PBIS Forum in Brief:
Integrating Academic & Behavior Supports at the District Level

Introduction

Integrating academic and behavior supports requires working with the "end in mind." Preparing students for college and career readiness will require a focus on integrated skill development. In addition to the integrated skills across various academic content courses, a significant source of students' future success before and after graduation will depend on their social-emotional and behavioral competencies. These "academic enabling behaviors" and related social-emotional skills serve as a foundation for learning, building relationships, and problem solving obstacles in one's life beyond the formal school years. The role of the district in helping students to become college and career ready is to help schools engineer their schooling practices to promote skill integration. At least six school-level targets can help to promote integrated student skill development: (1) integrate academic standards with school-wide behavior expectations; (2) integrate academic and behavior instruction in lesson plans; (3) integrate assessment information and data sources; (4) develop interventions using integrated problem solving practices; (5) integrate teaming practices and membership; and (6) integrate implementation practices across multiple initiatives adopted for improving student outcomes. By specifying the targets for integrating district supports to schools, and by defining the purpose for doing so, a district can then engage in a variety of strategies to align their supports to schools. This document was written for district leaders who are interested in aligning or integrating their academic and behavior supports.

District Strategies

- Use existing or establish new teaming & communication structures that support specialization and shared distribution of responsibility

- Map district's organizational chart to identify existing direct and indirect relations

- Map the influence each department provides to school level integration targets within a tiered framework

- Align initiatives and programs by analyzing core features of use and implementation needs

- Engage in district level action-planning to guide implementation practices.

- Engage in organizational level problem solving to address barriers to implementation success or fidelity.

District level: Internal integration strategies

Teaming and communication

A recommended teaming structure allowing for *alignment* of district (e.g., Superintendent) strategic plans, and allowing for differentiation between upper cabinet decision-making and management of implementation practices involves: (1) A leadership team (static high office membership) and, (2) an implementation team (ad hoc middle management membership). The implementation team as you may imagine are the "worker bees" whose responsibility is to get into the detailed logistics of planning the implementation, supporting integration of practices, and/or engaging in organizational problem solving of barriers affecting desired systems change at the school or classroom levels. The implementation team, having ad hoc membership would be a structure for use as needed by various district department or office leaders, and school leader representatives based on the integration or implementation collaboration being prioritized. It can serve as a communication hub to preventatively address potential conflicts between guidance from different departments to the same school(s) (e.g., help to integrate initiatives to ease the implementation burden on schools).

Mapping district partnerships, communication, and expectations on schools

Analyzing the district's organizational chart is a useful strategy. The district's organizational chart provides lots of information about the various departments or offices currently involved with schooling, and the direct and indirect relationships between them. Knowing which departments are involved in a particular district, it

may then be possible to take inventory of the initiatives, practices, and resources that each department contributes or leads at the school level within a tiered framework. Mapping out the policies, procedures, required materials, plans, data, and all other practices that each department, office, program or grant requires of schools helps to inform implementation team membership when needed for a given implementation or systems change priority. This information also helps to promote collaborative partnerships among departments as they each become more aware of the policies, procedural compliance practices, and related data and decision making practices that each requires of schools. This awareness may be necessary to effectively support integration decisions at the district level among the various departments.

Logic for mapping relative department contributions within a tiered framework:

- Communicates how everything in the district "fits" in the schools' triangle.
- Inventories the mandated specialization and distinctive responsibilities that each department has or is authorized to manage prior to engaging in the integration of initiatives, programs or practices.

