



## **Native Voices in PBIS FY22 Summary Report**

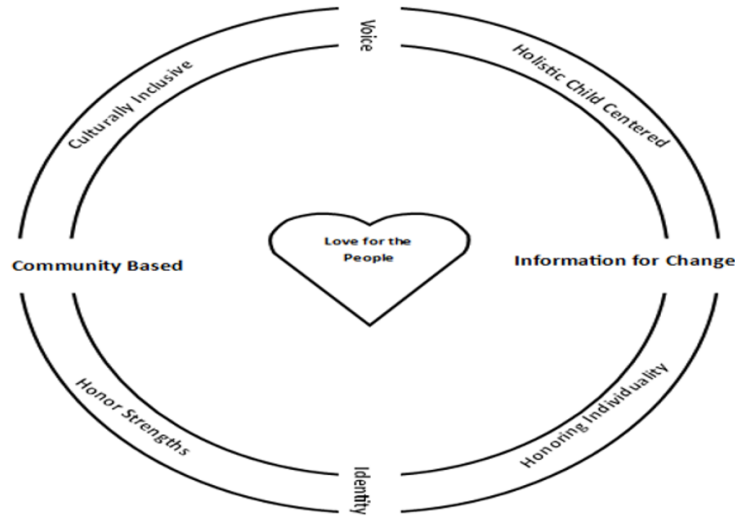
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### **INTRODUCTION**

Native Voices for PBIS is a statewide partnership focused on exploring ways in which Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) may be used as an evidence-based behavioral intervention to better serve all American Indian students in K-12 public educational settings throughout the state of Minnesota. To date, active partners in this initiative include the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC), and district partners throughout the state, who are specifically mentioned later in this report. The inception for this initiative occurred on April 25th, 2019 with a day-long gathering of passionate American Indian educators. This group of “Dreamers” was led through discussion protocols in collaboration with MDE and FDLTCC representatives in order to envision how educational systems could look by the year 2027 if PBIS was implemented with a specific focus on being culturally appropriate for American Indian students.

The results of the Dreamer meeting are documented in previous summary reports of this initiative, but it is important to center all of the work that we do for this initiative on the ideas discussed during that day. Themes from the work done that day all revolved around the central concept of having unconditional love for the people. The group felt as though any educational system and set of practices require having unconditional love for the people receiving the support. It is only by recognizing someone as an individual, and loving them holistically that real impact and educational change can happen. Other themes of the day include: holistic and child centered, honoring individuality, honor strengths, being culturally inclusive, and using data for change. A visual representation of that day’s work is highlighted in the image below.

Image 1



## TRIBAL NATIONS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A critical component to the success of this project is making sure that Minnesota tribal communities are aware of this work, and have a platform to affect the direction of this initiative. The Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) is a group of tribally appointed representatives which advocate for American Indian students in Minnesota. TNEC advocates for positive change in areas including, but not limited to: curriculum review, student achievement, language revitalization, revision of the American Indian Education Act, and teacher training. Their mission is to strengthen, protect, and advance the overall education experience and opportunities for all tribal (American Indian) students, families, and communities of Minnesota.

On Thursday, June 16th, 2022 MDE and FDLTCC partners attended the TNEC consultation meetings hosted virtually via Zoom. MDE partners in attendance were Dan Torrez (Alternative and Preventative Services Specialist), Robyn Widley (Director of Special Education) and Daron Korte (Assistant Commissioner). FDLTCC partner present on that day was Govinda Budrow (Project consultant).

Our presentation focused on the following messages:

1. Scale and scope of PBIS implementation in the state of Minnesota (Image 2)
2. Impact of PBIS implementation on American Indian students in Minnesota (Image3)
3. How Native Voices for PBIS is intentionally engaging the stories of local stakeholders with a vested interest to make sure PBIS is implemented in a way that supports the social, emotional and behavioral needs of American Indian students throughout the state. (Image 4)
4. Highlight local examples of our work throughout FY22. (Images 5 and 6)

