



## **Response to Intervention and School-wide Positive Behavior Support – Webinar Transcript January 14, 2010**

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*Whitney:* We are fortunate to have Dr. Rob Horner with us today. Dr. Rob Horner is an Alumni-Knight endowed professor with the Department of Special Education and Clinical Sciences at the University of Oregon. He is currently co-principal investigator at the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support and co-director of the Center on State Implementation and Scaling-up Evidence-based Practices. Dr. Horner is also a member of the Institute of Education Sciences review panel for social and behavior research. He has written extensively about positive behavioral interventions and supports. We are very fortunate that he is sharing his expertise with us today.

So now I turn the presentation over to Dr. Horner.

### **Slide 1: Response to Intervention and School-wide Positive Behavior Support**

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*Rob:* Thank you very much, Whitney. I'm delighted to be here and I really appreciate the invitation from the RTI Technical Assistance Center.

Let me give you a little bit of background of who I am and what we're going to do. I'm a Professor of Special Education at the University of Oregon, but really part of what drives what this Webinar is all about is experience doing behavior support in early literacy, as a teacher early on in my career and also as somebody who does ongoing teacher training and works with states and districts in terms of implementation.

I work closely with Dr. George Sugai. And we have been working on practices and procedures for implementing school-wide systems of behavior support over the past ten years. We've now developed strategies that are being used in over 10,000 schools in 44 states throughout the country.

Part of what we've learned is that focusing on behavior alone is insufficient. And in most [schools] - especially in the elementary schools, we implement both behavior and literacy interventions simultaneously.

We actually find the response to intervention framework to be incredibly helpful, with large-scale state and district planning and with actual implementation of key practices of both good teaching and good behavior support.

In terms of what we're going to do with this Webinar: any of you who wish to actually download and use the slides, with all of the animation and elements that go along with them, can do so by downloading off of the [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) web site as of Monday. So anyone who's interested in following up and getting more information can go there.



I will stop twice, partway through and again at the end, to answer questions. And we can go from there.

## **Slide 2: Goals**

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*Rob:* So here are the goals. Those of you who are skilled interventionists and trainers, you know that we always want to start with what are the real outcomes.

Within the next hour, my hope is that you would be able to define the core features of school-wide positive behavior support. You would be able to identify 13 features that link school-wide positive behavior support and early literacy within an RTI framework and you'd be able to identify both core data and sources of information to be able to put that together.

## **Slide 3: Assumptions**

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*Rob:* My assumptions from discussions with Whitney and others who have set up the Webinar is that the vast majority of you -- there are about 239 of you who are on the line right now -- are very knowledgeable about RTI for establishing early literacy. The identification of universal screening, the development of high quality prevention practices based on unambiguous instruction and effective curricula, the use of progress monitoring strategies and more intense interventions for those kids who are not responding, and the very careful, systematic, and iterative use of data for decision-making are core features of what are making early literacy systems much more effective.

Some of you are also knowledgeable about school-wide behavior support, but we can't make the assumption that everybody is. So one of the things that I've been asked to do is to first really frame what is this thing that we call school-wide positive behavior support and then how does that link with what you all know well about early literacy.

The other thing that we're going to do is really focus on the fact that in all cases what we're looking for collectively as a group is figuring out how states, regions, districts, administrations of individual schools, and teachers can do a better job of improving the quality of education for literacy, behavior, math, and writing.

## **Slide 4: Main Messages**

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*Rob:* Now main message -- I mean, if we were to cut to the chase, the main thing that I would want you to take away is if you are really interested in improving the academic gains, the math, the literacy scores of students in schools, you will not achieve that unless you also pay attention to the social behavior. Schools are social contexts. The social culture of a school is directly -- not tangentially, but directly -- related to producing academic gains.



Second, the old way of doing business where we had one way of doing literacy, another way of doing math, another way of doing behavior, simply is untenable. There are not the organizational constructs to be able to handle the parallel play that would be involved in multiple initiatives. We need an integrated strategy for producing school reform.

And part of what we're really arguing from this Webinar is that response to intervention, the constructs, the core elements of response to intervention, really provide a framework for cutting across different ways of doing educational intervention and support.

The third big message, and this comes from the work that we're doing around implementation strategies, is that things that have been demonstrated to work well in a small context or a narrow environment are not necessarily going to be implemented at scale unless we formally attend to the science of key implementation strategies.

Dean Fixsen and Karen Blase are really introducing American education systems to the science of effective implementation. And what we're learning is that if we ignore that science, what we end up is with pockets of excellence, but not the broad, large-scale implementation we want.

#### **Slide 5: What is SWPBS**

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*Rob:* So three big messages -- what is school-wide positive behavior support, how does it fit with the link with RTI providing the framework of linking literacy and behavior, and how does that fit within a large-scale strategy if you want to implement and use this to change all of the schools in your state or all of the schools in your district.

#### **Slide 6: Logic for School-wide PBS**

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*Rob:* So to begin, what's the logic with respect to what is school-wide positive behavior support? Why would you move in this direction as opposed to what many of us are familiar with?

