Designing School-Wide Systems for Student Success

Academic Systems
- Intensive, Individual Interventions
  - Individual students
  - Assessment-based
  - High intensity
- Targeted Group Interventions
  - Some students (at-risk)
  - High efficiency
  - Rapid response
- Universal Interventions
  - All students
  - Preventive, proactive

Behavioural Systems
- Intensive, Individual Interventions
  - Individual Students
  - Assessment-based
  - Intense, durable procedures
- Targeted Group Interventions
  - Some students (at-risk)
  - High efficiency
  - Rapid response
- Universal Interventions
  - All settings, all students
  - Preventive, proactive
Moving towards Safer and More Effective Learning Environments in New Zealand Schools: The Effective Behaviour Support Initiative (EBSI)
Juliet Lewis

EBSI is an internationally research-validated approach for creating and maintaining safe and effective learning environments. It is evidenced by positive social cultures and behavioural supports for all students. In New Zealand this school wide approach is based on staff, students and community working collaboratively to develop a plan for encouraging and teaching respectful behaviour. The subsequent building of staff/student/whanau relationships, and the increased time spent on learning, result in an increase in academic achievement and social skills. EBSI provides a foundation for focus on the New Zealand curriculum values and key competencies, enabling full access to the eight curriculum learning areas. A quantitative information system for recording behavioural events is central to the approach. Decisions for the development of school wide action plans and individual behaviour support plans are based on this data. New Zealand schools that have totally bought into the process have shown improvement in school community relationships, a decrease in violent behaviours, and increased time spent on learning. EBSI is an adaptation of School Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports developed in the USA.

The key factor of EBSI is that it develops a positive school environment, in which the staff recognises, and consistently abides by, the same set of behavioural expectations for all students. It is designed to improve the learning environment by teaching critical skills that help students to become competent, responsible, and caring. In New Zealand there has been emphasis on educating all staff to understand the functions of behaviour, and to respond to problem behaviours in logical, pro-active, and consistent ways. The data system ensures that “at risk” students are identified early so that families, students and teachers can work together to problem solve and develop appropriate support plans. Each school develops its own EBSI plan, based on the resources, values and strengths relevant to that particular school community and culture.

The Process that is Currently Being Used to Develop EBSI in New Zealand Schools. Throughout the process there needs to be professional development for whole staff. This needs to include:
• Looking at the meaning of behaviours and what they are trying to communicate.
• Understanding the stages of escalating behaviours and using non-aversive practices to avoid this escalation.
• Recognising the importance of relationships with young people, how this might look in the classroom, and what this means for their academic achievement.
• Encouraging the staff to consistently use school wide logical consequences for negative behaviours and positive reinforcement for desired behaviour.

**The process is three-stage: pre-implementation, implementation, and maintenance.**

1. During the pre-implementation stage, an action team (representing staff, students, and community) establishes processes for consultation and collaboration. External facilitators work alongside this team to:
   - Administer the School Evaluation Tool (SET) and Safety Survey, analyse results and establish baseline data around perceptions of how the school operates.
   - Identify a three to five letter word which will represent the vision of the school, and from which the expectations for the school will be developed.
   - Establish expectations of behaviour in different areas of the school (including the staffroom).
   - Reach mutual agreement on the definitions of minor and major instances of inappropriate behaviour so these definitions are consistent across the school.
   - Plan a consistent school wide incentive system.
   - Develop a flow chart of actions for inappropriate behaviour so that consequences for inappropriate behaviour are relevant and consistent.

2. During the implementation stage the facilitators assist the action team to develop plans and timelines for:
   - Installing the data system so that patterns of behaviour can be graphed and evaluated in terms of time, frequency, type of behaviour, location, and number of students involved (the top five graphs).
   - Setting up special teams to review data on a regular basis.
     o School wide data team, which meets regularly to discuss the behavioural data on which school wide decisions are based.
     o Individual student data team, which meets to plan and monitor interventions for individual students who need a secondary or tertiary level of behavioural support, or are in need of early intervention to stop their behaviours escalating.
   - Teaching the behaviour expectations on a regular basis, the content for each week being determined by the data.
   - Using the school wide incentive system to reward the expectations being taught.
   - Developing a process for whole school input into ongoing monitoring, evaluation and revision of the system.