Image 2

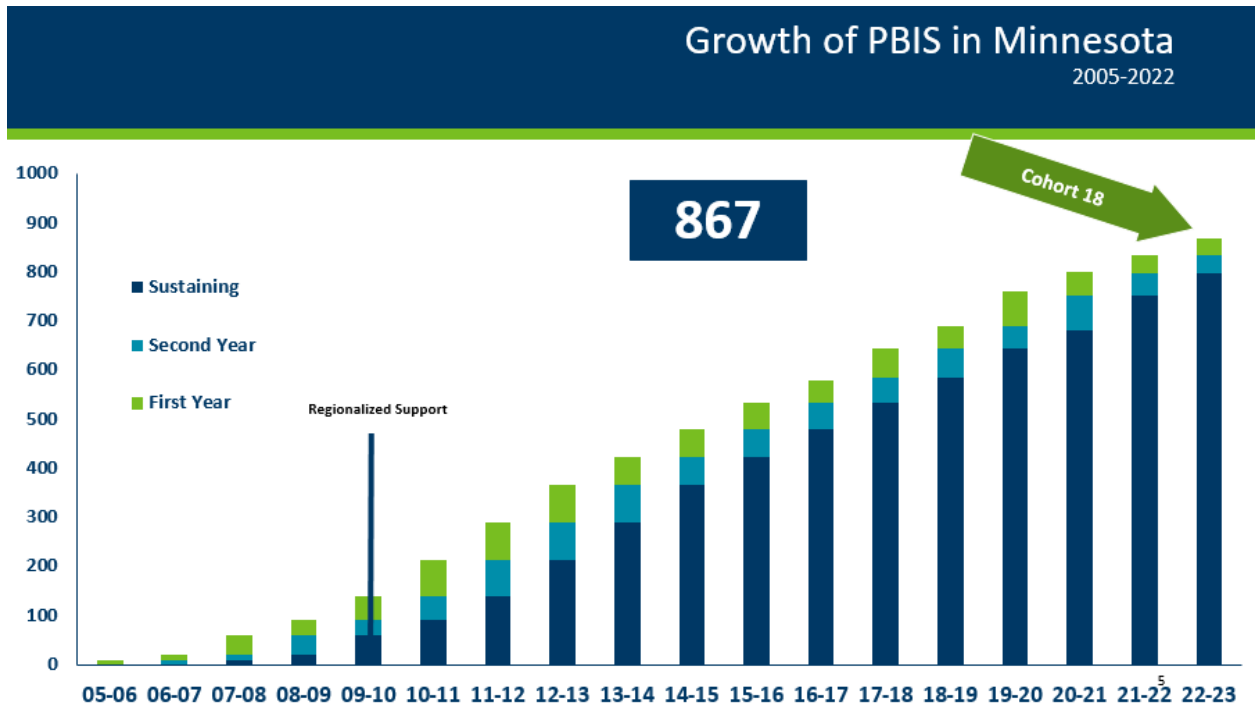


Image 3

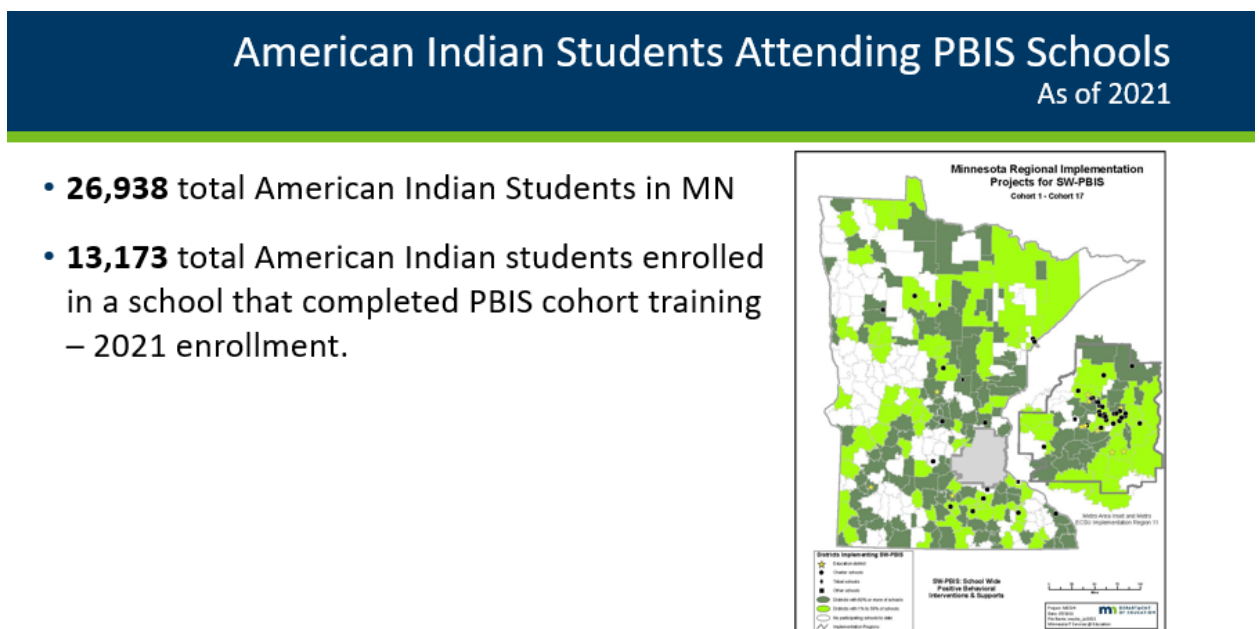


Image 4

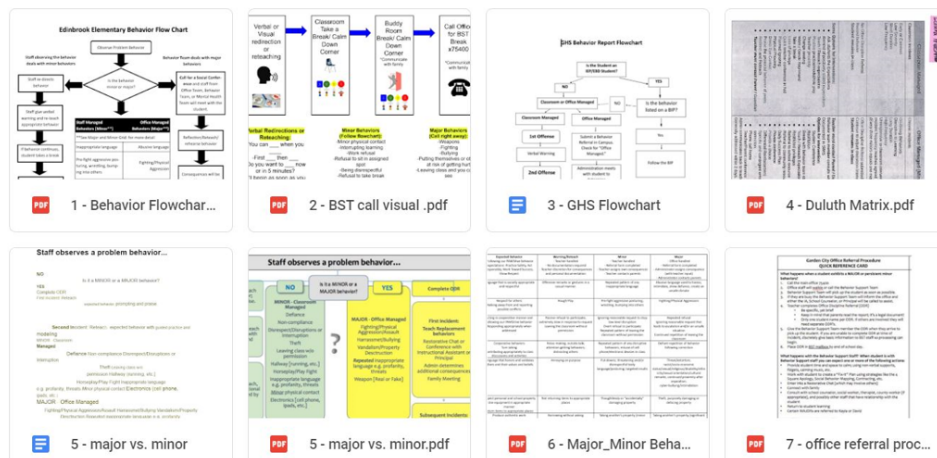
## Native Voices/The Listeners

- Workgroup representing 6 different Indian Education programs and throughout the state.
- Elder Conversation
- Caregiver and Teacher survey
- AIPAC interviews
- Tribal Nations Education Committee
- School and District American Indian Education Departments
- Office of Indian Education, MDE



Image 5

## Office and Classroom Major and Minor Flowcharts



## Measuring the Effectiveness of Implementation



- Published in 2016, Revised in 2021
- Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support is not fully implemented unless it is Culturally Responsive.
- Cultural responsiveness includes:
  - (a) holding high expectations for all students
  - (b) using students' cultures and experiences to enhance their learning, and
  - (c) providing all students with access to effective instruction and adequate resources for learning (Klingner et al., 2005).

[PBIS Culturally Responsiveness Field Guide](#)

The feedback from TNEC was generous and insightful. One TNEC member was quoted as saying, “Great presentation, this is really great. We support it.”

The following points were made by TNEC members during the course of the presentation:

- There needs to be more (5-10) American Indian PBIS trainers throughout the state.
- There needs to be a PBIS training developed for Tribal Education leaders for each Tribe.
- TNEC would like clarification on the difference between how PBIS measures exclusionary practices vs what is reported to the state (DIRS).
- Question from TNEC member: How do we make schools responsible for reaching out to Indian Ed Departments to make them a part of their PBIS team?