Having mapped the district department unit contributions or oversight responsibilities on school practices within a tiered framework, various internal targets of district integration may be considered that have influence upon the integration decisions at the school level as highlighted earlier. Those district targets may be teaming and planning structures (i.e., cross-department collaboration); *alignment* of initiatives, programs or grants; district policies & procedures; professional development resources and structures; data systems; and coaching and related implementation

District Leadership Team	District Implementation Team
Members: Superintendent Cabinet (Superintendent, Business, Legal, Finance, Community Partners, area or regional asst. superintendents, and a Rep from District Implementation Team (if not already included).	Members: All department, office, program, or grant leaders (or designees) have the potential to participate on the team as the district integration and implementation needs demand. School leadership representation from each level of schooling involved as needed. Community partners involved as needed.
Role: Provide district vision/mission, communicate expectations of schooling through district strategic plan, and maintain political support and visibility for all district improvement practices. District strategic plan goals provide context for linking all department, office, program, or grant activities.	Role: Collaborative planning, problem solving and decision making about the integration of department, office, program, or grant requirements on schools. Particular emphasis on involvement of School Improvement as "hub" for linking school level initiatives & practices.

supports. It may be helpful to crosswalk the contributions of the various district level targets with school level targets for integrating academic and behaviors supports.

Align initiatives & programs for common features and implementation needs

At the recent 2015 PBIS Leadership Forum, Horner, Poulos, & Greenwald demonstrated a planning process for comparing the implementation needs and components of different initiatives at a state and district level focus. This process includes three broad phases: Start Up (Defining what, who, and why); Core Features Analysis (alignment of multiple initiatives to prepare for implementation); and Implementation (delivery of training, coaching, data systems, and assessment or evaluation procedures). Their presentation serves a reminder that implementing district-wide or school-wide initiatives often draws upon different resources, data, and planning venues than when implementing student-focused interventions. Their presentation may be found at

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http://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/Forum15_Presentations/B11_Horner_Poulos_Greenwald.pdf.
The Core Features Analysis tool can help the district implementation team with determining the targets for
integration, how much integration to achieve, and for what purpose (e.g., district or school efficiency, student
outcomes). Within this tool, outcome measures across all targeted initiatives for comparison are listed
allowing for an analysis of potential alignment and identification of data sources that will need to be
coordinated for the evaluation of an integrated implementation plan. The practices of schooling are
identified and compared across the different initiatives allowing for an analysis of the potential to align, braid,
or merge practices that are common or complimentary. An interesting aspect of this Core Features Analysis
process is that a team must consider the additional professional development requirements to not only
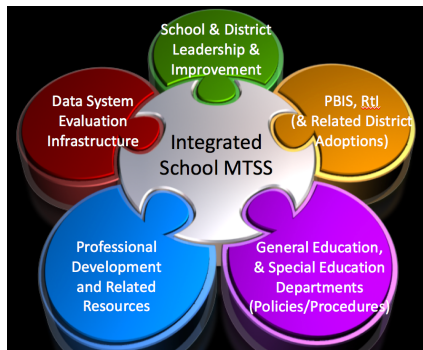
support the integrity of implementing each initiative on its own, but
also support targeted PD about the integrated practices across these
initiatives. Perhaps the supplemental use of *Practice Profiles* or
Innovation Configurations would be useful to further define the
integrated practices. The Systems section provides an opportunity
to explore the various implementation structures that each initiative
relies on such as teaming structures, meeting schedules, policy
considerations, training/coaching supports, etc. This section allows
educators to potentially leverage portions of their limited
implementation resources for more efficient use in support of
multiple initiatives at one time.

An additional factor to consider when attempting to integrate planning and implementation practices across
initiatives is to differentiate between required and voluntary planning structures or resources. Current ESEA
legislation requires schools to have a school improvement plan. Depending on the structure and design of
your state or district's school improvement plan template, that required planning structure may or may not be
conducive to effectively plan implementation practices for particular initiatives such as PBIS or MTSS, let
alone support coordinated planning across several initiatives. Where additional implementation planning
documents are necessary or encouraged (e.g., PBIS implementation plans, MTSS implementation plans),
decisions must be made about the relationship among the various required and voluntary plans. This is
analogous to an accountant having several different ledgers that manage various income and expense sources,
but a master balance sheet tracks the total income and expense summaries for reporting overall financial
improvement. The school improvement plan can serve for many schools as a master balance sheet of
implementation priorities, and goals across several initiatives.

