

Psychological

Software Solutions

5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior

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Psychological Software Solutions, Inc.

The 5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior provide school districts an invaluable tool in their efforts to address disruptive behavior on their campuses. By providing a systemic and dynamic methodology, the 5 Steps meet the standard set forth by US Department of Education in adhering to the tenants of positive behavioral support and addressing the issues identified by the Institute of Education Sciences. The following paper examines current challenging issues that school districts face regarding student behavior and provides an examination of the role that the 5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior plays in the implementation of successful PBS and Rtl models. Additionally, this paper introduces a web-based product, Review360, which is founded on the principles of the 5 Steps and dedicated to providing teachers with effective and easy to use behavioral solutions that will result in the improved behavior of their students.

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Review360

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5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior

I. Identification of the issues

One of the greatest challenges facing school districts is how to positively support teachers in the process of improving student behavior. According to the U. S. Department of Education, approximately one third of students have psychosocial problems that act as a barrier to their benefiting fully from instruction, resulting poor academic progress. Additionally, teachers are inefficiently forced to expend time and resources on these issues which take away from classroom effectiveness and the academic instruction of all students.

Similarly, educating students with low incidence disabilities, such as autism, severe emotional and behavioral disorders, MR, and MI pose a demanding challenge. These students represent a very low percentage of district's enrollment, yet require a great deal of district resources. Example challenges include but are not limited to procedural hearings, litigation, and managing a variety of dangerous and risky behaviors. Additionally, teachers who instruct these most challenging students must be appropriately trained and focused. Contributing to the high turnover and stress of these teachers are the enormous administrative procedures and paperwork required to implement appropriate programs for these students. Thus, highly qualified teachers specialized in low incidence populations are 'burning-out' at a rate far greater than any other teacher segment.

In recognition of the importance of these challenges, the Department of Education and the federal government have produced mandates and guides that address behavioral issues. In 1997 and in its reauthorization in 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments (IDEA) required that school districts implement effective strategies for addressing inappropriate behavior of students with disabilities in schools. In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education in response to the need to reduce disruptive behavior in schools for all students, released "Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools". Recently, September 2008, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) released a practice guide, "Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom" that provides recommendations on how to help general education teachers reduce the frequency of behavior problems often encountered in public schools. Additionally, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), requires that all students, including those with special needs, receive instruction from highly qualified teachers and that these students progress academically as assessed by each states measure of adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Over the past decade there has been an increased focus on addressing behavioral problems in our public schools and their classrooms. The increased scrutiny into this issue is accompanied with burdening mandates that tax the already anemic public school system. The federal government dictates that schools try to fix the problem behavior in regular education setting before making a referral to special education. Accompanied by the movement to add to the inclusion opportunities of students with disabilities, it is becoming apparent that behavioral support is required in all the classrooms within a school. Schools are expected to expand accountability beyond the scope of academics, incorporate assessment information in intervention development, use relevant and accurate information in the decision-making process, engage in regular and comprehensive screening for at-risk, special needs, and regular education students, provide expanded support for students that are not effectively served by the regular curricula, and increase the congruence between the actual classroom practices and intervention models. There have been many different methods that have been employed to

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counter these issues. Two of the more successful evidence-based methods are Positive Behavioral Support programs and Response to Intervention models.

Through a review of the educational research literature addressing programs that are designed to reduce student behavior problems, a commonality of phases emerge which provide the foundation for approaching this challenge. After examining the major components and processes of evidence-based programs in this area of instruction, five simple and straightforward steps emerge that are required to effectively implement an effective behavioral solution, these *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* are Track, Aggregate, Analyze, Intervene, and Communicate. The purpose of this paper is to provide a description of the 5 steps and how they are related to some of the most universal and evidence-based practices found in our schools.

II. The 5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior

“There are no shortcuts to better student behavior, but there is a better path”

The *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* formatively appear in the implementation of many of the multiple tiered programs and models that effectively improve student behavior. These 5 steps represent a continuum of action. A dynamic and continuous process that allows for a student centered approach that can adapt and change as the students behavioral needs change.

