of the previous academic year.

Figure 4
PAPBS Network Affiliated School Districts in 2020-2021



Note. PBIS = Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Process

Successful implementation of the SWPBIS framework requires procedures by which sites are identified, training and technical assistance is provided, and leadership is evident. The second focus of large-scale SWPBIS evaluation is titled Process. Process can be described by the questions in Figure 5, dealing with SWPBIS leadership activities, key accomplishments of the initiative, process of becoming affiliated with the PAPBS Network, and professional development provided across the PAPBS Network (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2020).

Figure 5
Process of Large-Scale SWPBIS Evaluation and Associated Common Questions

Area	Common Questions
Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is happening with the SWPBIS initiative? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the activities and key accomplishments of the CoP SBBH related to SWPBIS? - How do schools become affiliated with the PAPBS Network? - What professional development activities were provided?

Note. CoP SBBH = Community of Practice on School-Based Behavioral Health; PAPBS = Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support; SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; modified from original source (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2020).

The CoP SBBH is the statewide team charged with coordinating SWPBIS implementation across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Two strategies are employed to achieve its mission of advancing early childhood and school age social-emotional and behavioral wellness:

Strategy 1: Continued scale up of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework with fidelity through the outreach endeavors of the PAPBS Network across the Commonwealth.

Strategy 2: Alignment of evidence-based, trauma-informed approaches to build protective factors and enhance social-emotional wellbeing to reduce or mitigate risk factors associated with substance misuse and youth suicide in an equitable manner across early childhood and school-age programs.

A complete membership listing can be reviewed at the CoP SBBH website: www.papbs.org. CoP SBBH activities are memorialized in scheduled meeting minutes. Additionally, the process of becoming affiliated with the PAPBS Network, including district and school expectations, supporting documentation, and contact information for the lead SWPBIS consultant at the three PaTTAN offices, can also be found on the www.papbs.org website.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused many schools to be closed for in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 academic year. Precautions were made by organizations, including intermediate units and the PaTTAN regional offices, that would typically provide in-person professional development. Professional development, however, was still provided in a virtual format via Zoom, Google Meet, or other technologies. Moreover, the pandemic significantly limited on-site training and technical assistance at PAPBS Network schools. Thus, technical assistance was often provided virtually as well.

Over the years, PAPBS Network Facilitators have been encouraged to enter data regarding training and technical assistance provided to affiliated schools into the *pTrack* system. Utilization of this data tracking system has waned in recent years, and only four PAPBS Facilitators out of over 200 entered such data for the 2020-2021 academic year. Consequently, these data are under-reported and summaries of training and technical assistance via the *pTrack* system would be incomplete. Further, many intermediate units have their own, internal data systems to monitor training and technical assistance provided to school districts and schools. Accessing and integrating such data across 29 intermediate units is not practical. As such, the type and amount of training and technical assistance provided to affiliated schools in the 2020-2021 academic year is unknown.

Capacity

Questions related to building and expanding the SWPBIS initiative are the focus of the third category for large-scale program evaluations and are categorized by the Center on

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Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (2020) as “capacity.” Figure 6 offers some of the important questions to appraise in this domain.

Figure 6

Capacity of Large-Scale SWPBIS Evaluation and Associated Common Questions

Area	Common Questions
Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the ability of the organization to implement and sustain SWPBIS? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the capacity of the CoP SBBH to install, sustain, and expand SWPBIS? - What human resources are available to support SWPBIS installation, sustained implementation, and expansion? - What financial resources are available to support SWPBIS installation, sustained implementation, and expansion?

Note. CoP SBBH = Community of Practice on School-Based Behavioral Health; SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; modified from original source (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2020).

One measure used by the CoP SBBH to assess an organization’s capacity related to SWPBIS is the *State Systems Fidelity Inventory* (SSFI). The SSFI is a self-report instrument that assesses nine areas known to influence the capacity to install, sustain, and expand SWPBIS: (a) leadership teaming; (b) stakeholder engagement; (c) funding and alignment; (d) policy; (e) workforce capacity; (f) training; (g) coaching; (h) evaluation; and (i) local implementation demonstrations. The SSFI was completed by 14 members of the CoP SBBH for the first time in winter 2020-2021 with assistance from a facilitator from the National Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Results of that process, including the proportion of items endorsed by each of the nine areas and overall score, are presented in Figure 7.

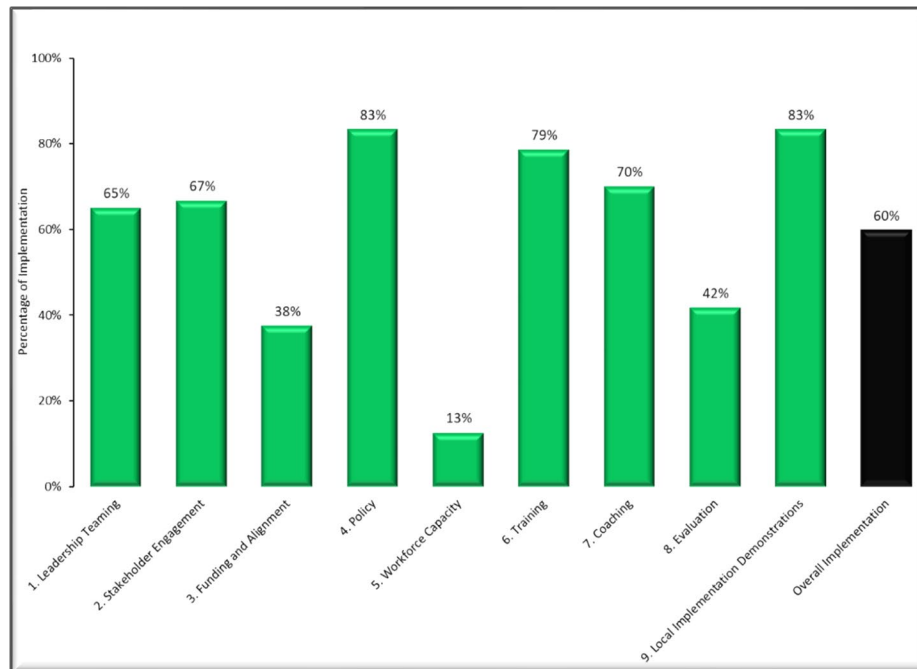
Based on these self-appraisals, policy, training, and local implementation demonstrations were the highest rated categories. Additionally, the CoP SBBH generally regarded the current mission statement and inclusion of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in policy actions as being in place. The team assessed its training materials and calendar as fully in place with recommendations for improvements to ongoing professional development and increasing local and statewide training capacity. Lastly, a number of local demonstration sites are available for other schools to visit and learn from, although the team suggested that more demonstration sites would be preferred.