I'm going to go through the next set of slides fairly quickly on the assumption that some of you are knowledgeable and some aren't. Remember, you can always go back and get all of these slides and the backups either from the pbis.org Web site or from the National Center on RTI Web site.

One of the issues I want to argue: schools right now face a real difficult challenge partly because they're expected to do social competence, academic competence, and safety. And we're really being held to a much wider and much deeper set of expectations than ever before.

Second, students who arrive, especially in elementary school, at our schools today, arrive more different in their understanding of what is socially acceptable than ever before. And we have many examples of the mobility, the different cultural standards. But the big issue is that students are not coming from their local neighborhoods with a common set of expectations of what's



acceptable. Unless we define clearly what the standards and acceptable behaviors are, we should expect to see that the normal variability is going to result in a lot of differences of what is okay.

Third big message: most teachers were trained in a discipline system in which getting tough and zero tolerance were standard policies and practices. Essentially Russ Skiba and Reece Peterson and others have demonstrated unequivocally that the get-tough, zero-tolerance approach to discipline is ineffective and insufficient. If the only thing we do is punish inappropriate behavior, we actually create social cultures that are the opposite of what we want as effective learning environments.

Third big message: individual student interventions. There is a powerful technology for supporting individual students. We know more about how to help individual kids than ever before. But anybody who believes that the way that we're going to change social behavior in school is by a large number of individual interventions isn't counting. There basically are more kids who have needs than there are people who can do the individual interventions.

That is really what led us to this notion that if we're going to be effective, we need to create social cultures that are focused on the whole school as a unit of analysis.

#### **Slide 7: Context**

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#### **Slide 8: Sobering Observation**

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#### **Slide 9: School-wide PBS**

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*Rob:* And I'm going to skip down just a little bit. A guy named George Sugai, who is pictured now, really introduced this notion that if we're going to use the technology that we know about good behavior support, we need to do it not just with individual students and with the classic thing that we've all been through, which is training in classroom behavior management, but we need to think about behavior support as something that is operating at the whole school level.

#### **Slide 10: What is School-wide Positive Behavior Support?**

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*Rob:* So first major goal of this Webinar: what is school-wide positive behavior support? School-wide positive behavior support is a system. It's a set of individual practices within the organizational and administrative systems to establish the social culture and the individual behavior support – so, the broad social, cultural and individual behavior supports that create effective learning environments.

A critical theme about this definition is that the focus is not just having kids behave well, but having kids be in schools where they are learning effectively. If we look at the literature and we



say what are the evidence-based practices that make up school-wide positive behavior support, they actually come in several different levels.

And I want those of you who are very knowledgeable about RTI to be careful to keep track of how these fit. So I'm going to come back in the first set of questions. I'm going to ask to what extent do you feel comfortable in your understanding about what school-wide behavior support is? So here is the core part.

Everything focuses on prevention -- rather than using only consequences, we want to define, teach, monitor, and acknowledge social expectations in school before students have a chance to engage in inappropriate behavior. So the emphasis on prevention is right from day one when the school opens. It also involves, as a core feature of RTI, identifying students early and providing additional assistance early on.

So the first three elements are prevention, define and teach behavioral expectations, and active acknowledgement of positive behavior. When we walk into schools and we walk down a hallway, we stop students and we ask them: do you know what the expectations are, what does that actually mean right here, right now, and has anybody acknowledged you for doing things the right way in the past two weeks? When 80% of the students in a school can answer those questions, you're implementing school-wide positive behavior support.

When we see implementation with fidelity, the general data that we're looking at is a 20% to 60% reduction in office discipline referrals. And I'm going to come back and share more data as we go forward.

But key features of school-wide behavior support -- one is investing in prevention. That means creating the team, defining expectations, teaching expectations in the first two weeks of school, providing a system of acknowledging appropriate behavior.

But look at the fourth one -- it also involves arranging consequences so that you do not ignore problem behavior. One of the critical themes of RTI is very rapid correction of errors. Just as you correct the errors in early literacy, you want to correct the errors in terms of problem behavior. The assumption we go on is that problem behavior that occurs and is not corrected has probably been inadvertently reinforced and is more likely to happen in the future. So a system of clear, consistent continuum of consequences for problem behavior is critical.

The collection and ongoing use of data for decision-making is something that is a close match with RTI. The data that we collect, however, is going to focus on office discipline referrals and patterns of problem behavior.

We are getting more and more specific and use technology to get more individualized and more detailed in the data that we can collect, but the basic idea that the administrator, the school-wide team, and individual student teams use data for decision-making is critical, a continuum of interventions. Of all of the things, I think one of the greatest contributions of RTI is getting away from the old idea that one package will work for everybody.



Think about - those of you who have been in education for a while - the discipline and classroom management strategies that have typically been introduced. When I was a teacher, we would be sent away and we would come back with a three-ring binder that had the behavior support strategy of the year. And every year we got a new one.

Part of what we're learning is all of those strategies have very useful elements. But none of them work for the full continuum of challenges. So one of the messages of RTI that we strongly embrace within school-wide positive behavior support is that you need multiple tiers of support if you're going to be effective.

The other big message, look at the bottom one, is implementation of systems that support effective practices. Too often we send teachers away to be trained on how to make their classrooms work, but we don't provide the companion training and orientation for administrators.