Tracking

The path to improving student behavior starts with the student and teacher in the classroom. Teachers need a consistent method to observe and identify behavior in the classroom and then a user-friendly way to record and report it. Through the collection of meaningful information teachers can determine specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it in the context of the classroom. Tracking behaviors, their frequency and their intensity over time, are the building blocks to a successful behavioral solution.

Aggregate

Once a classroom tracking method is established, a complete picture of a student’s behavior can be constructed by aggregating the information and data into a student behavior profile. An effective behavioral management solution simplifies this step by organizing behavioral data in a centralized database. Day to day interactions and observations tracked by the teacher can be tabulated and summarized for use by teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. That makes it simple for teachers and administrators to access and review student progress, including important indicators such as occurrences of special incidents, specific behavioral objectives and rates of inclusion.

Analyze

Upon tracking and aggregating behavioral data and information, the teacher can develop a tangible profile of the student’s behavior. With a realistic and evidence based picture of the issues and problems within the context of the classroom, the teacher can better understand the student and the underlying issues that lead to poor behavior. Then, the teacher can analyze the information in order to develop and comprise the positive support that can be used to help the student improve behavior.

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Intervene

Through the use of data rich analyses of student behavior, the information necessary to implement a behavior solution can emerge. An invaluable behavioral solution system endows teachers with strategies that allow them to meet and address behavioral challenges and facilitate and sustain improvement in their students. This process includes meaningful interventions, appropriate behaviors, and adaptive skills that students can use to replace poor behaviors. These solutions should be aligned with school and district rules and protocols, but flexible enough to be tailored to individual student needs.

Communicate

In order to expand the synthesis from a classroom to each facet of a student's daily routine, the behavioral data and the process of promoting positive behavioral change needs to be shared. An indispensable behavioral solution system incorporates the means of communication that can aid in establishing a successful transformation of the student's behaviors in all classes, at school in general, and at home. It supplies the means of cooperation that allow the student, teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents to be on the same page in the progression of behavioral solutions.

The 5 steps to Improving Student Behavior are essential and embody a natural progression of the processes necessary to effectively identify and response to behavior problems in the classroom. These steps represent a continuous process that remains flexible in order to facilitate student improvement and changes in the situations and issues. As information is gathered and communicated and feedback is forthcoming from the students, teachers, administrators, and parents, the positive behavioral solutions can be revised and evolve in order to reflect the progression of the individual student.

III. Relationship to Main Behavioral Support Practices In Public Schools

Recent updates to state and federal educational guidelines are changing the way schools are expected to support students with problem behaviors. In particular, schools are encouraged to move away from traditional exclusionary practices that take the student out of the classroom context and away from the core instructional delivery of academic curriculum.

Two evidenced-based practices in public education that represent this movement and are considered advantageous to the process of improving student behavior at the classroom and campus levels are Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) and Response to Intervention (RtI). These models are recommended by the IDEA and have a large base of research to support their implementation. Additionally, as educators are encouraged to increasingly focus on improving student behavior, the application of these programs expands to include students in regular education classrooms. This extension of practices is more than adequately represented by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the practice guide *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*. In this section these three educational practices are investigated and their relationship to the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* is examined.

Positive Behavioral Support

The IDEA requires that school districts implement effective strategies for addressing inappropriate behavior of students with disabilities in schools. As its recommended intervention,

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IDEA, identified Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS). In its most basic form, PBS is based on a problem-solving model that aims to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors. PBS involves the assessment and restructuring of environments so students with problem behaviors experience reductions in their problem behaviors and increase social, personal, and academic quality in their lives. PBS is a student-centered approach that addresses individual; student needs through positive interaction that work to improve behavior through individualized interventions which facilitate the development of appropriate skills and behaviors. The guiding pedagogic influence at the foundation of PBS is a movement away from punishment-based methods toward functional skill development that emphasizes normalization and inclusion. PBS is well established as an individual student, classroom, and school-wide program. Given its support by the IDEA, it is also the most researched and evidence based approach to addressing the behavioral needs of students with special needs. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has a technical assistance center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) that provides support and resources. At their website, the PBIS has a document that provides an extensive literature review of PBS programs: <http://www.pbis.org/files/101007evidencebase4pbs.pdf>.