3. During the maintenance phase the action team needs to ensure that:
   - All the implementation processes follow reviewed timelines.
   - Clear guidelines are available for new and relieving staff about the EBSI process.
   - Ongoing information is provided to whanau about the weekly expectations and progress of the initiative.
• Weekly use of behaviour data is embedded in the school system. The data for school wide behaviours should be displayed for students and staff alike.
• The EBSI system becomes embedded in the way a school operates, not an ‘add on’.
• There is ongoing opportunity for input from the whole school community.

What is the ‘fit’ of EBSI and the N.Z. Curriculum?
EBSI provides a foundation for a school to focus on the positive values, the key competencies and the learning areas of the curriculum. It fits extremely well with the curriculum’s intentions. All the values included in the curriculum are an integral part of EBSI, and participating schools have commented favourably on that.

The key competencies of the curriculum and EBSI align:
A. Thinking:
From the start of the EBSI process, students are using creative and critical thinking processes to make sense of information around their ideal school. They consult around decision making and have experience of flexibility as the process evolves. The data system’s top five weekly graphs are available for all students, staff, parents and BOT. This data challenges the students within the Action Team to problem solve around what might be causing behaviours in particular locations at certain times of the day. They are then further challenged with developing ideas to reduce inappropriate/unsafe happenings, and to follow through and evaluate the success of their plans. If the data and observations show that the plans are not successful, the students, alongside the staff/community members, develop new plans.

B. Using language:
Choice of appropriate language in the EBSI behaviour expectations is paramount. All students are involved in the wording of the school expectations, behaviour definitions and logical consequences so that there is clarity across the whole school community. Students have input to the lesson plans, design posters for each area of the school, and develop pamphlets to advertise how their school operates. As well, they create and present power points for teaching the expectations, and educating the whole school community. This is ongoing, as the EBSI process is about continually evaluating and improving outcomes through the data.

C. Managing self:
Students in a well-established EBSI school are used to thinking and learning independently. Many of the expectations taught are about taking responsibility for self. Ideas such as “Dare to dream” give rise to expectations about challenging oneself by trying new activities. Expectations in the classroom might include such things as: ‘Solve problems with words’, ‘Arrive on time’, ‘Bring correct equipment’, and ‘Be responsible for your own belongings’. Students also learn to take responsibility for their individual levels of behaviour and learning. They become confident enough to discuss and label their personal levels of motivation, progressing along a continuum from extrinsic learners to intrinsic learners. Where EBS has been the way a school does things for a few years (e.g. Inglewood Primary) many children are having such conversations with their peers and staff.

D. Relating to others:
Relationships are the core of the EBSI project and are reflected in the schools’ EBSI key words, and throughout the school wide expectations. School communities have identified acronyms such as REACH (Respect, Expect, Achieve, Communicate, Hauora) and MANA (Manaakitanga, Achieve, Ngakaunui, Aroha) as the base from which their expectations flow. The weekly expectations to be taught in the classroom include such things as: ‘Celebrate differences’, ‘Include everyone’, ‘Use kind words and actions’, and ‘Wait your turn’.

From the very beginning of the EBSI process, it is emphasised that staff to staff, and staff to student relationships need to reflect respect. Students are then more likely to role model this in their interactions. This can really challenge the teaching staff, and usually involves ongoing professional development around respectful relationships. Inglewood Primary refers to their EBSI project as a ‘relationship project’ rather than a behaviour project.