So the teachers don't have the technical data, they don't have access to the time to operate within teams, they don't have the curriculum or the materials that they've been taught to use. Never implement effective practices without simultaneously implementing the systems that will support them.

### **Slide 11: Establishing a Social Culture**

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### **Slide 12: Create Effective Learning Environments**

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*Rob:* The basic things that we're learning - create environments. If you want to create a learning environment that will work, create an environment that is predictable, where everybody knows what the expectations are; it's consistent across time, people, and locations; it's positive.

The students receive at least four positive bits of feedback for every correction. And it's safe. One of the things that we've learned over and over: we ask students to what extent to do you feel emotionally and physically safe in this environment? One of the exciting things about school-wide positive behavior support is randomized control trials have now indicated that students actively identify the school as a safer place when you build high predictability.

### **Slide 13: School-wide Positive Behavior Support**

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*Rob:* The image that we use most frequently is this triangle. We're big fans of icons to describe the systems. One of the icons [this triangle] - think about all kids fitting in this triangle. And the triangle has two really big messages.

Message number one is invest first in prevention for everybody. So, if you are interested in building a behavior support system, don't start by identifying a high-intensity intervention for the small number of kids who are making the most excitement in school. Start first by creating a



prevention system that is made available to every student. So within school-wide behavior support, every single student gets assistance.

We recognize that if this works, about 80% of the students will respond. That means there's going to be about 15% of students who need more intense support.

And there's probably going to be another group - our data indicate about 5% - 7% of students who need much more intense support. So the message from this triangle, which we actually got from (Hill Walker's) work with community health, is invest first in prevention and never have a single tactic for addressing an outcome.

If you're going to do early literacy, put a lot of energy into your primary curriculum and instruction, but always make sure that you have at least two more levels of intensity of support.

If you're going to put energy into behavior support, invest first in the primary prevention and then look at the ways in which you will have at least two additional tiers of support.

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#### **Slide 14: SWIS summary 08-09**

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*Rob:* These are data from approximately 3400 schools in school year '08/'09, about 1.7 million students. What it gives is some basic ideas in terms of the rates of office discipline referrals.

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#### **Slide 15: SWIS Mean Percentage Students (2008-09)**

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*Rob:* And, remember, I talked about the triangles with 80%, 15%, 5%. Here are the data broken out for preschool to kindergarten, schools that are K-5, K-6, middle schools, grades six, seven, eight or seven, eight, nine, or six, seven, eight, nine, high schools grades 9-12, and then over to the right you see schools that are either K-8 or K-12.

Now notice the elementary group. There are 2162 elementary schools. If you look at all of the students from the '08/'09 school year and you ask the question what proportion of those students had zero or one office referral for an entire year, the answer is 90%.

If you ask how many had two to five referrals for the entire year, the answer is 7%. If you ask how many had six or more referrals, the answer is 3%. And you see the similar means for middle school and high school.

The thing that's interesting and important for you to keep in mind is that in elementary school you've got about 10% of the kids, you've got about 22% in middle school and a similar amount, about 28% in high school, who are creating the vast majority of the excitement.

Organize behavior support first to maximize the size of the green part of the triangle and then build in the systems so that you're able to respond with greater intensity for the students in the red and the yellow parts of the triangle.

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### **Slide 16: Multi-tier Model**

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*Rob:* A lot of what we've done in terms of building this as an RTI framework is framing it with the behavioral supports on the right side and the academic supports on the left side. And we have multiple examples of putting that in place.

### **Slide 17: Behavioral Systems**

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### **Slide 18: Establishing Continuum of SWPBS**

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*Rob:* When we do training with schools, part of what we ask them to do is to be able to answer, what are your primary prevention strategies? Do you teach? Do you have rewards? Do you have effective instruction? Do you have active parent engagement? What do you do for students who need more help? And then, what do you do for students who need high-intensity individualized interventions?

Schools that have all three levels of support are implementing school-wide positive behavior support.

### **Slide 19: Supporting Social Competence, Academic Achievement and Safety**

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*Rob:* We also emphasize that if schools are going to be effective, they start by focusing on the core outcomes, social competence, academic achievement and safety, the practices that support student behavior, the systems that support staff behavior, and the data structure that's going to allow people to move successfully and sustain over time.

### **Slide 20**

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*Rob:* If we do that well, we get kids who are very clear, very competent in terms of knowing what the expectations are.

### **Slide 21: Define School-wide Expectations for Social Behavior**

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*Rob:* We look in most cases for three to five social expectations, short statements positively stated. Notice that it's what to do, not what to avoid – so things like be respectful, be responsible, be safe, be kind – not long, complicated issues, but three to five.

### **Slides 22 and 23**

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*Rob:* And we organize them so that the students are clear about what the words are and what the expectations are.

### **Slide 24**

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*Rob:* The picture you're looking at right now is from a middle school in Iowa.

**Slide 25**

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*Rob:* This is from an elementary school in the East Coast.