From this review the core features of PBS can be identified: (1) the identification of specific goals, (2) collection of relevant data from multiple sources, (3) summary statements, (4) multi-dimensional intervention plans that emphasize practical strategies, and (5) a system for monitoring student progress (Sugai, Horner, Dunlap, Hieneman, Lewis, Nelson, Scott, Liaupsin, Sailor, Turnbull, Turnbull, Wickham, Reuf, & Wilcox, 2000). In reviewing the evidence-based research the congruence between PBS programs and the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* becomes apparent. The following points highlight the relationship between the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* and PBS:

- Through the process of tracking, aggregating, and analyzing, student information can be used within a functional assessment to guide the development of individualized behavioral objectives and goals for a student and employed in the classroom.
- The flexibility of the 5 Steps, allows for the utilization of multimodal assessment and observations in order to collect, aggregate and analyze student information and through the communication process input on student behavior can be obtained from teachers, support staff, administrators, parents, and the students themselves.
- By providing teachers with positive and flexible strategies, the 5 Steps focuses interventions on accentuating the development of positive behaviors and skills that can be individualized to the student's needs with pragmatic methods that can be aligned with overall objectives and goals for the student. The interventions from an effective behavioral solutions plan are student-centered, address the function of the problem behavior, focus on the development of appropriate skills within a more inclusionary context, and promote student self-determination and decision-making. These comprehensive interventions developed for the individual student can be implemented while incorporating classroom and school-wide expectations and rules.
- The 5 Steps employed within a web based PBS program fosters the optimal method for systematically documenting, reporting, and monitoring student progress. Through the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior*, student progress is tracked, aggregated, analyzed and communicated to, teachers, professionals, administrators, parents, as well as the student. This continual process and the flexibility of goals, objectives and interventions

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within these 5 steps promotes the continuous evolution of the positive behavioral support for the student.

Response to Intervention

Through necessity and based on the success of PBS at the individual student and the classroom level, school-wide PBS models have been developed and implemented (SWPBS). Many of these programs rely on an established general problem-solving rubric previously used in education, Response to Intervention (RtI). RtI has been identified through IDEA as a method of improving teaching and learning environments so that they are effective, efficient, relevant and durable for all students, families, and educators (Sugai, 2007). In reviewing the literature on RtI, six defining characteristics can be identified (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005; Christ, Burns, & Ysseldyke, 2005; Fuchs & Deshler, 2007; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; Gresham, 2005; Gresham et al., 2005; Kame'enui, 2007; National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2006; Severson, Walker, Hope-Doolittle, Kratochwill, & Gresham, 2007): Universal screening; data-based decision making and problem solving; Continuous progress monitoring; Student performance; evidence-based interventions; and Implementation fidelity. These steps comprise a school-wide process that combines evidence-based instructional practices with a multi-tiered system of support for at-risk students that need extra assistance in the classroom and school. The most predominant RtI models found in public education utilize a 3 tiered process (while some models employ more than 3 tiers). In its most commonly used format, this multi-tiered system is designed to provide basic positive behavioral support to all students in tier 1. For the 15% of behavioral at-risk students typically found at schools, tier 2 is used to provide specialized group support. For the students deemed high risk (characteristically about 5% of a schools population), tier 3 implements specialized individualized additional support.

Tier 1: A school-wide approach to improving the behavior of all students requires a curriculum that focuses attention on set of student social skills that meet the behavioral expectations and standards set by the campus. This behavioral curriculum that comprises Tier 1 in an RtI model includes a specific set of guidelines and procedures as well as the method need to facilitate the development of appropriate positive behaviors and improve the behavior of all students. As part of the Tier 1 process classroom level data is collected and reviewed in order to ensure program fidelity and allow for proactive screening of students in order to identify students that are at-risk and would benefit from interventions at Tier 2 and 3.