E. Participating and Contributing:
By bringing the wider community, including parents and extended whanau, into the regular EBSI action group meetings from the very beginning, students quickly grow in confidence to reach out to the community. Incentive tickets are given to the wider community, especially in known ‘problem spots’, so that when students show the right behaviour they are appropriately recognized. The school will celebrate this recognition in some way. Good relationships with the wider community grow with the recognition of how hard the school community is working together to make a more respectful environment. Parents become involved because they are welcome to offer what they can do well e.g. contributing their musical skills for the school song, their art skills for posters and displays, helping organise activities to include the community (e.g. hangi), and having opportunity to have their voices heard in developing the school expectations. Participation draws on everybody’s strengths and is more likely to be sustained because of their experience of success within a school context. EBSI is certainly “…..guided by dialogue between the school and its community” (N.Z.C.F. 2007, p 10). This is the very basis of EBSI in New Zealand.

Data based decision making:
A primary tool for evaluating the effectiveness of school-wide EBSI is the School Wide Information System (SWIS). SWIS is a web-based information system which provides practical information for making decisions about discipline systems. Graphs from behaviour data are printed out weekly for the EBSI team to discuss, and display for staff and students. All decisions are based on data, which in turn records the appropriateness of that decision. SWIS is used:

- To identify types of problem behaviours, times and locations in which they occur, number of students involved, and frequency of occurrence.
- As a base for decisions around school wide ecological change and teaching practice.
- To help design behavioural support plans for at-risk students.
- To report on school behaviour outcomes.

What is needed for the ongoing success and sustainability of EBSI in New Zealand Schools?
The initial success and sustainability of EBSI is determined by the level of commitment of the whole school staff and the Board of Trustees, as well as the degree to which staff, parents and the students are consulted. There needs to be at least 80% buy-in from school staff before a
start can be made on building the foundations for EBSI. With high level commitment it becomes an integral part of the school culture. It needs to be central to the school’s strategic planning and included in job descriptions. Successful schools have had total buy in from their senior management team, who focus on reduced discipline issues through improved relationships, and support the process of collaborative consultation with the whole school community.

There is a need for a group of external facilitators to be available to support schools involved in the EBSI process. These facilitators need to have regular contact with the school to help sustain the process by problem solving with the school teams around data, having input into ongoing decision making, planning for high risk students, and helping identify needs for ongoing professional development. It is essential that these facilitators help the schools look at wider areas of data (e.g. the School Wide Evaluation Tool) on an annual basis, and examine behaviour trends.

**Features to celebrate in New Zealand schools:**
- The inclusion of students and wider school community in the whole process has increased ownership of the initiative.
- A structured approach to bullying based on school wide data, clear definitions of bullying, student response and staff actions has meant that bullying is seen as unacceptable.
- The improved relationships, levels of trust, and shared responsibility amongst staff members, have markedly improved the school climate.
- The access to school wide data has promoted a shared responsibility for making things better.
- The evolving ‘common language’ around behaviour expectations and the addressing of disrespectful behaviour (staff and students) have reduced stress levels.
- The diminished levels of blaming outside influences for young people’s behaviour has meant that staff members are involved in making sense of what problem behaviours are trying to communicate.
- There is a marked increase in the development of independence and leadership skills amongst the students. This is noticeable as soon as one enters an EBSI school.
- The increase in student responsibility in naming and expecting respect creates a target for all those involved with the school.
- Getting relief staff, especially for senior classes, has become an easier task as respectful behaviour has increased.

**Three behaviour management tips for classrooms from EBSI:**
1. Define appropriate classroom behaviours.
2. Teach these behaviours just as any other subject.
3. Consistently acknowledge and encourage these behaviours.

**Three priorities for policy:**
1. Invest in efficient integration of academic and behavioural supports, e.g. EBSI and the Curriculum: The EBSI process develops all the values and key competencies of the curriculum thus enabling better access to the learning areas.
2. Invest in a continuum of evidence based practice for all students, e.g. data-based decision making: Base action around learning, behaviour, and school climate on evidence not opinion. The School Wide Information System is a tool which does this with minimum effort.

3. Invest in building expertise for facilitating the Effective Behaviour Support Initiative, e.g. structures in place to address bullying and violence: Ensure that bullying and violence initiatives are based on consistent data. EBSI provides such a data-based structure. Each school can work collaboratively with students and community to conduct a school wide survey and use data to define bullying and violence in that school. Definitions of bullying and violent behaviours, and agreed upon actions are taught to the whole school community. Consistent responses and methods of non-escalation are taught to staff, and become the way the school does things.