One important aspect of capacity is the extent to which PAPBS Network Facilitators are available to train and support staff at affiliated schools. Cross-sectional data pertaining to the number of PAPBS Network Facilitators are provided in Figure 8. Of the 219 facilitators available in the 2020-2021 academic year, 212 were designated as Local Facilitators whose focus was supporting schools within a specific location (e.g., school district), 24 were Regional Facilitators whose focus was supporting schools within a larger region (e.g., intermediate unit), and 34 were designated as Statewide Coordinators whose focus was coordinating SWPBIS across any of the PaTTAN regional offices. Since individuals could be designated as a Local Facilitator,

Regional Facilitator, and/or Statewide Coordinator, the sum of these exceeds the 212 total PAPBS Network Facilitators reported in Figure 8.

Figure 7

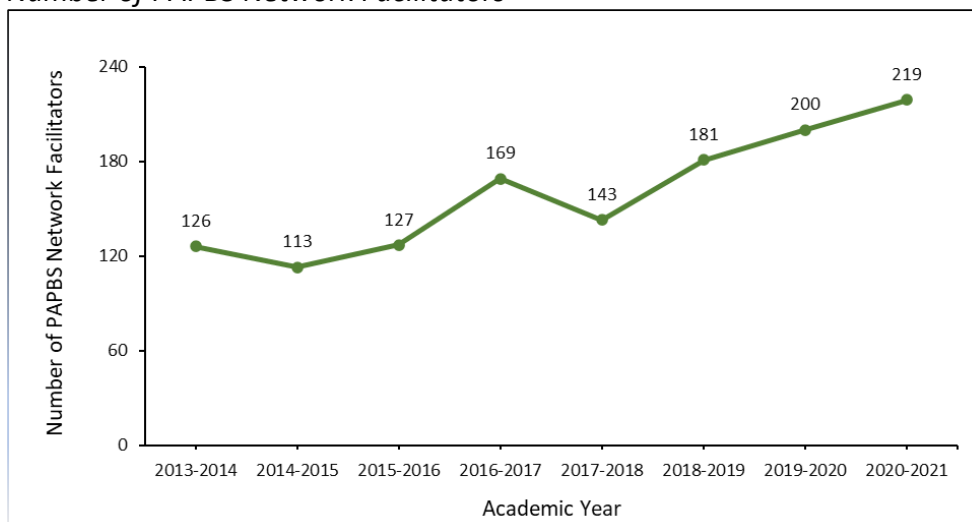
Subscale and Overall Score Results from Pennsylvania's CoP SBBH 2020-2021 SSFI



Note. CoP SBBH = Community of Practice on School-Based Behavioral Health; SSFI = *State Systems Fidelity Inventory*.

Figure 8

Number of PAPBS Network Facilitators



Note. PAPBS = Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support.

The primary source of statewide funds to support SWPBIS are via School-Based Behavioral Health grants. In the 2020-2021 academic year, over \$224,000 was allocated for direct financial support to 30 school districts across Pennsylvania. This funding in the 2020-2021 academic year followed two years of no funding; however, funding levels from the 2020-2021 academic year remain below levels in the three consecutive academic years beginning in 2015-2016, each of which was over \$330,000.

Fidelity

Fidelity refers to the extent to which SWPBIS is implemented as intended at each school and across the three tiers of the framework. Research-validated fidelity instruments are used to quantify the extent to which fidelity is achieved. Questions associated with implementation fidelity, identified by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and support (2020), appear in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Fidelity of Large-Scale SWPBIS Evaluation and Associated Common Questions

Area	Common Questions
Fidelity - Are the core features of SWPBIS being implemented?	- How many schools are implementing tier 1 SWPBIS by building type? - How has implementation of tier 1 SWPBIS expanded over time? - How many schools are implementing advanced tiers of SWPBIS by building type? - How has implementation of advanced tiers of SWPBIS expanded over time?

Note. SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; modified from original source (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2020).

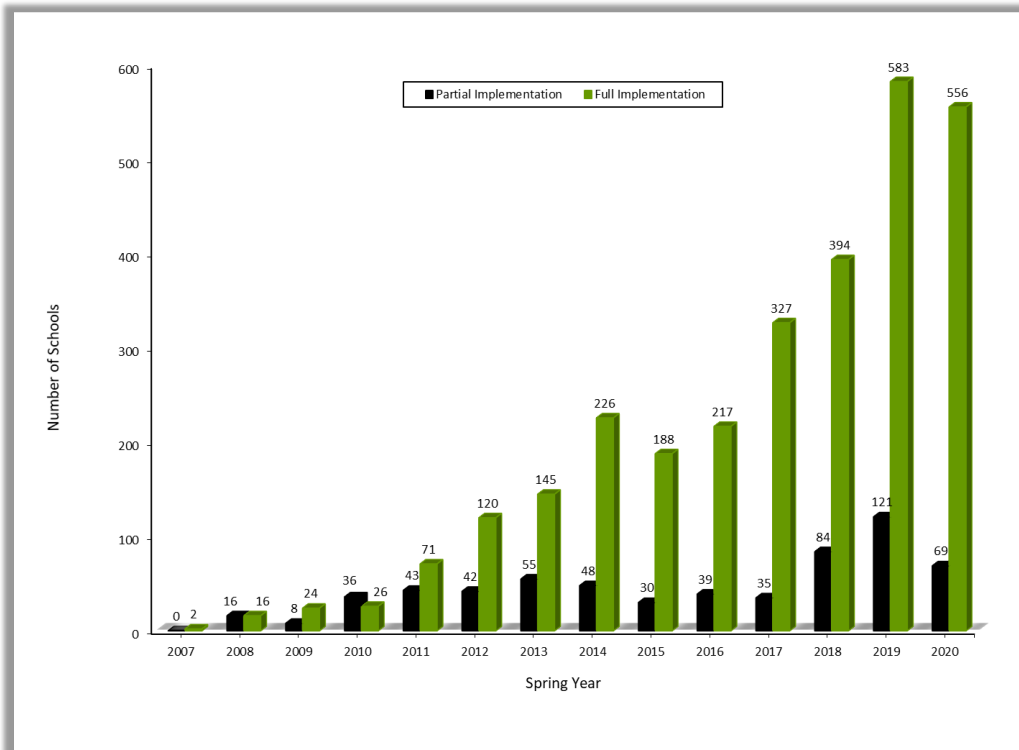
A school may be categorized as (a) *not implementing*; (b) *partially implementing*; or (c) *fully implementing* at each tier of SWPBIS. While a school categorized as *partially implementing* has implemented *some* features of that tier, it is not implementing *the minimum proportion* of features of that tier to achieve criterion. For a school to be considered *fully implementing* a given tier of SWPBIS, it must meet or exceed the criterion for the fidelity instrument used.