Tier 2: Students identified as at-risk within the Tier 1 process are referred to the campus RtI team and further assessed to determine their specific behavioral needs. Students placed in Tier 2 are provided with small group interventions that focus on the particular problem areas of behavior. Students benefit from working with educators who are aware of their specific needs and with other students that have similar issues. These interventions are evidence-based, easy to administer and require limited time and staff involvement. These inventions include focuses students on school-wide expectations, group counseling, pull-out interventions like behavioral instruction classes, social skills groups, and mentoring programs. RtI Tier 2 programs require effective monitoring of student progress and program fidelity.

Tier 3: Within the individual functional assessment process used by the RtI team for assigning students to Tier 2, students that are highly at-risk can also be identified for inclusion in Tier 3. Additionally, through the progress monitoring system in Tier 2, students that do not respond to those interventions can also be identified for inclusion in Tier 3. Specifically, students that are served in Tier 3 exhibit behavioral difficulties that are persistent, disruptive, and warrant

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additional time and resources. Interventions in Tier 3 require individualized plans and programs that provide more intensive support and great depth of student data collection through individual behavioral assessments. Classroom teachers have a larger role as the interventions in Tier 3 are conducted through individualized behavior plans that require student-centered interventions and intensive monitoring. Additionally, teachers are afforded more support from the campus RtI team as effective team decision-making processes are applied to monitor and review intervention and student information in order to ensure a positive outcome.

In reviewing the basic foundations of an RtI model the role of the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* can be seen within the model's characteristics and the process necessities. These 5 steps play a prominent part in the core activities that are required for a successful RtI program. This is illustrated in the following description of the six basic characteristics of RtI models.

Universal screening: Functional assessments are employed to categorize students on one of three tiers: primary prevention that is preventive and proactive and used with all students; secondary prevention that is focused on at-risk students requiring extra assistance; and Tertiary prevention for those special needs students that need more specific and individualized support in order to deter failure. The *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* include the steps necessary to successfully use a functional assessment. Used within the context of the classroom, the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* facilitate the assessment process through the use of tracking, aggregating, and analyzing student behavior. These steps can be employed with all students and provide student behavioral data that are required to place students in the most appropriate RtI Tier. The screening process also involves communication between teachers, administrators, other educators, the RtI team, and parents for that student behavior data can be collected from multiple sources.

Data-based decision making and problem solving: Within the RtI model, decisions regarding students including instructional effectiveness, student responsiveness, and interventions should be based on measurable and relevant criteria and outcomes. In order to engage in data driven decision-making and problem solving, educators need to compile and utilize a comprehensive store of information on student behavior and a resource of effective interventions for each of the behavioral areas that are included in the model. The *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* can be used within the RtI rubric to deliver the student behavioral information through tracking and aggregating, and can be used in decision-making and problem solving through the analytical process and by facilitating educators' choices of interventions by providing research-based alternative that can easily be adapted to group and individual student needs.

Continuous progress monitoring: Student progress should be assessed on a frequent and regular basis to identify adequate or inadequate growth trends and support timely instructional decisions. A behavioral solution employing the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* is well equipped to monitor student progress. Using the methods established to observe student behavior in order to accomplish universal screening, the system can be adapted to track, aggregate, and analyze student behavior as well as report and communicate progress to all individuals that are invested in the students' education. The 5 steps can aid in the identification of those students that are responding positively to interventions and those students who are not, as well as determining across students which interventions are most effective.

Student performance: Priority should be given to using actual student performance on the instructional curriculum to guide decisions regarding teaching effectiveness and learning progress. Within a behavior based RtI model, student behavior should be quantified within the assessment and monitoring process. The *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* supply the

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methods needed to measure student behavioral improvement and performance on the specific objectives and goals that are employed for each individual student. Student performance is typically measured by different metrics at different tiers of intervention. It is best to use more specific and detailed outcome indicators as the student receives subsequently more intensive services. This information can be incorporated with academic student performance information to track the effectiveness that behavioral intervention have on academic subjects.