**Three suggestions for an action plan:**

1. Provide training for EBSI teams to develop expertise in data based school wide frameworks so they can facilitate the EBSI process in schools.

2. Fund EBSI facilitators to provide ongoing professional development for school staff around the necessary skills to build data based plans for all students at risk.

3. Negotiate with Colleges of Education to place emphasis on school-wide approaches, which include skill development in inclusive practices, teaching social skills, and functional assessment. Teachers instead use respectful, structured, non-escalating approaches. The use of confrontational reactive strategies is removed from our pedagogy.

**References:**


Manawatu College Community: (2007) MANA Project. Foxton: Manawatu College


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Material for this paper has benefited from the work of the following EBS schools:

- Dannevirke High School, Douglas Park, Masterton
- Inglewood Primary, Taranaki
- Manawatu College, Foxton
- Raetihi Primary, Raetihi
- Somerset Crescent School, Palmerston North
- Waitara East School, Waitara
- Wanganui East School, Wanganui
Introduction - Whole School Behaviour Management - A Systems Approach

Schools are designed as places where students go to learn. Schools contrive to provide an environment where optimum learning outcomes can be attained by all students within. With the above in mind, schools set up a variety of types of organisations and management styles to accommodate this need. This is known as a ‘system’. Like any system however, there is an inertia that goes with it that is resistant to change much like a spinning gyroscope is resistant to any change in direction and which, in the case of a school, can end up having a culture that does not reflect the changing learning and social needs of the students within.

At some stage (sometimes through a crisis situation) there is a recognition by the school that its effectiveness in meeting student needs is compromised and that ‘something has to be done’ at a whole school level. This could take the form of a poor ERO Report, increase in challenging problem behaviours, critical comments from parents and the community, low staff morale or combinations of all these factors and more. (Dimmock, 1995)

RTLB are in a unique position to offer support as a lead agent of change, at this level both through their experience as classroom practitioners, the training they have received and their availability to provide ongoing support.

Schools need to identify the issues that are causing their own mismatch(s) for themselves. This is definitely a situation ‘where one model fits all’ will not work. (Doig, 2000) However in saying this there is a number of common elements that are essential if positive collaborative change is to occur and that can act as a pathway of support. Also any change will need the co-operation and support of all stakeholders involved which by it nature becomes a ‘bottom up’ process. Note that any system’s change will take time (at least a year and possibly up to three) before significant measurable changes will occur. (Refer ‘inertia’ analogy above)

Common elements for a whole school systematic behaviour management change would likely include the following although this list is by no means exhaustive and the only consideration individual schools may need to make.

1. **Leadership** - Recognition that change is essential for the improvement in student outcomes; that it is collegially based; that there is collective and individual responsibilities that are to be managed and that sufficient resourcing is made available.
2. **Pastoral Care** - Planning that reflects the social, cultural and academic needs of staff and students.
3. **Valuing Diversity** - Involves recognition of the cultural backgrounds of the students, recognition of any special character related to that school; the strengths of the supporting community and so on.

4. **Effective Teaching Pedagogies/Practices** - Teaching strategies that most support effective learning with supportive professional development as well as effective classroom management strategies.

5. **Responsive Behaviour Management Strategy** - Is school wide and accepted by all stakeholders as a fair and equitable system that is consistently applied.

6. **Professional Development** - Long term and ongoing commitment by leadership and staff to individually and collectively look for ways to improve the educational outcomes of the students in their care.

Andrew and Clarke (2007) outlined a “Foundations for Behaviour Management” using the six elements similar to those above in the format that follows:

![Diagram]

(Printed with permission from Trevor Clarke and Diane Andrews)

An example of a school successfully changing its systems and culture to support student needs and outcomes is that at Te Kauwhata College where the emphasis for this school was placed on students forming positive relationships and attitudes to themselves, their peers and their teachers. This was achieved by including many students in a programme that supported personal and social development through physical challenges. Suspensions dropped from 35 to 1 over a four year period. (Making a Difference, 2009)
Finally, what will an effective outcome look like? George Sugai (2009) suggests the following:

- A positive, predictable school wide climate
- High rates of academic and social success
- Formal social skill instruction
- Positive, active supervision and reinforcement
- Positive adult role models
- Positive school/family/community involvement.