**Slide 26: A few positive SW Expectations**

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*Rob:* This is the example of a high school. Notice that in high school, the students were actively engaged in selecting the behavioral expectations, responsibility, respect, and relationships. They were actively involved in the creation of the icons and the spelling of it on the side of the wall, which is why it's almost illegible. But, in fact, 80% of the kids in this school actually know what those expectations are.

**Slide 27: SOAR**

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*Rob:* Part of what we found is that investing, building in the families, the staff, and the students to identify the expectations is important.

**Slides 28 – 30**

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*Rob:* You can do it in French: you can do it in Spanish. I see by the attendees that we actually have some colleagues from Norway and we actually have all of this in Norwegian. So any of you who would like to see behavioral expectations defined in Norwegian, please send me an email. We'd be happy to share that with you.

Notice also these are not 8-1/2-by-11 pieces of paper that are just sort of taped to the side of the wall.

**Slides 31 – 35**

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*Rob:* These are examples that are stable. We want to see the expectations on the wall, on the ceiling, on the floor, on the backs of the kids. We want to see it throughout the school and we want it to clearly define what the expectations are.

**Slide 36: Teach Behavioral Expectations**

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*Rob:* The other part is it's not enough just to define the words. If you define the words well, you'll have students saying okay, be respectful, be responsible. But it will produce no change in their behavior.

**Slides 37 – 40**

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*Rob:* A key thing about school-wide behavior support is that we actively teach the expectations under real conditions, not just in a classroom or gym, but rather going to each of the different locations in the school.

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**Slides 41 and 42: Expectations & behavioral skills are taught & recognized in natural context**

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*Rob:* If you want to teach what behavioral expectations look like in the cafeteria, teach it in the cafeteria. If you want to teach the expectations that are going to be part of an assembly, teach it in the context of an assembly.

If you want to teach the behavioral expectations related to the bus area, go out and teach it in the context of the bus area.

Part of what we look for is active instruction – what are the expectations, what does it look like, and do it under multiple conditions.

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**Slide 43: Linking Academic and Behavior Supports**

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*Rob:* So big messages: school-wide positive behavior support is a systematic strategy for having practices plus systems to build the social culture, with the individual intense supports to establish an effective learning environment.

The key things that we're learning are that if we do behavior support well, it will improve the effectiveness of the learning environment. What's exciting and what most teachers also know is that good teaching promotes better behavior. Good behavior support also produces better teaching outcomes. All of this needs to be done in a context of effective systems.

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**Slide 44: Alignment for Systems Change**

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*Rob:* The irony is all too often in our schools, one of the things that happens is schools are faced with too many initiatives. You've got the early intervention initiative, the literacy initiative, the wraparound, the math, family support, behavior support.

If we do this well, we need a way to align initiatives so that we have a common framework always held accountable to student outcomes. One of the messages from this Webinar is that response to intervention is actually a framework for achieving that alignment.

So think about those of you who are actively engaged in each of these different kinds of initiatives. Think how they fit together in terms of all including clear systems of primary prevention.

What is the math curriculum, math instruction, what is the literacy curriculum, the literacy instruction, what is the behavioral curriculum, the behavioral instruction that serves as the



foundation? To what extent on a regular basis, two to three times a year, do we do universal screening to determine if students are responding and identify those kids who need more intense support early.

Does the school build multiple tiers of support? Not just one tactic, not just one intervention, but a multi-tiered level of increasingly intense support on the assumption that if you do primary prevention well, 80% of the kids will respond, but you're still going to have 15% to 20% of the kids who need more support.

Do we intervene early? Now in behavior support, I've got to tell you, having been a teacher and having done this for 30 years, all too often we wait until about November/December. We see students who are having difficulty; we hit the winter holidays; we build behavioral supports in January and February, get them in place in March and April, and then in May and June we actually kick in the real strategy, hoping that the students will get better over the summer. That really is not an effective model for behavior support in schools.

Part of what we're learning about early intervention: you know in most cases, in your schools, 75% to 80% of the heavy hitters will be there in September.

We should have 80% of the high-intensity interventions in place before Halloween. We should use active data collection and early intervention if we're going to be serious about creating environments that are effective for learning.

When we identify a student who needs more support, she or he should get more intense monitoring, not just of their literacy performance, but also of their behavior.

And over and over, one of the things that is a big message that we want to give is that too often behavior support is something expected to be in the hands of only teaching and school psychology staff. However, school-wide positive behavior support has a very strong role for administrators.

### **Break for Questions**

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*Rob:* So at this point, you should have at least an operating introduction to what is school-wide positive behavior support. If I look at the questions, there are two questions that have been asked so far.

One question: "Are there samples of clear consequences for pre-K?" And the answer is, absolutely. If you go to the [pbis.org](http://pbis.org) Web site, we have examples of establishing behavior support systems for preschool, for kindergarten, for elementary, for middle school, and for high school.

And your question is a beautiful one because it emphasizes the need to ensure that the behavioral expectations must be tied to the developmental level of the kids. Similarly, the consequences for inappropriate behavior need to be tied to the developmental level of the students.



So both in terms of defining behavioral expectations and defining a continuum for consequences, by going to pbis.org, you can find a matrix and table of strategies that have been used.