Continuum of evidence-based interventions: Rtl behavioral models supply teachers with strategies and interventions that are integrated and link within the three Tier structure. All students are instructed in a core behavioral curriculum that incorporates school-wide expectations and rules at the classroom and campus level. Behavior specific group interventions and strategies are added to the basic core curriculum for those students that require additional behavioral support at Tier 2. For those students that present behavioral difficulties that are persistent and disruptive and are beyond the scope of the core curriculum and group interventions, individualized, specialized, and intensive interventions and strategies are provided to meet specific behavioral needs. Intervention need to be empirically supported, outcome driven, relevant to teachers and students, effective, and sustainable. The *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* require that an effective behavioral solution prepares teachers with practical and easy to use strategies that can be tailor to the specific needs of the students well meeting the behavior expectations of the classroom and campus. These systems also provide support and training to ensure that the interventions are appropriately employed in order to increase their effectiveness. The dynamic and flexible process embodied by the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* within the Rtl tiered structure allows for the process to adapt as changes in students' behaviors occur. By continuously tracking, aggregating, analyzing and communicating, the most appropriate interventions for each student can be employed and the effectiveness of interventions can be monitored.

Implementation fidelity: Successful Rtl programs provide the team-based structures and procedures needed to ensure and coordinate appropriate adoption and accurate and sustained implementation of the full continuum of intervention practices. The *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* advocate the monitoring of interventions and teacher reliability as well as the observation of student behaviors and progress. An effective behavioral solution employing the 5 Steps will report the effectiveness of interventions at the individual student, classroom, and campus level. Ineffective interventions can then be examined to determine if the problems lie in the context or process of implementation. Teacher fidelity can also be tracked to determine which teachers are employing the 5 steps to collect, aggregate, analyze, and communicate the information need for the continual implementation and operation of a successful Rtl model. Within the Rtl model extra support measures are in place to aid teachers that have strayed from the appropriate implementation practices.

The Institute of Education Sciences Practices in Regular Education Classrooms

According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) schools are encouraged to use programs that are developed through the application of “scientifically based research”. Expressly, programs should be founded on research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs. As a part of the Department of Education, The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) publishes guides that bring the best practices and evidence from scientifically based research together in order to help schools address systemic challenges that cannot be addressed by a single program or intervention. According to the IES Practice Guide, *Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom*, there are five recommendations on how to help

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general education teachers reduce the frequency of behavior problems often encountered in public schools.

1. Identify the specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it: Research suggests that the success of behavioral intervention relies on the identification of problem behaviors and their antecedents and consequences. This allows teachers to focus the interventions, ensuring that they are effective and efficient. *The 5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* meet this recommendation through the components of tracking, aggregating, and analyzing. Within the classroom, successful behavioral solutions use these steps to identify behavioral issues, note their frequency and magnitude, and ascertain the contextual factors that predicate the behaviors in the classroom.
2. Modify classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior: Teachers can improve student behavior by matching individual student interventions with classroom environment and expectations and instructional practices. Interventions designed to focus on the individual student's needs must be applied in congruence to the context of the classroom. The third step in the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior*, Intervene, completely encompasses this recommendation. By using proven research-based interventions within the context of the classroom behavior solutions can be implemented and improved behavior achieved. The other steps are also important to determine the utility and effectiveness of the interventions and to communicate the progress they facilitate in student behavior.
3. Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate: Research suggests that most effective way to address problem behaviors is to employ interventions that include appropriate behaviors that students can use to replace poor behaviors. This recommendation is also incorporated within the intervention step of the 5 steps. Teachers can help students with behavior problems learn how, when, and where to use positive new skills; increase the opportunities that the students have to exhibit appropriate behaviors; preserve a positive classroom climate; and manage consequences to reinforce students' display of positive "replacement" behaviors and adaptive skills. The other steps are also important to determine the utility and effectiveness of the interventions and to communicate the progress they facilitate in student behavior and provide the information necessary to make adjustments in interventions when warranted.
4. Draw on relationships with professional colleagues and students' families for continued guidance and support: The team approach and collaboration with other educators and parents add to the support that teachers need to successfully help students improve behavior. Behavior is pervasive. Implementing a comprehensive behavioral solution require the sharing of information through an effective method of communication. Information gathered through tracking and aggregation can be better analyzed by sharing this information with administrators, colleagues and parents, resulting in effective interventions than can be employed in a varied of classrooms and the home environment and behavioral progress that is well support by a team effort.
5. Assess whether school-wide behavior problems warrant adopting school-wide strategies or programs and, if so, implement ones shown to reduce negative and foster positive interactions: Classroom teachers benefit from the support of administrators and other school personnel. School-wide behavior programs support positive behavioral