Spring 2020 fidelity checks were adversely affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic. For those schools that could not complete a fidelity check in spring 2020, fidelity checks reflective of implementation in spring 2020 were subsequently completed retroactively in summer or fall 2020. As seen in Figure 10, from spring 2007 to spring 2019, the number of schools achieving full implementation of tier 1 SWPBIS grew steadily. This number slightly decreased in spring 2020, however. While there may be multiple reasons for this decline in schools fully and partially implementing tier 1 SWPBIS in spring 2020 compared to spring 2019, at least one primary reason for this reduction is likely related to the challenges of implementing and documenting implementation during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This

could be especially true for schools that were initially adopting tier 1 SWPBIS in 2019-2020. Given the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019-2020 and resultant challenges caused by school closures in March 2020, the number of schools that implemented at least tier 1 SWPBIS across the commonwealth in 2019-2020 is very impressive.

Figure 10

Cross-Sectional Count of Schools Implementing Tier 1 SWPBIS 2006-2020

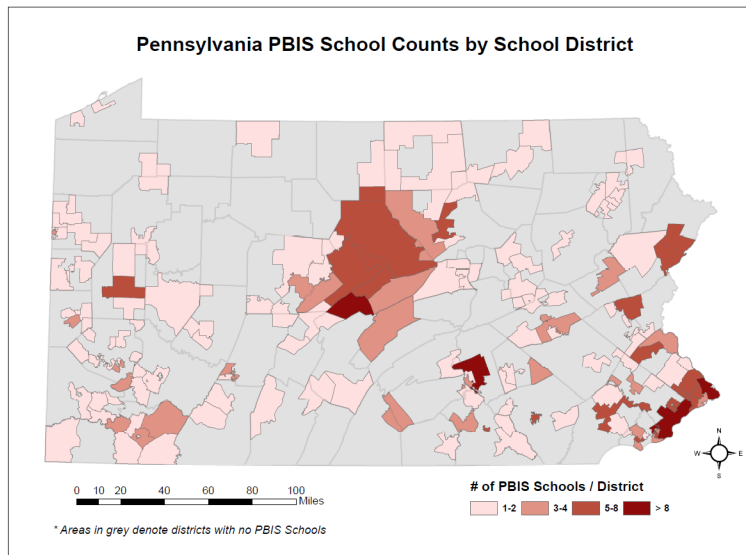


Note. SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Figure 11 provides a geographic representation of the schools implementing tier 1 SWPBIS aggregated at the school district level, along with the density of SWPBIS implementation at each school district. Notably, these data suggest that model sites are located in many counties across the commonwealth.

The fidelity of advanced tier implementation could not be empirically established until the 2016-2017 academic year. PAPBS Network schools that achieved full implementation of the advanced tiers of SWPBIS since spring 2017 are showcased in Figure 12. In the last year, the number of schools achieving full implementation of tier 2 SWPBIS increased from 112 to 144. In regard to tier 3 SWPBIS, 53 schools achieved full implementation by spring 2020. This represents an increase of 29% for both tier 2 SWPBIS and tier 3 SWPBIS implementation over the 2018-2019 academic year.

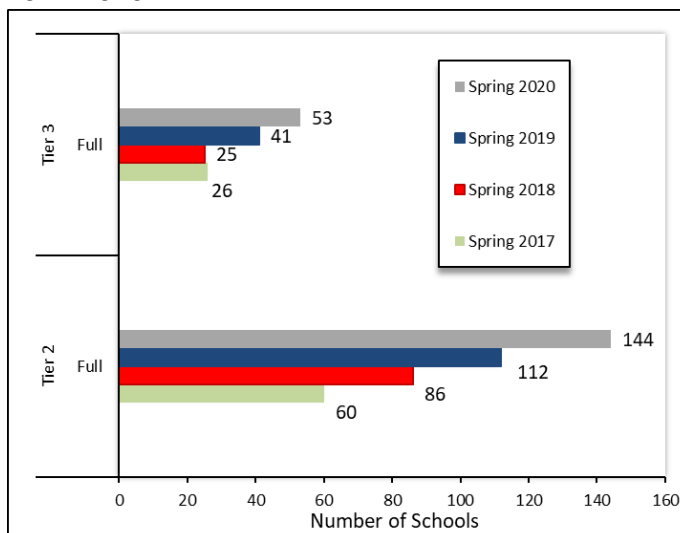
Figure 11
Number of Schools Implementing SWPBIS by School District



Note. SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; PBIS = Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

Full implementation of tiers 1, 2, and 3 of SWPBIS is a long process that takes several years to achieve. Given the complex implementation process, some schools may achieve differing levels of implementation at varying rates and meet fidelity requirements sooner or later than others. In general, the number of schools implementing the tiers of SWPBIS as well as cross sectional trends over time are very encouraging.

Figure 12
Cross-Sectional Count of the Number of Schools Implementing Advanced Tiers of SWPBIS Spring 2017-2020



Note. SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; schools are counted twice in a given academic year if they achieved full implementation of tier 2 SWPBIS and tier 3 SWPBIS.

Outcomes

The fifth area of SWPBIS program evaluation, as recommended by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (2020), is to focus on the extent to which intended benefits and outcomes for students, families, and school communities are achieved. Common evaluative questions regarding outcomes are presented in Figure 13.

Figure 13

Outcomes of Large-Scale SWPBIS Evaluation and Associated Common Questions

Area	Common Questions
Outcomes - Is the initiative achieving valued outcomes and worth sustaining?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To what extent do schools implementing SWPBIS with fidelity show desired changes in other areas of school (e.g., adult perceptions, behavior support)?- To what extent do schools implementing SWPBIS with fidelity show desired changes in student outcomes (e.g., discipline rates, academic achievement, out-of-school placements)?

Note. SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; modified from original source (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2020).

Arguably, outcomes are the most important of the five domains. Each monitored outcome finding is presented separately, below.

Staff Perceptions of the Status of Behavioral Support

Staff members within schools can provide insights into how extensive that implementation is perceived to be. While not a validated fidelity measure, the *Effective Behavior Support: Self-Assessment Survey* (EBS: SAS; Sugai et al., 2003) is used to assess indirect measures of staff perceptions of SWPBIS implementation. As schools implement SWPBIS across multiple tiers, one would expect that staff perceptions of implementation would increase. Figure 14 contains the descriptive summary for the EBS: SAS data by validated tier-level implementation of SWPBIS. It is very encouraging that as schools fully implement SWPBIS across all three tiers, as measured by validated instruments, a larger percentage of staff perceive more behavioral supports present to meet all students' needs.