Second question: “Have randomized control trials been conducted?” And the answer is, yes. There are randomized control trials that have been done in Illinois, Hawaii, Maryland, and Arizona. Ron Nelson has conducted randomized control trials using the development of school-wide systems.

Catherine Bradshaw has done three different studies within a randomized control trial framework documenting both the effectiveness of school-wide positive behavior support and initial preliminary data documenting not only the improvement in social behavior, but the improvement in the quality of the organization as a place to work.

We have just published a randomized control trial, again documenting 1) that school-wide positive behavior support can be implemented, 2) that it’s related to reduction in problem behavior and improved school safety, and 3) preliminary but not definitive data documenting in elementary schools that when you create coherent social environments, it actually is related to improved social or improved academic outcomes.

So those were the initial questions. Let me come back to giving you a little bit more; then we’ll come back to questions later on.

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**Slide 45: States Implementing SWPBS: 10,000+ schools in 48 states**

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*Rob:* So one of the messages, one of the reasons why I think the RTI network is really an important place for us to talk about behavior and literacy is the experience that we have in terms of going to scale.

We currently work in over 10,000 schools throughout the United States. The state with the most schools now -- literally over 1000 -- is Illinois. So we’re working with 24%, 25% of all of the schools in Illinois. We’re working with about 48% of the schools in Oregon. So it’s more than just individual examples. It’s broad examples.

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**Slide 46: North Carolina: Positive Behavior Support Initiative**

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*Rob:* Let me give you just a quick example of North Carolina.

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**Slide 47: North Carolina: Positive Behavior Support Initiative**

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*Rob:* Heather Reynolds and Bob Algozzine have been working carefully. North Carolina has been organized through a federal grant to implement school-wide positive behavior support.



What you're looking at now is a map of North Carolina. And the yellow portions of the map are counties that are implementing school-wide positive behavior support.

#### **Slide 48: North Carolina: Positive Behavior Support Initiative**

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*Rob:* One of the things that Bob Algozzine did when he looked at an evaluation of school-wide positive behavior support was actually calculate what the triangle data looked like in '04/'05, '05/'06, '06/'07, and '07/'08.

Note that the number of schools in his evaluation cohort changed. Now these bars are really meant to be triangles and we're working on Bob to get his geometry straight.

But the green part, remember, is the proportion of kids with zero or one referral for an entire year. The yellow is the proportion of students with two to five, and the red is the proportion of students with six or more.

One of the interesting things that they did in North Carolina is they were able to also collect formal data -- and this is hard to get -- but a comparison of schools that were not implementing school-wide positive behavior support.

So the North Carolina data indicated several things: 1) schools on a large scale were able to adopt these practices. These are not practices that can only be done in a rich environment. These are being done in schools that have very limited resources; 2) when the universal or primary prevention systems are in place, students respond; and 3), there's margin for improvement. Schools that are not implementing this actually have greater challenges.

#### **Slide 49: North Carolina: Positive Behavior Support Initiative**

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*Rob:* This particular slide is better when you have the animation. Part of what we were able to show - down below, the x axis - is the rate of office discipline referrals per 100 students.

The vertical axis is the proportion of students who were meeting the fourth grade reading standard. Part of what they did is they demonstrated that schools with lower levels of office referrals in North Carolina were systematically linked with higher rates of early literacy.

#### **Slide 50: MIBLSI**

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*Rob:* Now we've looked at that more carefully in Michigan. Michigan is a state in which school-wide positive behavior support and early literacy were united, where we actually have implemented all of the interventions using early literacy and behavior support at the same time.

#### **Slide 51: Participating Schools**

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*Rob:* We started small with just five schools doing a demonstration and then Steve Goodman and his colleagues have implemented school-wide positive behavior support with early literacy using both DIBELS data as the literacy database and SWIS data as the behavioral database.

There are currently now over 500 schools throughout the state of Michigan that are actively implementing school-wide positive behavior support and early literacy. So in terms of an example of using the RTI framework, Michigan is among the best examples that we have.

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**Slide 52: Average Major Discipline Referral per 100 Students by Cohort**

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*Rob:* Some preliminary evaluation data: here are data from three cohorts of schools in Michigan. These data indicate the average office discipline referrals per 100 students in cohort 1 (15 schools), cohort 2 (19 schools), and cohort 3 (34 schools).

So part of what we saw with implementation of school-wide behavior support was in fact related to reduction in problem behavior.

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**Slide 53: Percent of Students meeting DIBELS Spring Benchmark for Cohorts 1– 4 (Combined Grades)**

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*Rob:* But part of what they also did is they kept careful data looking at their DIBELS spring benchmark scores. So these are exactly the same schools across years. So for cohort 1 you get the average rate of students meeting DIBELS benchmark. As office discipline referrals went down, the proportion of students [meeting benchmark] across the cohorts went up.

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**Slide 54: Percent of Students at DIBELS Intensive Level across year by Cohort**

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*Rob:* Now those of you who are really knowledgeable about literacy remember the three tiers of the DIBELS benchmarks. So one is meeting, but what about the kids who are at greatest risk, those in the intensive level? With those cohorts, this is the proportion of students who were identified as needing intensive literacy supports.