My own suggestion is that we will have happy students, happy staff and a school community that is highly supportive.

John Harper - RTLB

References


Assessing your Classroom and School-Wide Student Management Plan

by Vernon Jones (The original article has been adapted for the Northern Tararua Cluster by Mike Stone RTLB)

Introduction
This article presents a framework for building an effective student behaviour management plan and a checklist for assessing your current plan.

School staff find themselves increasingly confronted with the need to assist students develop responsible behaviour. Educators increasingly express concern about the number of students who display behaviours, which interfere with learning and teaching. Given this reality school staff will need initiative, creativity, leadership and patience in developing more effective methods for preventing and responding to disruptive student’s behaviour.

Vernon Jones suggests that we will be more effective in responding to student’s behaviour view “discipline” or “student management’ primarily as an opportunity for teaching students alternative ways to meet their needs within the school environment. We will serve students and staff more effectively if we operate from the assumption that student management is less an issue of control than an issue of providing students will new skills.

Five Questions
Five key questions are the basis for assessing or developing a classroom or school wide management plan.

Question 1: Does the Plan treat students with dignity?
It is increasingly obvious that students need opportunities to work with adults who model positive, non-aggressive methods of resolving conflicts. The high rates of family violence in NZ suggest that many individuals in our communities are observing and experiencing aggressive interpersonal relationships.

When responding to disruptive student behaviour school personnel have an excellent opportunity to model positive interpersonal relationships and effective conflict negotiation. Many students are highly sensitive to issues of fairness, equity and mutual respect. By treating students with dignity educators reduce the extent to which students can justifiably project blame onto the adult and thereby reduce their own sense of responsibility.

A good method for assessing a current plan is to ask yourself if the response you make to inappropriate behaviour is similar to that you use when dealing with annoying behaviour with a loved one, a member of a valued social group or a colleague. One can certainly argue that these situations involve adults and only some of these interactions occur in groups as large as 30. Rather than suggesting these methods are not appropriate with students, however, this simply suggests that these methods are not appropriate with students, however, this simply suggests that we will need to clearly instruct students in using and responding to effective communication in conflict situations and ourselves be more skilful in using these methods than
would be the case in a more easily controlled environment. The bottom line is that student motivation and behaviour are dramatically influenced by the quality of adult-student relationships within the school setting and our responses to their challenging behaviour is perhaps the most important test of this relationship. Harsh and inconsistent consequences in family predicts later addictive, depressive and antisocial behaviour.

Question 2: Does your response to inappropriate student behaviour include an educational component i.e. Does it teach new skills?

Punishment has been shown to be an ineffective method for influencing student behaviour. Glasser's contention that most student discipline problems are caused by students fast-paced environments. Student misbehaviour can be seen as their attempt at meeting basic personal needs by gaining some sense of personal significance, competence and power within the school environment. Unfortunately, the students who create the most numerous and serious behaviour problems lack skills in appropriately and effectively meeting these needs. Therefore, school personnel will be more effective in responding to behaviour problems when their interventions focus not on control but on educating students to develop positive and effective ways to express their concerns and meet their needs.

The key point is that punishment alone is an ineffective intervention. No reading recovery Teacher would consider placing a student in isolation as a response to their skill deficit in reading. Likewise educators in the new millennium would be as irresponsible if they placed students in time out, suspended them or without including instruction in skills that will assist the student in responding more successfully to the specific environmental situation that elicited the problem.

Question 3: Does your plan require and support an environmental analysis?