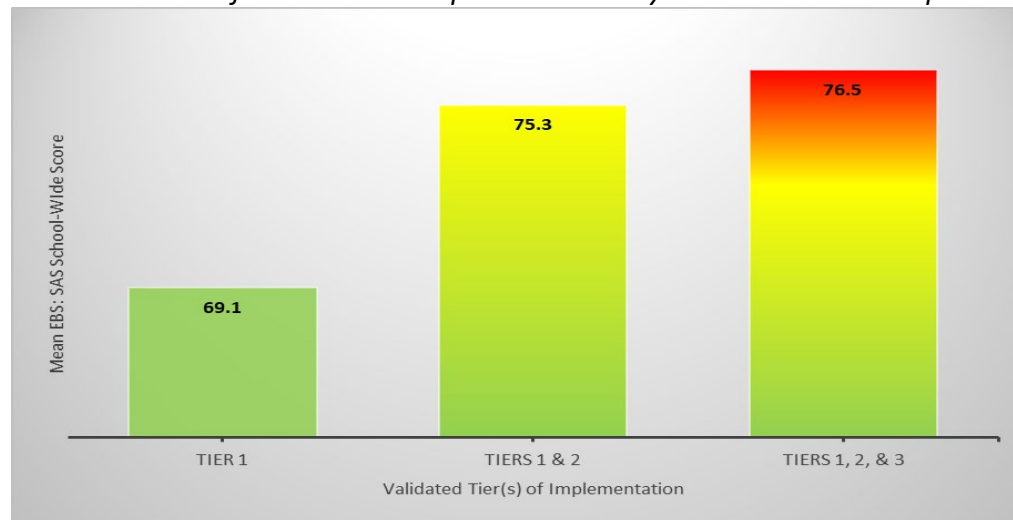
Staff Perceptions of School Safety

It is thought that implementation of SWPBIS will result in a more nurturing and safer environment. The *School Safety Survey* (SSS; Sprague et al., 2002) is an indirect measure of risk factors that adversely affect student development and protective factors that enhance students' development. Figure 15 presents the mean percentage scores for protective and risk factors across a continuum of schools from those that were fully implementing only tier 1 SWPBIS through schools that were fully implementing all three tiers of SWPBIS. These results

suggest that implementation of SWPBIS is associated with an increase in protective factors and less likely to influence actual risk factors.

Figure 14

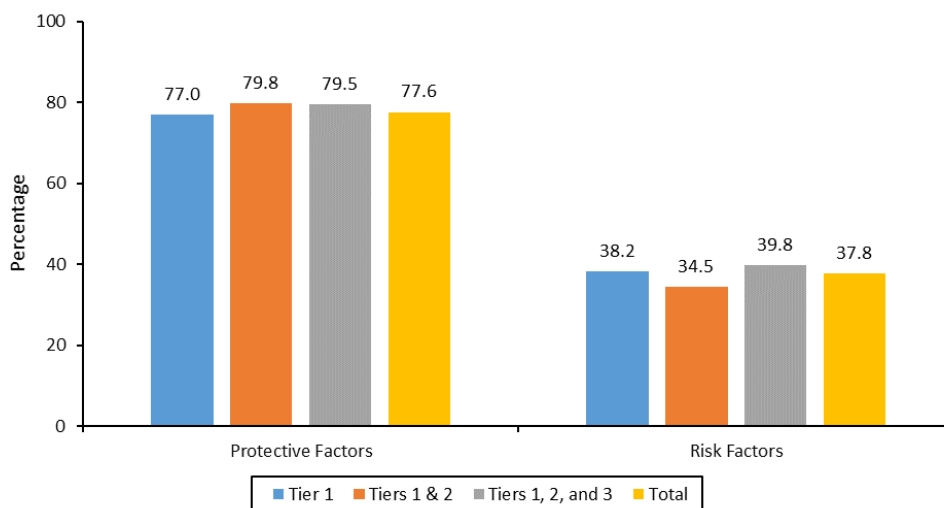
Perceived Level of School-Wide Implementation by Actual Tier-Level Implementation



Note. EBS: SAS = *Effective Behavior Support: Self-Assessment Survey*..

Figure 15

SSS Protective and Risk Factors by Level of Tier Implementation



Note. SSS = *School Safety Survey*.

Office Discipline Referrals

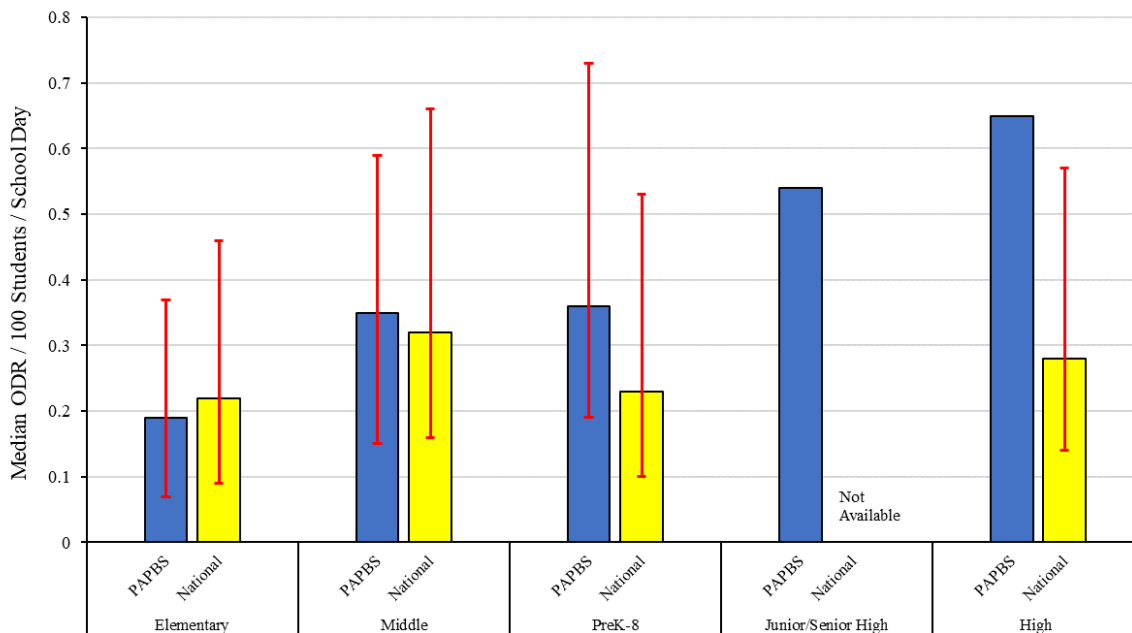
Unfortunately, there are times when student misbehavior is so severe that they are temporarily removed from the learning environment. Exclusions from the learning environment are referred to as Office Discipline Referrals (ODR). Reducing the occurrence and severity of

disruptive classroom behavior is a primary goal of SWPBIS. Figure 16 provides comparison of PAPBS Network schools and national data disaggregated by building type. While no statistical analyses could be performed because of a lack of raw data from the national sample, the following observations are worth noting:

- PAPBS Network elementary schools use ODRs at comparable or even modestly lower rates than a national sample of elementary schools.
- PAPBS Network middle and preK-8 schools use ODRs at comparable or perhaps slightly higher medians compared to national data.
- PAPBS Network high schools report higher median ODR rates compared to a national data.