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improvement by employing a team approach that is aligned in regards to behavioral objectives and goals. The *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* represent a holistic multimodal approach to behavioral solutions. The 5 steps start as a student-center approach to addressing the behavioral solution needs within the classroom. However, the methodology that is so successful for the individual student can be expanded to include a classroom level and school-wide planning and implementation. Through the process of communication, the other steps can be linked and school-wide plans, rules, objectives and goals can be integrated to the classroom and student levels.

IV. *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior In Practice*

The programmatic approaches of PBS and RtI as well as the recommendations from that IES practice guide are comprehensive enough to be used within a school-wide approach and flexible enough to address the varying needs of a diverse student population. However, these methods also have to address the pedagogic status quo that has been used to address behavioral problems in our schools. Traditionally, approaches to assisting students with behavioral issues included parent conferences, observations, a minimum number of general interventions, a review of educational and social records, and a psychological evaluation. This process has primarily focused on providing teachers with broad interventions that have focused on eliminating or reducing specific problem behaviors through punishment and/or coercion. While these reactive approaches can reduce the occurrence of problem behaviors in the short term, they do not facilitate overall behavioral growth in the students through the development of appropriate alternative behaviors. Additionally, the philosophy of meeting the behavioral needs of students has typically been intervention driven; supplying teachers with instructional curricula and support that are meant to attend to problems singularly. So, while many school districts have some type of traditional behavioral management system that collects student data and provides interventions, it is also true that most districts struggle to systematically collect student data, analyze behaviors, effectively monitor student progress, and communicate these results.

The foundation of the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* as well as the programs that illustrate their utility (PBS, RtI), is to provide teachers with a complete behavioral solutions infrastructure. Intervention is the 4th step in the continuous process of the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior*. This acknowledges the necessity of providing teachers a system that delivers a framework of information and analysis from which interventions can be employed, evaluated and revised as well as methods to directly communicate results to all parties involved or interested in the students' education including parents. The interventions have a functional role within an overall behavioral solutions model that is dynamic, allowing for flexibility and individuation without losing their connection to the objectives and expectations that are required of all students at a campus and/or within a classroom.

The typical convention within education has been to employ behavioral interventions with students identified within the IDEA and focus efforts on those students that present overtly observable behavioral issues or students with low incidence disabilities that provide the campuses with the greatest challenges. The categories of behaviors that are most commonly identified in these student groups as behaviors that teachers struggle most with are defiance, social problems, hyperactivity/impulsivity, inattention/Disorganization, academic problems, and aggression. It is becoming increasingly apparent that these behaviors are not exclusive to special needs students. The effects of problem behaviors within the classroom have become more pervasive and have an increasingly negative impact on students' academic performance, while contributing to the increasing number of students dropping out of the education system all

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together. As identified by the IES Practice Guide, problem behaviors in the classroom go beyond specific student groups. The problem behaviors that teachers struggle with can be found in students of all groups and types.