### WORKGROUP

Another way this project intends to bring in Native Voices is by the assembling of a workgroup of educators that identify as American Indian or work directly with American Indian populations. In addition to finding educators that have intense background knowledge of American Indian communities, we also sought out individuals that have experience with the PBIS framework, or currently work within a school district that actively implements PBIS. This workgroup of educators may overlap but differs from the initial Dreamer group, because the workgroup will be actively and intentionally listening to stakeholder groups to determine what kind of changes can be made in systems to positively impact change.

The vision of the workgroup was to assemble a team large enough to accurately represent American Indian communities throughout the state, but small enough to allow for the agility of its work. Initial outreach in FY20 started with focusing on the top 20 districts serving American

Indian students (identified by state enrollment count). Recruitment for the workgroup was initiated by MDE and FDLTCC partners and focused on the top 20 school districts serving American Indian students and identified individual districts that have had schools complete PBIS statewide cohort training. In addition to those two criteria, initiative partners also identified districts that were not overrepresented within special education (overrepresentation defined by expressing a “risk ratio” of 3.0 or higher for any special education category) for American Indian students. Once target districts were identified, email and phone recruitment by initiative partners ensued. Additionally, recruitment in FY20 also included interested partners that had attended presentation sessions at the Dream Catchers Winter Gathering.

These recruitment efforts were successful in bringing together an extremely talented group of partners to serve on a workgroup dedicated to the improvement of PBIS systems that serve American Indian students and families throughout the state of Minnesota. In FY 21, the dynamics in the group have changed a little but the attempt to represent around the state regionally has been sustained. At the end of FY 22, six members served on the committee and of the six, five were returning from FY 21 and one new member was added. .

<b>Name of Participant</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>School or Agency</b>
Dan Torrez	Alternative and Preventative Services Specialist	MDE
Govinda Budrow	Project Consultant	Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
Coya Nightpipe	American Indian Education	Minnesota Connections Academy
Laurie Eide	American Indian Education Liaison	Greenway Nashwauk Keewatin Public Schools
Lowana Greensky	American Indian Education Director	Greenway Nashwauk Keewatin Public Schools
Edye Washington	American Indian Education Director	Duluth Public Schools
Ethan Neerdaels	American Indian Education Director	Osseo Public Schools
Sonia Wadena	American Indian Education Director	Bemidji Public Schools

## **WORKGROUP PLANNING AND WORK**

The following deliverables were written into each contract with individual workgroup members:

1. Attend up to 5 in-person meetings OR up to 40 total hours of virtual meetings.
2. Complete community survey follow-up phone calls
3. Write and submit a final summary report
4. Elder interview and summary report
5. Explore a Core Feature of PBIS at the school or district level

During this year, the work group reevaluated our meeting structure to accommodate for the conflicting priorities that each member has at their local site. We started the year by meeting virtually via Zoom once per month for three hours at a time, but changed our meeting structure to a twice per month for 90 minutes via Zoom format. We also reinstated our full day in-person meeting as an end of year gathering to reflect on the work of FY22 and to plan for our work coming up in FY23. Topics of our meetings during FY22 consisted of the following ways in which our individual work connects to supporting American Indian students' social, emotional and behavioral needs.