Figure 16

Comparison of ODR Rates Between PAPBS Network Schools and National Sample



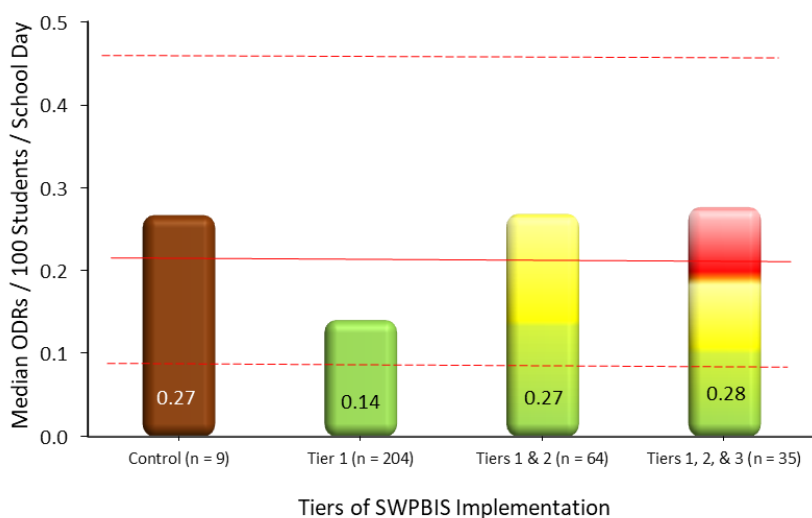
Note. ODR = office discipline referral; PAPBS = Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support; comparison of median ODRs/100 students/school day between PAPBS Network schools and national data (PBISApps.org, 2020); red lines represent 25th and 75th percentile ranks built around the median; percentile ranks were not computed for samples of less than 40.

Another important analysis of ODRs takes into account the level of SWPBIS Implementation. In other words, do schools have differential rates of ODRs as they implement SWPBIS at tiers 1, 2, or all 3 tiers? The results of these analyses were surprising. Collectively, statistically comparable ODR rates among middle, preK-8, and high schools were found when comparing those not implementing SWPBIS and those implementing tier 1 SWPBIS. A visual display of median ODR rates for elementary schools is provided in Figure 17. These results

indicate that elementary schools implementing tiers 1 and 2 SWPBIS reported significantly higher ODR rates in comparison to elementary schools only implementing tier 1 SWPBIS. Elementary schools categorized as control (e.g., not implementing), implementing tiers 1 and 2 SWPBIS, and implementing tiers 1, 2, and 3 SWPBIS reported similar ODR rates, which was somewhat unexpected. These results were comparable to those found in the 2018-2019 evaluation and may suggest a potential emerging pattern. The exact reason for this remains to be seen at this time.

Figure 17

Median ODR Rates for Elementary Schools Disaggregated by Tiers of SWPBIS Implementation



Note. ODR = office discipline referral; SWPBIS = School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports; solid red line represents the national median; dashed red lines represent the 25th and 75th national percentiles for elementary schools (PBISApps.org, 2020).

Equity in Discipline

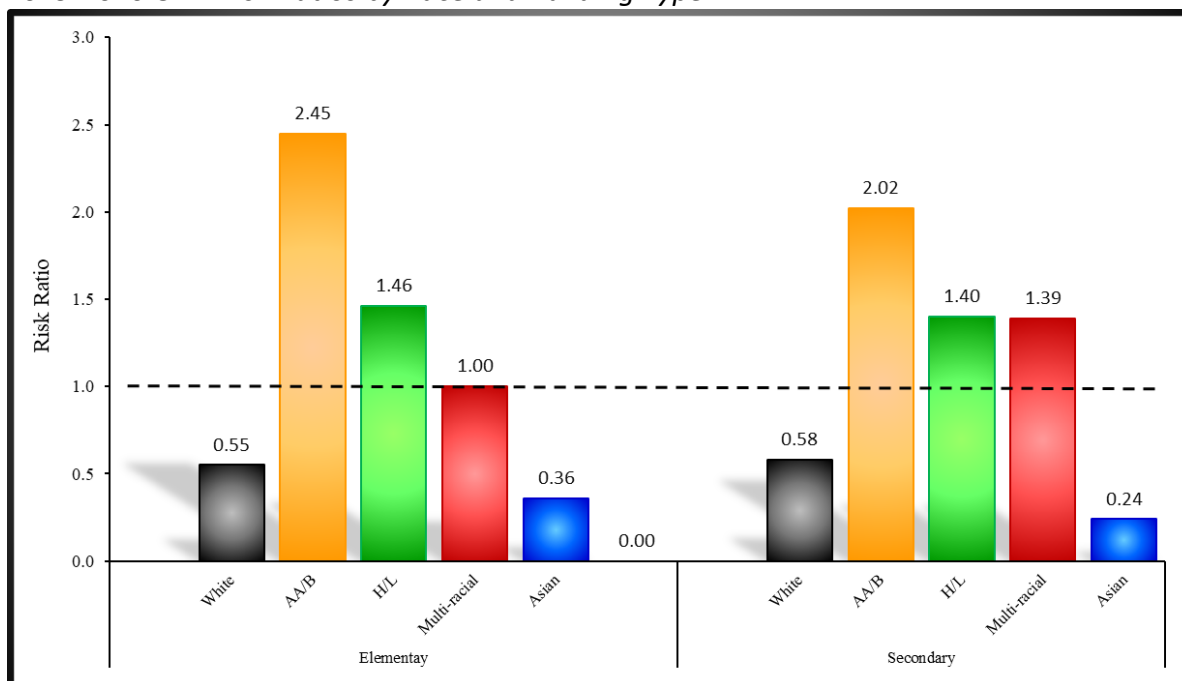
One goal of education is to realize more equitable outcomes for all students, whether it be related to graduation rates; academic outcomes; or special education placements. Specific to SWPBIS, it is important to appraise the extent to which equitable disciplinary practices occur for students of color. Exclusionary disciplinary practices such as ODRs are disproportionately used with minoritized groups, including students of color and students with disabilities (e.g., Gage et al. 2021; Skiba et al., 2011).