Many responses to discipline fail to ask the critical question. “Why would a student respond inappropriately in a positive, supportive environment intended to meet his/her learning needs”? School Effectiveness research has highlighted the fact that student behaviour and learning are dramatically influenced by; the instructional match, motivational strategies, expectations , classroom environment, Informed feedback, adaptive instruction, and a number of other factors which are managed by educators and are unrelated to home circumstances and student individual characteristics. Levels of collegial support, professional development opportunities and organisational flexibility are also needed to enhance teacher's ability to structure a positive and supportive environment. Students from at-risk environments are the best staff development specialists we have. They constantly remind us that we must alter the learning environment and develop new instructional and management strategies to meet the needs of all students.

Question 4: Is the response to rule violation clear to everyone?

As any adult knows, no one likes “speed traps”. Indeed, almost anyone who has been caught in one has expressed anger, frustration, and perhaps legitimate projection of blame. Such situations do not; enhance self-esteem, respect for authority, or an internal locus of control. Similarly students will be less likely to develop these positive attributes in settings characterized by unclear routines or inconsistently applied rules and consequences. Research in student management has clearly demonstrated the value of providing students with clear instruction in classroom routines and rules. Students need and benefit from structure.
Structure provides a sense of order and security—a factor missing from the lives of many children. Clear structure is a prerequisite to teaching students personal responsibility and accountability for their actions. Students cannot learn responsibility in an irresponsible environment. Students need to know the routines, rules and consequences so they can be assisted in acknowledging that they made productive or unproductive choices and therefore themselves chose the consequences.

Faced with a transient student population some schools teach routine sand rules through; skits, practising a weekly social skill, classroom practise, modelling, videotapes made by students. Educators have discovered that, as with instructional tasks students will learn the skills more effectively when they are actively engaged in goal setting, committing to, developing classroom/school routines and rules and when mistakes are corrected with additional practise.

**Question 5: Is there a sequential response to rule breaking?**
Studies suggest that when police enact motor vehicles law including clear, sequential responses to such irresponsible behaviours as drink driving the number of injuries and deaths caused by such behaviour is reduced. If adults require this type of structure to influence their behaviour involving such obviously dangerous actions: it is not surprising that young people benefit from structured responses to their school rule-breaking.

**Conclusion**
Research suggests that control methods of influencing students are ineffective. Since many adults have been raised with rather punitive models of discipline, it is not surprising that these continue to be common in schools.

The reason some “zero tolerance” approaches or control methods like assertive discipline have proven ineffective is that they score high on clarity and sequential consequences but low on factors of dignity, teaching new skills and environmental analysis.

Unfortunately a classroom or school-wide student management system with a score of 2 out of 5 (or 40%) will fail miserably with the students who place the greatest demands on the system and whose lifelong survival depends on the quality and integrity of the system.

Mike Stone 2010
(The following notes were produced from an Interview with Anne Cameron Deputy Principal, Tauhara Primary School Taupo.

Tauhara Primary school is a decile 3 school with a roll of around 160 students. Their current school wide system was developed with the current staff in a move towards teacher development and ownership of the plan given a number of staff changes and a rise in the number of significant behavioural concerns. The foundations of the plan acknowledge the positives, are based on choice, recognising Maori values, developing role models, regular reflection and ongoing refining and development. Western Heights Primary School is acknowledged as supporting Tauhara Primary staff with the development of the Maunga Behaviour Programme

Prior concerns were around a lack of consequences for moderate to severe behaviours e.g. disrespect for people and property. Associated with this disrespect was the behaviour for relievers.

Benefits include eliminating children wandering out of class without an identified purpose, the lunch club component is consistent, and children aspire to be role models.

The tangata toa badge inspires students to work towards being the best that they can be and acknowledges those who generally do the right thing. Students who achieve this status attend morning tea on occasions with the staff.

“Prior to the introduction up to 20 students might regularly be in lunch club whereas currently (after 18 months) generally 2-3 students and a maximum of 6 have been involved at any time.”

Badges are restarted each year and successes include a student who was suspended as a Year 2 student who was a badge holder and role model in Year 3.

To download the specifics of the programme please visit the Tauhara School website or contact Anne Cameron, DP. Tauhara Primary School, ph 07 3787755 email annec@tauharaprimary.school.nz)