The realization of this pervasiveness makes that need for a dynamic and systemic behavioral solution even more paramount. The *Five Steps to Improving Student Behavior* provides a framework that approaches these challenges vigorously and comprehensively. These steps can be applied with special populations as well as in the regular education classroom. Positively impacting a PBS model and addressing each tier within an RtI behavioral model as well as meeting the “scientifically based research” standards as illustrated by the IES.

Psychological Software Solutions, Inc. (PSS) recognizes the critical need of school districts to counter the influx of disruptive behavior in their classrooms and meet the requirements of local, state, and federal mandates and expectations by providing comprehensive and effective behavioral solutions. PSS is a grassroots company founded by educators that are dedicated to working cooperatively with school districts to develop a better pathway to improving student behavior. PSS is the first and leading provider of web based, behavioral management software applications that incorporates the five-step process for improving student behavior to work across multiple tiers of intervention in some of the nation’s largest school districts.

Their flagship application, Review360, was built from the ground up in urban school districts to provide a unique and dynamic behavioral solution with the flexibility to include the specific behavioral systems and expectations of school districts. This application is built upon the structure outlined by the *5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior* and founded on the principals identified as positive behavioral support within IDEA. It can be used within the tier system espoused by RtI models and incorporates the scientific researched-based recommendations advocated by NCLB for school and classroom base programs and by the IES for regular education classrooms.

Step 1: Tracking– Review360 provides a consistent web-based observational system that facilitates the daily tracking of student behavior. This behavioral solution can be adapted to individual student needs by focusing on specific targeted behaviors. Review360 helps teachers identify and describe problem behaviors and their effects on learning. Through its tracking process, Review360 helps teachers observe and record that frequency and context of problem behaviors while identifying those behaviors’ prompts and reinforcers. The dynamic and flexible configuration of Review360 allows it to be coordinated with a school district’s current data collection process.

Step 2: Aggregate– Review360 includes web-based processes that facilitate the collection of student data while compiling information at the individual and organizational level. This information is centralized and accessible by teachers and designated school administrators, professionals, and staff. This process is robust and dynamic and continuously updated as teachers track their students’ behaviors.

Step 3: Analyze– By collecting and aggregating student behavioral information, Review360 creates a data rich web-based environment from which to apply its analytic components. Review360 allows teachers, administrators and staff to select specifics within the analysis so that particular students, behaviors, and interventions can be examined. This allows users to determine the needs of students at different levels while presenting specific behavioral trends at the student, classroom, and school-wide levels. Review360 can be used to identify the specifics of problem behaviors within the context of the classroom. Analysis helps teachers identify areas where students are behaving poorly and determine the situations and circumstance surrounding

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these occurrences. Review360 helps teachers identify and describe problem behaviors and their effects on learning.

Step 4: Intervention– By using Review360, teachers gain access to interventions and strategies that provide positive behavioral support. Interventions designed to focus on the individual student’s needs must be applied in congruence to the context of the classroom.

Review360 then provides the teacher with proven research-based interventions and appropriate behaviors that they can employ to counter problem behaviors. Through the application of Review360 Teachers can help students with behavior problems learn how, when, and where to use positive new skills; increase the opportunities that the students have to exhibit appropriate behaviors; preserve a positive classroom climate; and manage consequences to reinforce students’ display of positive “replacement” behaviors and adaptive skills. The new skills focus both on the individual student and the classroom as a whole so that they will become an integral part of the students’ education and can be tied to common instructional practices found in the regular education classroom.

Step 5: Communication– Behaviors are pervasive. By understanding this fact, Review360 endeavors involve all stakeholders in a student’s education via a complete system of positive behavioral support. Through its web-based design and reporting modalities, Review360 facilitates the communication of student behaviors, classroom interventions, and school processes to all stakeholders; including parents, other teachers, and school professionals and administrators, while aiding in the implementation of collaborative supports including these individuals and additional resources (i.e. behavioral support teams) in order to ensure behavioral improvement in all environments. The reporting functionality of Review360 enables teachers to easily inform parents and administrators about students’ progress, while allowing them to prepare for meetings (IEP, teacher-parent, etc....) with comprehensive documentation that includes written and graphic presentations of results. It also provides a means of communicating feedback that allows for the continuous growth of each students behavioral plan, allowing for updating target behaviors and interventions when necessary.