ODR data were used to generate risk indexes and risk ratios for each racial group. A risk index “is the proportion of a group that is at risk of a particular outcome” (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014, p. 151), and it indicates the proportion of a group that has that given outcome (e.g., proportion of all students who identify as Latinx who received an ODR). Once a risk index is determined, it can be compared to the risk indices for all other groups via a “risk ratio.” For interpretation, a risk ratio of 1.0 indicates the group receives the outcome (e.g., ODRs) at the

same proportionate rate as all other groups. A risk ratio below 1.0 indicates the group receives the outcome (e.g., ODRs) at lower rates than all other groups. A risk ratio above 1.0 indicates the group receives the outcome (e.g., ODRs) at higher rates than all other groups. For example, a risk ratio of 2.0 indicates the group receives ODRs at twice the rate (2.0; 200%) as all other groups.

Figure 18 provides the risk ratios by race and building type for the 2019-2020 academic year. Across elementary and secondary schools, students who identify as Asian and White are at a lower risk for receiving an ODR compared to all other racial groups. Students who identify as African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx are at a heightened risk for receiving an ODR compared to all other racial groups. Results for students who identify as Multi-racial are mixed, with elementary schools reporting equity in exclusionary discipline compared to all other racial groups and secondary schools reporting elevated risk.

Figure 18
2019-2020 ODR Risk Ratios by Race and Building Type



Note. AA/B = African American/Black; H/L = Hispanic/Latinx; ODR = office discipline referral; all schools were implementing at least one tier of SWPBIS; American Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander groups represented <0.4% of the total population and are not included in this graph; the dashed horizontal line represents a risk ratio of 1.0 which is interpreted as equitable disciplinary outcomes compared to all other racial groups.

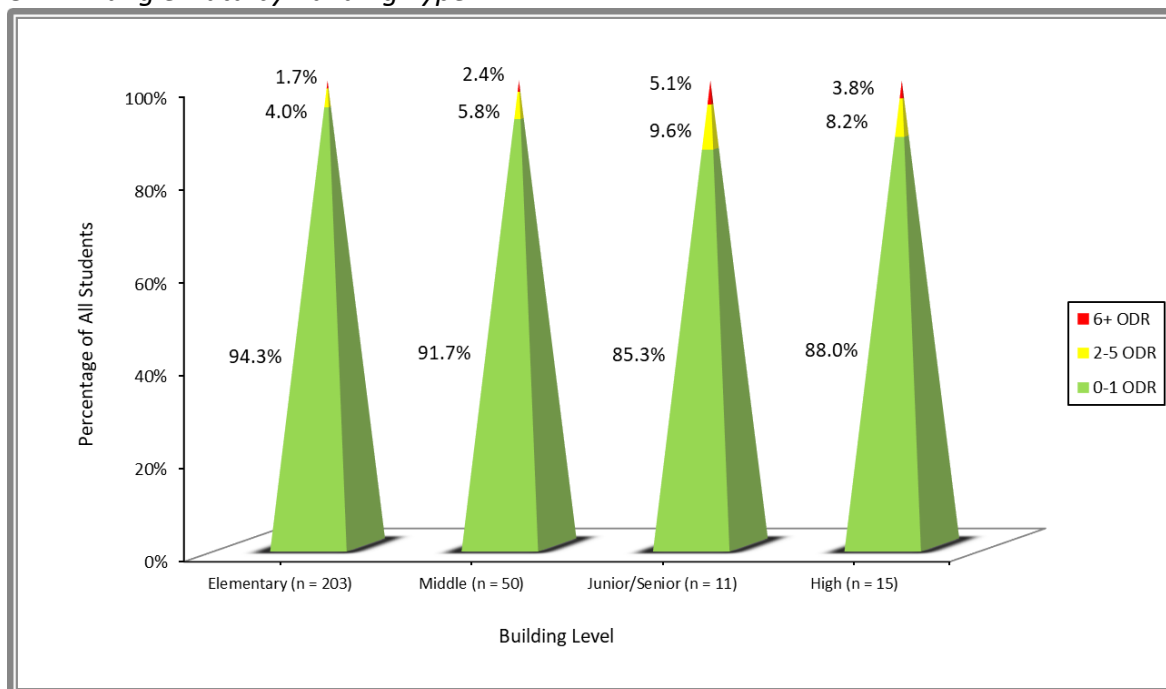
These findings indicate that equity in discipline has not been universally achieved to date. To do so will require specific emphasis of training, implementation, and technical assistance and subsequent evaluation for that expressed purpose.

ODR Triangle Data

The number of students who receive an ODR in an academic year can be collapsed into three ranges: 0-1; 2-5; and 6 or more. These ranges of ODRs correlate highly with students' level of behavioral risk: low, moderate, and high. Figure 19 provides a display of the difference among building types and proportions of students receiving 0-1, 2-5, or 6 more ODRs.

Figure 19

ODR Triangle Data by Building Type



Note. ODR = office discipline referral; data are from the 2019-2020 academic year and represent the proportion of the student population with that number of ODRs; fidelity of SWPBIS implementation is not confirmed in these schools.

Comparison of the differences among building types revealed the following results:

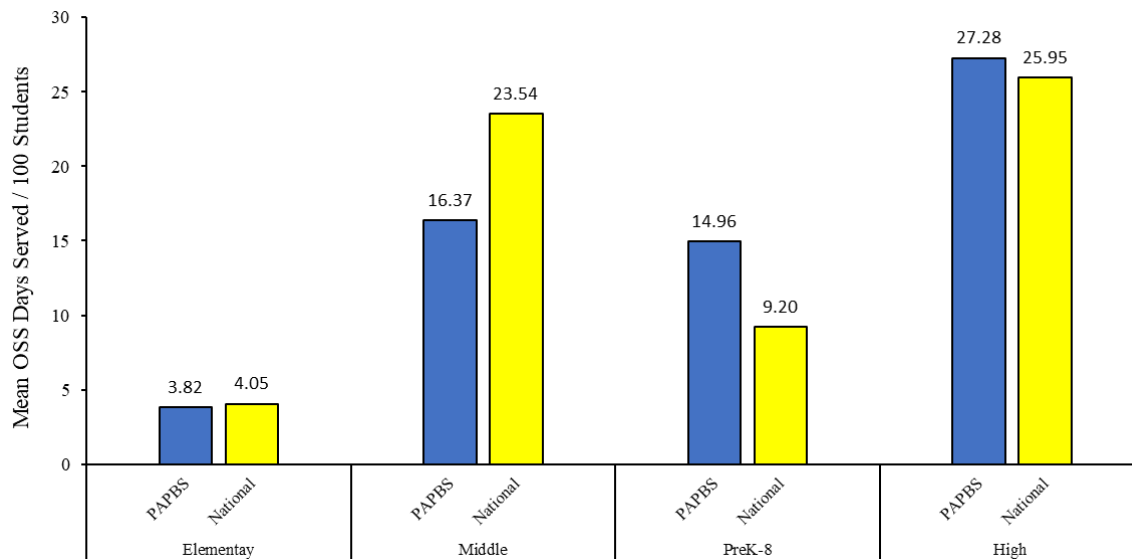
- 0-1 ODRs: Both high and junior/senior high schools were significantly lower when compared to elementary schools. The percentage of students receiving 0-1 ODR in junior/senior high schools was significantly lower than middle schools.
- 2-5 ODRs: Elementary schools were significantly lower when compared to junior/senior high, middle, and high schools. Results from junior/senior high schools were also significantly higher than those of middle schools.
- 6 or more ODRs: Elementary schools were significantly lower than junior/senior high and high schools. Middle schools were significantly lower than junior/senior high schools.