So the basic message is that as we implemented, using an RTI framework, early literacy and behavior supports in Michigan, 1) we were able to do it on a large scale (not just a little bit) and there are now over 600 schools in Michigan that are doing this; 2) when schools adopted this framework, they were able to meet the primary prevention efforts for both early literacy and behavior support.

We saw reductions in office discipline referrals, increases in the proportion of students who are meeting basic benchmark, and, more important, decreases both in the intensive levels of the literacy demands and the intensive levels of behavior support.

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**Slide 55: Participating School Example: Fourth Grade Reading MEAP Results**

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*Rob:* One quick example: here's a district from Michigan over a six-year period. This is the mean of all students in the district who met fourth grade reading requirements using standardized tests. So these are not DIBELS data. These are the standardized state tests.

One of the schools that we worked with was particularly at risk. So in this district, it was below the district average. MiBLSi is the name of the intervention in Michigan that is using the RTI framework to implement both early literacy and positive behavior support.

In 2001, this school (blue bar) implemented that. By 2002, they had reached criterion. And not only did they implement the behavior and early literacy things, the fidelity measures documenting effects, but their scores in terms of their school (it was one of those at-risk schools) went up.

So one of the messages that we want to be able to give is that linking early literacy and behavior benefits both the behavior support systems and the literacy systems.

**Slide 56: The Effects of School-wide PBS within a Randomized Control Effectiveness Trial**

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**Slide 57: RTI as the framework for Linking SWPBS and Early Literacy**

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**Slide 58: Randomized Controlled Trial**

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**Slide 59: Finding #1: Implementation by regular personnel**

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**Slide 60: Results: With training by regular state trainers, schools are able to implement SWPBS to criterion.**

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**Slide 61: Finding #2: SWPBS is associated with increased perception of safety**

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**Slide 62: Results: Perceived Social Risk Factors decreased when SWPBS was implemented with fidelity.**

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**Slide 63: Finding #3: SWPBS associated with increase in proportion of students meeting state reading standard**

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**Slide 64: Results: The percentage of 3rd graders meeting the state reading standard increased with SWPBS implementation.**

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**Slide 65: Linking PBS and Early Literacy**

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*Rob:* Now one of the things for this Webinar, there's a Word file that is attached. And the Word file is a self-assessment of practices and functions. What I'm going to do in the next ten minutes is walk through how we actually help schools and districts use that function, use the RTI framework, to build action plans where they implement early literacy and behavior support.

The key theme is that we try to identify the common features and then use team training with coaching with fidelity documentation and outcome measures to keep track of what the things are that we're putting in place.

So for those of you who have been steeped in both RTI and in behavior support, you should be able to see how these pieces now fit together. So, in part, a continuum of practices is going to be implemented. Never do the practices without the foundation, systems, and supports that are necessary. Always use the administrative roles to put things in place and a heavy focus on the use of data.

**Slide 66: Linking RTI and PBS**

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*Rob:* If you have now downloaded and are looking at the self-assessment, that Word file, you can either do that or you can watch the slides.

But I wanted to give you a copy of the self-assessment because the self-assessment has been directly and explicitly helpful to us when we work with both school leadership teams and district leadership teams that are building plans to put things in place.

So here are - from our perspective - the key things that tie literacy and behavior support together using a response to intervention framework.

So the first big issue: effective foundation practices. One of the big messages is you don't start with corrections; you start by implementing a core foundation, the universal primary prevention issue, which is always going to say do you have an effective curriculum, do you deliver it with unambiguous instruction, do you deliver it at an adequate intensity? So think about early literacy, at least 90 minutes a day, four to five days a week, using instructional practices that teach the general case before teaching exceptions, that have high rates of student involvement, that use a curriculum that is scaffolded to create the pre-skills necessary to move forward, a reward system so that you never teach something that isn't acknowledged at least four times, an error correction system that prevents errors from going uncorrected and thereby being rewarded, both for behavior and for early literacy.



Think about the young child who is not doing well with reading. One of the first things you do is put her into a smaller group with more minutes so that she gets adequate intensity to practice performance, and if she makes a mistake, the likelihood that it will be immediately corrected is very high. We do the same thing when we build the behavior support systems.

So part of what we're looking for is how to increase the likelihood that we can put these things in place.

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**Slide 67: Linking RTI and PBS**

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*Rob:* Second, universal screening. Using data for decision-making is a critical variable. Too often people think about using data only at the individual student level.

Part of what we've learned from RTI is at least three times a year, two to three times a year, we want all students in the school to be assessed to say are there students who are at risk. And you can use AIMSWeb, you can use Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), you can use DIBELS as excellent strategies for doing universal screening.

With behavior, we typically use office discipline referrals. And part of what we're learning – I mean, we've got schools in Illinois that use the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD) or the Social Skill Rating System (SSRS), but most schools have office discipline referral patterns that can work.

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**Slide 68: Cumulative Mean ODRs Per Month for 325+ Elementary Schools 08-09**

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*Rob:* Consider this -- these are data that have only recently been proposed. And this slide did things faster than it was supposed to. Let me see if I can go back and try this again. It didn't work.

All right, the slide that you're looking at provides data for '08/'09 for 325 elementary schools. The green bar is the cumulative mean level of office discipline referrals for students who end up the year with zero to one.