V. Conclusions

The issues surrounding the current necessity to increase and improve school districts’ efforts to counteract poor student behavior are pervasive. Disruptive students detract from the classroom instruction, not only of the misbehaving students but of their peers as well as teachers are asked to focus their attentions on the problems at hand. As set forth in the documents from the US Department of Education, school district resources are being ever more taxed in order to provide students with a safe problem free environment in which students can learn for special populations as well as in the regular classroom. This has led to the recommendation of the implementation of positive behavioral support programs and response to intervention models in an effort to improve student behavior and refocus the attention back on curricular instruction. In reviewing these efforts as well as other guidelines to improve student behavior, the pathway in these endeavors indicates that there are 5 critical steps to improving student behavior in the classroom and schoolwide. These 5 steps: Track, aggregate, analyze, intervene, and communicate provide the foundation of a dynamic and flexible behavioral solution: Review360. Review360 was developed in cooperation with school districts by highly trained and knowledgeable educators at PSS. It is currently being used by several of the largest school districts in the county. By working directly with school districts, PSS ensures that Review360 meets their specific needs while providing the powerful methodology inherent in the 5 steps.

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The results from Review360 have been overwhelmingly positive and have earned a stream of affirmative feedback from users:

“We decided to use the Review360™ for the Behavioral Services Classes because it is research based, allows us to easily document the delivery of interventions, tracks student progress, automatically analyzes student data for the teacher, and is easy to use.” **Carolyn Guess, Asst. Superintendent of Special Education**

“Decisions on behavior support interventions should be based on solid data. The Review360™ provides teachers an efficient way to collect and analyze useful data to make decisions about the need to design, adapt, maintain or fade interventions. In addition, the Review360™ allows special education administrators to monitor student progress to insure that teachers are given the support they need to help students make continual progress on behavioral and academic goals.” **Randy Sprick, Lead Author and Consultant, Safe & Civil Schools**

“This is a must have program for all teachers. I like that the program accumulates, consolidates, and tracks a student’s behavior on a continual basis. The program is easy to use and cuts back on paperwork and filing. I think that it is as easy as it gets.” **Michael Evans, Behavioral Services Teacher, HISD**

“We are in our first year of implementation for Review 360. The customer support from Psychological Software Solutions throughout the initial planning phase, training, and startup has been phenomenal. They are incredibly focused and responsive to our unique needs and they understand the empirical research behind best practices coupled with the practical experience of classrooms and schools. The easy access to information and data allows us to be more responsive to the needs of our students and our staff; which is a real asset in a large district like ours. We are really excited about the benefits and the possibilities for our entire district as we expand use of the programs.” **Jay Glynn, Ph.D. Coordinator, Psychological Services & Related Services**

“It (the Review360™) has made a big improvement in my child’s behavior; in fact the difference has been almost night and day... I think this program helps in that it really targets the main problem and does not offer band-aid solutions. It is also geared to assist the child in a positive manner...” **Parent feedback**

“The email reports are perfect...that way I can pass them along to the therapist and to my student's father. His Father is currently in Kuwait, but he likes to hear how things are going via email.” **Parent feedback**

Through an innovative web-based process PSS endeavors to meet the ever changing needs of school districts by providing solutions that adhere to the 5 Steps. While developed to address the behavioral issues of special populations, PSS is moving forward to address behavioral issues in the regular education classroom through schoolwide implementations. PSS also sees the myriad of possibilities in the application of the 5 Steps to Improving Student Behavior in other specific student populations, in order to address other important pedagogic issues and concerns. The 5 Step methodology proves useful in facilitating the education of students at risk of dropping out and other at risk students. By providing teachers with a behavioral solutions resource that is productive and easy to use, PSS enables educators to refocus more of their efforts on the main goal of instruction, academic.