Suspensions

A comparison of PAPBS Network schools with the national mean out-of-school suspension (OSS) rates appears in Figure 20. Both PAPBS Network elementary schools and high schools have very similar OSS rates compared to their national peers. However, in the case of middle schools, it appears that PAPBS Network schools have lower OSS rates and preK-8 have higher OSS rates than their national peers.

Figure 20

Visual Comparison of PAPBS Network School Mean OSS Rates to National Mean OSS Rates



Note. PAPBS = Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support; OSS = out-of-school suspensions.

Out-of-School Placements

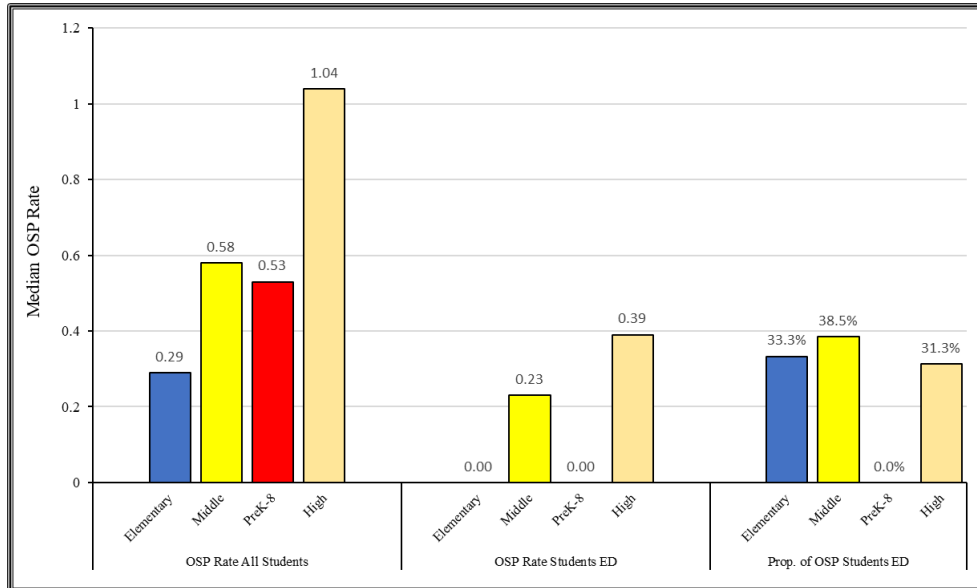
Even with all the best efforts, some students require services and supports that are so intensive or specialized that they are recommended for an out-of-school placement (OSP), often to a specialized school setting or another school in that district that offers the highly specialized programming the student needs. Figure 21 provides a summary of OSP rates by building type. The analyses of these data suggest the following:

- Elementary schools reported significantly lower OSP rates for all students compared to middle and high schools.
- Elementary and preK-8 schools reported similar OSP rates for all students.
- PreK-8, middle, and high schools reported similar OSP rates for all students.
- Elementary and preK-8 schools reported significantly lower OSP rates for students with emotional disturbance compared to middle and high schools.
- Elementary and preK-8 schools reported similar OSP rates for students with emotional disturbance.

- Middle and high schools reported similar OSP rates for students with emotional disturbance.

Figure 21

OSP Rates by Building Type



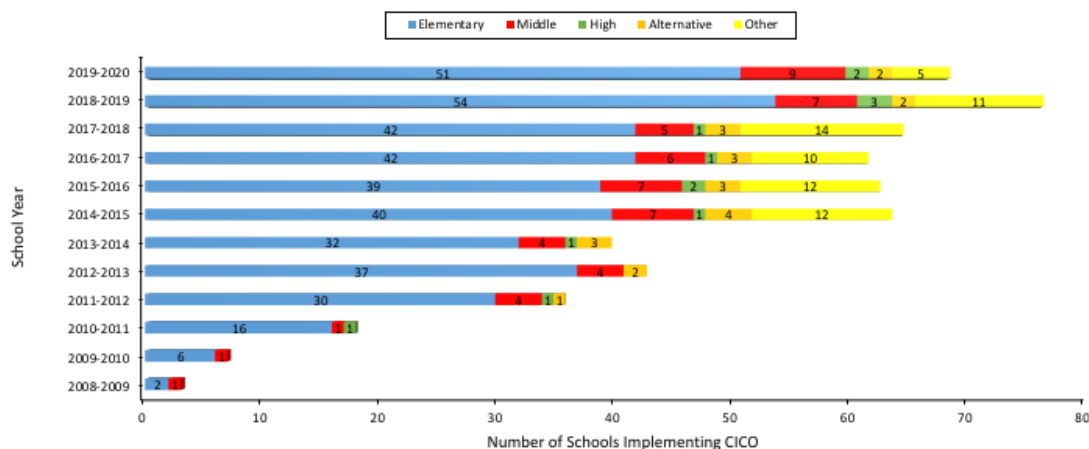
Note. ED = emotional disturbance; OSP = out-of-school placement; Prop. = Proportion; medians are reported as rates per 100 students enrolled; proportions are reported as percentages of all students in an out-of-school placement; fidelity of SWPBIS implementation was not considered.