The purple is the mean rate by month for students two to five. The blue bar, which actually gets covered as it goes up, is the mean office discipline referrals for all students who end up with six or more.

So look at that bar. What that says is typically, on average in January, students who end up with six or more referrals have almost six referrals. By April, they're ending up with about seven referrals.

So one of the things that we want to be able to say: you can identify most of the heavy hitters by October. And if the animation in this slide had worked, what we want to do is to cover up and



decrease that increasing trend and create a new slope for that line. We can identify which kids are going to be at greatest risk.

We actually can use the concepts of universal screening using what we know about office discipline referral patterns.

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**Slide 69: Linking RTI and PBS**

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*Rob:* Third big message. This comes back to that notion of the triangle where you invest in prevention first, but you never have one trick. You always have multiple tactics.

So for any core theme or outcome in the school, you want to be able to say do we have at least three levels of intensity? And when we identify a student who is at risk, can we quickly deliver, can we do early intervention to deliver higher rates of support.

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**Slide 70: Linking RTI and PBS**

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*Rob:* Part of that is improving the progress monitoring that's available when students get more intense support. The graph that you're looking at is a graph of the percent of behavioral points for a student across time. It's a graph that can be developed and used by schools that are using the School-wide Information System (SWIS).

This is designed around the check-in/check-out, which is an intervention at the yellow part of the triangle. But similar graphs will be available, not just within SWIS, but within many school information systems.

The interesting thing is technology is going to make data easier, cheaper, faster, and more accurate. The key is quickly going to become not can we get the data. The key is going to be have we delivered the training and support for the teams so that they use those data for active decision-making.

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**Slide 71: Linking RTI and PBS**

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*Rob:* Part of that is also going to come back to something that is going to be a key message. Too often in education we only keep track of kid behavior. What RTI does is it has this emphasis not just on monitoring student outcomes, but monitoring if we as adults are doing what we said we would do? So have we actually implemented the literacy program with adequate fidelity?

Every single person on this call can identify an experience they had in their career where what they did after they got trained was this: they came back, tried to put something in place, brilliant program, brilliant plan of support, but it wasn't implemented. When we don't implement effective practices, they don't get put in place.



Of all of the things that we are learning about getting programs implemented with fidelity, the two biggest messages are first, never implement an intervention type of program without a fidelity measure that's used on a regular basis, at least quarterly, to say are we doing what we said we would do, right?

The second thing is never implement systems change without including local coaching that helps to make that systems change adapted to the community, the families, the situation of a particular school.

So one of the themes that Dean Fixsen and Karen Blase have taught us is take advantage of the huge development of effective technology. But when you get trained in effective technology, always ensure that there will be regular measures of whether that technology is being implemented with fidelity and never assume that training alone will be sufficient without ongoing coaching.

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**Slide 72: Implications for Systems Change**

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*Rob:* Part of what that brings us back to is this whole notion of the systems. So think about the extent to which the district has a policy – you've got the data systems for universal screening and progress monitoring.

To what extent does your district actually have built into the recruitment and hiring process that people are knowledgeable about core systems? To what extent is there actually ongoing professional development?

Think about the number of times that professional development days are just a Christmas tree of different strategies and seminars rather than an integrated professional development model designed to produce functional change. Use this as an example of really making a difference.

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**Slide 73: Discipline Foundation Policy: LAUSD**

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*Rob:* This is the discipline policy for Los Angeles Unified School District, a district with over 875,000 students.

I mean, when you think about it - oh my goodness - could we actually ever build a policy that was coherent and clear? If LA Unified can build a policy, if Jeff Sprague and Laura Zeff and others working in LA were able to make this happen, we can do it anywhere else.

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**Slides 74 and 75: Implications for Systems Change**

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*Rob:* So part of our message is build in strategies so that you not only are implementing the core features, but you're doing them with the systems that allow people to be successful.



If RTI is really something that a district is adopting, think about the extent to which the annual administrator evaluations, the annual walkthroughs and classroom evaluations, the annual faculty and staff evaluations include something that documents the extent to which you actively are implementing school-wide systems of early literacy and behavior support. To what extent are we using what we know to actually build ongoing systems change?

All right, my goals for this Webinar were 1) to create a message that said here are the core features of school-wide positive behavior support, 2) to argue that we now view school-wide behavior support as being a very strong system implemented with early literacy, and the way to do early literacy, math, and behavior so that they are sustained for schools and for districts is to do it within a common implementation infrastructure.

RTI in our estimation is an absolutely elegant model for systems change. It creates all of the opportunities to implement both practices, systems, and the data structure that allow sustained, continuous improvement. If this makes sense, you can get much, much more detail by going to the [pbis.org](http://pbis.org) Web site and download and use that Word file self-assessment.

Give it a try and walk through the extent to which those elements fit both with your school and notice that the second page gets into the district-level features.

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### **Slide 76: Questions, Comments**

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*Rob:* All right, we've got about seven minutes left. And part of what I wanted to be able to do is to come back and address some of the questions.