An alternative route is to modify the SIP template to
embed MTSS elements at the core of the SIP process.
This was the case in Florida recently when collaboration
between the FL PS/RtI, FL PBIS, and the Florida
DOE Bureau of School Improvement collaborated on
the design of a new school improvement template that
nests features of MTSS implementation (including use
of a structured organizational problem solving process)
within the current school improvement model. Doing
so has helped sustain political visibility and support for
RtI and PBIS. In turn, some districts have nested their
PBIS and MTSS district personnel within the district
School Improvement office as opposed to housing
them in Special Education or Student Services. For a
more detailed review of the tools and resources
associated with promoting a "MTSS friendly" SIP
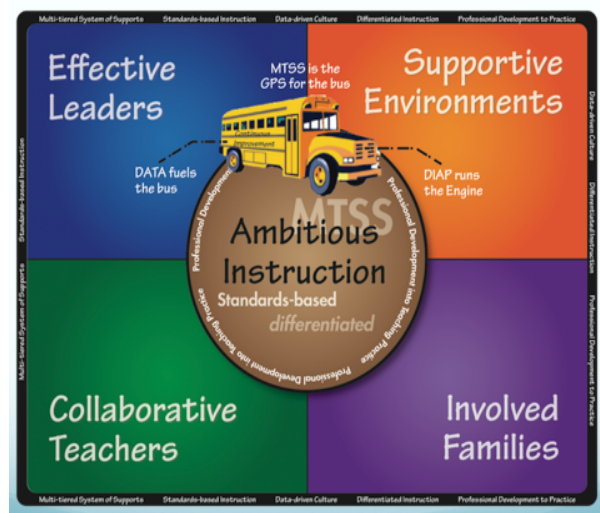
Florida's School Improvement Model

process, visit https://www.floridacims.org/downloads. Start with a review of the Florida SIP policy change process by clicking on "SIP" at the top-left of the webpage. For a deeper review of using an organizational problem solving process to guide priority and goal development for SIP in a MTSS framework, click on the "problem-solving" link in the upper right corner of the same webpage.

District level – External integration strategies

It's common for districts to hire or partner with external consultants when initiatives or programs are being introduced or implemented within the district. A good example of this is a district's commitment to implement both RtI and PBIS. In Florida, the PS/RtI and PBIS projects collaboratively launched a protocol of consultation practices among its respective staff for use in providing training and technical assistance to districts as integrated MTSS. This protocol-driven process was called the District Action Planning and Problem Solving Process; DAPPS). This process is featured in a book edited by Kent McIntosh and Steve Goodman (*Integrated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: Blending RtI and PBIS*; Guilford Press). The process involves 5 stages of district consultation activity that would be supported by both RtI and PBIS staff as blended services to the district. The initial phase established a working implementation team with appropriate representation of academic and behavior supports, and prepares the team for collaborative analysis of multiple types and sources of data. The second stage or Needs Assessment stage involves staff from the projects accessing internal and archived student data from the district to analyze the patterns of academic performance gaps within and across grade levels, and through disaggregation of student ethnic and risk profiles. This data serves to establish the defined problem and desired goal (Step 1 of PS). Then hypotheses are generated based on an analysis of systems data informed by both district and school leaders. Additional data are gathered as needed to further validate these hypotheses. The Needs Assessment process results in a targeted course of action by the district team. This chosen path of decision-making then informs the process of action planning for implementation of changes/practices, provision of training or technical assistance from both internal and external sources of support, followed by the 5th stage involving program evaluation of the district's implementation plan. For access to resources and tools associated with the DAPPS, please contact the authors of this paper.

	DAPPS Step 1	DAPPS Step 2	DAPPS Step 3	DAPPS Step 4	DAPPS Step 5
Florida's DAPPS Process (PBIS & RTI Braided Consultation)	• Establishment of Team • Readiness for Action Planning and Problem Solving	• Assessment of Student Performance • Assessment of District and School Systems • Determination of Action Planning Focus	• Implementation Plan Design • Evaluation Plan Design • Identification of Available or Needed Partners	• Implementation of District Plan • Provision of Training or Technical Assistance to Targeted Populations (Internal and External Coaching)	• Evaluation of Plan Impact on Improving Desired System Practices • Evaluation of Improving Student Outcomes

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