Check-In/Check-Out

A commonly used tier 2 intervention in SWPBIS schools is a standard protocol, Check-In/Check-Out (CICO; Crone et al., 2010). CICO is a low-cost, empirically-validated intervention in which daily before-school and after-school check-ins occur to pre-correct inappropriate behavior and prompt more appropriate behaviors. Figure 22 illustrates a cross-sectional review of the growth of number of schools implementing CICO since the 2008-2009 academic year, disaggregated by building level. It should be noted, however, this figure does not consider the fidelity with which schools are implementing CICO. With the exception of a slight decrease in the 2019-2020 academic year, there has been a steady increase in the number of PAPBS Network schools implementing CICO since the 2008-2009 academic year. The 69 schools in the 2019-2020 academic year that were implementing CICO enrolled 1,668 students, of whom 1,382 (82.2%) achieved criterion success. CICO efficacy was similar across building types. Additionally, CICO success rates were similar across schools implementing one, two, or all three tiers of SWPBIS.

Figure 22

Cross-Sectional Review of the Cumulative Number of Schools Implementing CICO



Note. CICO = Check-In/Check-Out; Other indicates schools with non-traditional grade configurations, including PreK-8 and PreK-12.

Summary

By the conclusion of the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 2,746 schools in the PAPBS Network, representing approximately 36% of all preK-12 schools in Pennsylvania. This figure continues the upward trend in Network affiliation over the past decade. Elementary schools accounted for nearly half of all PAPBS Network schools, followed by high schools (22%), and middle schools (17%). A concurrent increase in the number of mental health agencies collaborating with PAPBS Network schools was also observed in the 2019-2020 academic year.

The CoP SBBH continued to meet in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, with virtual meetings becoming the norm due to the pandemic. Training and technical support continued to be offered by members of the CoP SBBH, PaTTAN, intermediate units, and collaborating mental health agencies largely through virtual platforms. The SSFI was completed in winter 2020 for the first time with results used to inform statewide leadership efforts moving forward. Workforce capacity, funding and alignment, and evaluation were identified as the areas in need of the most improvement. Conversely, work around policy, training, coaching, and establishment of local demonstration sites were viewed as relative strengths.

The process of affiliating with the PAPBS Network remained consistent with previous years: building- and district-level administrators provide assurances of training, implementation, and data reporting commitments while collaborating agencies (e.g., intermediate units, PaTTAN, mental health agency partners) commit to training and technical assistance over multiple years.

The past two years witnessed the largest number of PAPBS Network Facilitators on record. Currently, there are 219 PAPBS Network Facilitators providing support to schools. Another bright spot is that School-Based Behavioral Health grants, which had not been awarded in two years, returned in the 2020-2021 academic year. A total of \$224,125 was awarded to 30 school districts to support SWPBIS implementation that academic year.

SWPBIS implementation remains most pronounced in elementary schools. Three hundred forty-seven elementary schools achieved fidelity of tier 1 SWPBIS by spring 2020. Sixty-five middle schools and 29 high schools also reported implementing tier 1 SWPBIS by spring 2020. Thirteen alternative settings achieved implementation of tier 1 SWPBIS with 102 additional schools of alternative grade configurations achieving this mark. While the number of schools implementing at least tier 1 SWPBIS decreased slightly overall to 556 from spring 2019 to spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic likely had an adverse effect on an otherwise steep increase in schools implementing SWPBIS over the past decade.

Increases in the number of schools implementing advanced tiers of SWPBIS also occurred by spring 2020. Ninety-one schools reported implementing tier 1 and 2 SWPBIS, with an additional 53 schools achieving implementation of all three tiers of SWPBIS. As is the case with implementing tier 1 SWPBIS, elementary schools represented the largest proportion of schools implementing advanced tiers of SWPBIS.

Staff perceptions of SWPBIS implementation were generally consistent with objective measures of implementation fidelity. Staff from schools with confirmed fidelity of implementation report similarly high perceptions of SWPBIS implementation. Staff perceptions of risk and protective factors were generally in the desired direction, with stronger perceptions of protective factors compared to lower perceptions of risk.

ODR rates were statistically different across building levels, with elementary schools using these exclusionary disciplinary practices less often than secondary schools. PAPBS Network elementary schools use ODRs at rates that are equivalent to or below national averages. Middle and preK-8 SWPBIS schools in Pennsylvania use ODRs at rates that are equivalent to or slightly above national averages. PAPBS Network high schools use ODRs at rates that are well above national averages.

Equity in discipline data indicate that students who identify as African American/Black and Hispanic/Latinx in elementary schools are 2.45 and 1.46 times more likely, respectively, than all other students to receive an ODR. Risk ratios for all other racial groups in elementary schools were 1.00 or lower. This pattern was similar at the secondary level, with students who identify as African American/Black 2.02 times more likely and students who identify as Hispanic/Latinx 1.40 times more likely than other students to receive an ODR. Secondary students who identify as Multi-racial are 1.39 times more likely than other students to receive an ODR. Risk ratios for secondary students who identify as White or Asian were 0.58 and 0.24, respectively.

ODR Triangle Data were statistically different across building levels, with more desirable proportions of students receiving 0-1, 2-5, and 6+ ODRs in an academic year at the elementary level compared to all other building levels. In general, elementary schools reported 94% of students received no or only 1 ODR, 4% received 2-5 ODRs, and less than 2% received 6 or more ODRs. Proportions of middle school students were as follows: 92% received no or only 1 ODR, 6% received 2-5 ODRs, and 2% received 6 or more ODRs. At the junior/senior high school level, 85% of students received no or only 1 ODR, 10% received 2-5 ODRs, and 5% received 6 or more ODRs. Finally, 88%, 8%, and 4% of high school students received 0-1, 2 to 5, or 6 or more ODRs, respectively.

Use of OSS was statistically different across building levels. PAPBS Network elementary schools reported an average of nearly 4 days of OSS served per 100 students, a figure that is slightly below the national average. PAPBS Network middle schools reported an average of 16 days of OSS served per 100 students, well below national averages. PAPBS Network preK-8 schools' OSS rates were higher than national averages. Finally, PAPBS Network high schools' OSS rate of 27 days served per 100 students was comparable to national averages.

Elementary and preK-8 schools used OSPs for all students at rates that were statistically lower compared to middle and high schools. Similar results were revealed for OSPs for students with emotional disturbance.

The number of schools implementing CICO declined slightly in the 2019-2020 academic year. Most schools implementing CICO were at the elementary level, although this is not surprising given that elementary schools comprise the largest proportion of schools implementing SWPBIS in Pennsylvania. On average, CICO was successful for about 82% of all students enrolled, a remarkably strong efficacy rate given the simplicity of the intervention protocol. Success rates were comparable across building types and number of SWPBIS tiers implemented with fidelity.

Finally, academic outcomes related to SWPBIS implementation typically found in previous program evaluations were not conducted for this report given the closure of schools in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and suspension of statewide testing. The resumption of statewide testing in spring 2021 will permit analysis of academic outcomes in future program evaluations.

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