#### **Can you talk more about what behavioral databases are available and their reliability and validity?**

Excellent question. If we really believe in RTI, part of what is going to be essential is that we give people data that they can actively use for decision-making. Decision-making relies on the information being credible and the information being available at the right time and the information being in a format that's usable by the right people.

Data systems for keeping track of behavioral data are used by administrators. They're used by school teams. And they're used by student assistance teams working with individual kids.

We actually have done systematic assessment of office discipline referrals and the extent to which office discipline referrals can be used as a credible form. And we get two messages.

Message number one is that the traditional systems that are available in schools are categorically inaccurate. Message number two is if a school goes through the process of adopting a program that uses operationally-defined, mutually-exclusive and exhaustive behavioral categories, teachers and staff can in fact collect and use data that is valid and reliable.



You can take a look at the validity and reliability data for the SWIS system on the pbis.org Web site. There's nothing that is more valid and reliable than direct observation. There are also a number of standardized assessments, but standardized assessments are too often too expensive.

If we're going to build systems that work, we will be using systems that are automated in which people are collecting and using data on a regular basis inside the school.

So an excellent message - an excellent question. The key thing is that technology is in fact giving us access to behavioral databases that work.

**How do you define a major office discipline referral? We would like to gather these data for our school district.**

The short answer is I recommend that you go to either the pbis.org Web site or the swis.org Web site. You can download the office discipline referral definitions.

A major referral is actually a behavioral infraction as defined by the federal government as being a behavior that places a barrier to the social or academic development of either that student or the students around them.

And it's usual things like physical aggression, verbal aggression, harassment, those sorts of variables. Contrast that with a minor event that is rapidly resolved. And you can look at the operational definitions and see how they fit your school.

**Consistent consequences have always held some trouble. For example, some consequences, such as suspension, are rewarding for some students, but aversive for others.**

**Any thoughts on this issue? It's one that we struggle with. Consequences may be rewarding for some. What if being consistent may be rewarding for some students?**

I've got to say simply your recognition that consequences for problem behavior can actually make the behavior worse places you in the top 10% of people who are dealing with these issues. It is perfectly worded and exactly right.

How many times have you seen in high school, for example, a student who was brought in to the administrative office for skipping and being tardy and was suspended? That's an excellent example of a consequence actually being a reward.

The short answer: any systematic list of consequences will have multiple tiers. It will be based on the presumed behavioral function of the problem behavior. There will be discretion both at the teacher level and at the administrator level. What won't be a discretion is the acknowledgement by all kids that this behavior is unacceptable.



Now we actually have multiple tactics for dealing with behavior that's tension and maintain versus behavior that's escape and maintain. And several articles recently published by Dr. Kent McIntosh give elegant examples of how to deal with some of those sorts of issues.

Excellent question. Actually there's a lot of literature focused on this. We do much more with this when you get into the yellow and the red levels of intensity.

**What does instruction in behavioral expectations at the high school level look like?**

High school is an area that we've been particularly focused on. We worked with about 1,000 high schools throughout the country. We just pulled together a group of the high schools in the country that have been most successful at implementing school-wide positive behavior support. They have described what they've done.

We've done a synthesis of their core features, and a monograph on implementation of school-wide behavior support at the high school level will be uploaded in approximately four weeks.

The short answer is instruction of behavioral expectations at the high school level always involves the students being actively engaged and typically involves an orientation, not a training, that is done by other students and includes how to be successful academically.

Keep in mind that in high school, 72% of the problem behaviors come from the freshmen and sophomores. And the reason for that is not that the older kids suddenly get socially together. It's that you lose the heavy hitters by the middle of the sophomore year. So in part, use the well-behaved juniors and seniors as the models and mentors for the other students.

So I think we are coming close to the end of the time that we've got. But what I wanted to do was basically create a foundation where we're able to say now is the time when this more sophisticated understanding of the core elements of RTI really is something that is moving beyond just implementation of early literacy, but is being used as a strategy for doing broad school improvement at multiple domains, including behavior support.

Thank you.

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*Whitney:* Thank you so much, Dr. Horner, for sharing this very informative presentation with us today.

I know that some of the questions were not answered. But we will get those questions down and we will be sending them out to folks once we do have the answers to them. So if Dr. Horner was not able to answer your question that you posted, we will be sending those questions and answers out.



If you would like to print a copy of the PowerPoint slides from today's presentation, you can do so by clicking on the small printer icon at the bottom right-hand side of the screen. And this allows you to print to PDF.

And the slides will also be available on the National Center on Response to Intervention's Web site. And more information is available on our Web site at [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org).

If you have additional questions about interventions and RTI and behavior, please email them to us at [rtiwebinars@air.org](mailto:rtiwebinars@air.org).

I would like to invite you to join us for our next Webinar that will be on February 9, 2010 at 2 o'clock Eastern Time. Dr. Daryl Mellard and Sara Prewett from the University of Kansas will provide an overview of a nationwide study of middle schools that exhibit exemplary RTI practices.

We would appreciate your feedback about today's session. If you would take a few minutes to complete the Webinar evaluation that you see on the screen, we value your feedback, and ultimately your suggestions will assist us in making decisions for future webinars.

Once again, thank you so much for participating with us today.