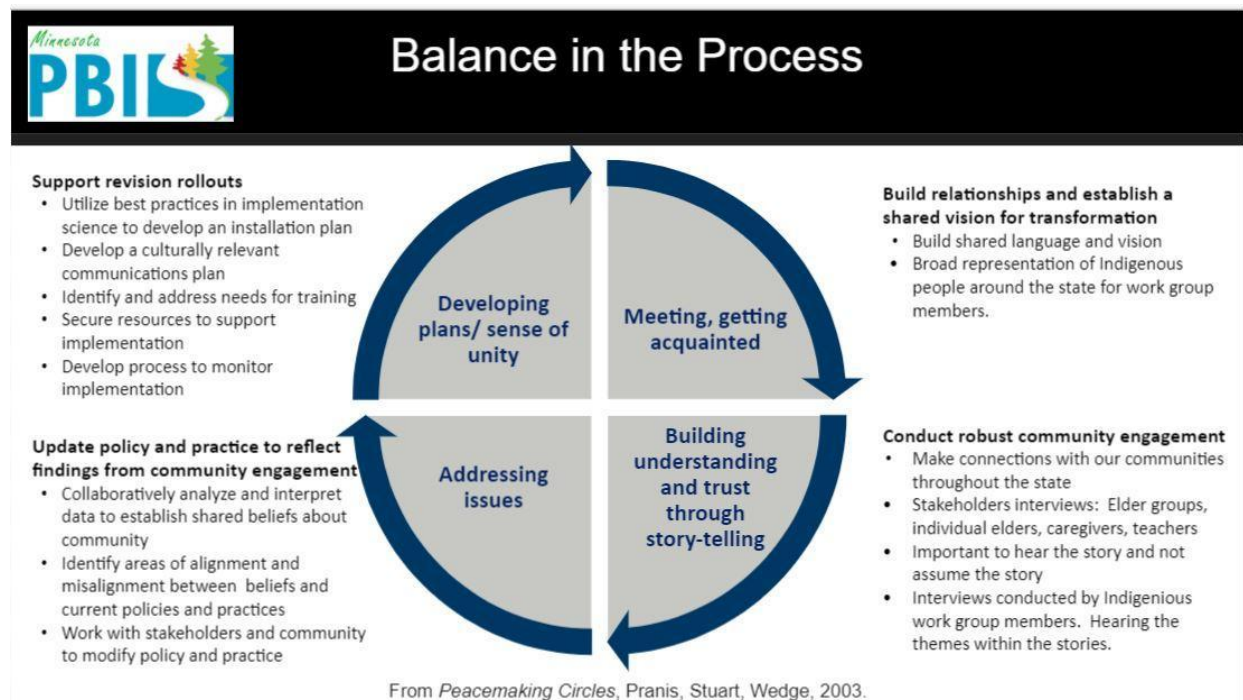
- Reviewing themes brought out in FY21 work: Relationships, Representation, Systems Change
- Quick Wins:
  - Lunch reward system implemented by Indian Education - Bemidji
  - Data tracking spreadsheet and system for sharing important information for all American Indian students with other staff and administrators - Greenway.
- Identifying Elders throughout the state with insight into educational systems that support students' social, emotional and behavioral needs. Interview question and format design. More information detailed in the Elder Interview section.
- Analysis and feedback on PBIS Flow Charts collected by schools represented by work group members.
- Discussion and debrief on Greenway Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) taken with Culturally Responsiveness Field Guide.

## **NATIVE VOICES METHODOLOGY**

In FY 21, the workgroup identified a process for this work that is associated with Restorative Practices. Adapted from the work of Kay Pranis in "Peacemaking Circles", the team decided that this plan aligned with an Indigenous way of exploration. The importance of building relationships within the team, and within Minnesota tribal communities was critically important to establish prior any specific strategies are considered. This group is grounded in Indigenous ways of being so arriving upon this strategy felt aligned to the centering foundations of the work.



Within this plan, individuals spend equal amounts of time building relationships and listening to narratives as they do attempting to analyze, develop and implement methods. This method is still being implemented in the work of FY 22.



### **Native Voice for PBIS Background:**

The goal of this initiative is to positively impact the systemic factors associated with establishing a safe and nurturing school environment for American Indian students throughout the state of Minnesota. By amplifying the voices and stories of our local tribal communities throughout the state, we hope to improve current educational outcomes by enhancing what is working and reducing what is not working. These voices will be used for change and creating actionable steps that can be taken by schools throughout the state.

### **Notes for interview questioning:**

- Ask questions in neutral ways without prompting or leading any particular response.
- Ask questions in your own voice
- The initial question isn't as important as the follow-up questions.
  - Listen intently and ask questions to uncover underdeveloped portions of responses.



### **What are we hoping to get out of this activity?**

- Understanding how American Indian students can be successful.
- By focusing on three overall groups of themes, pose questions that address how they relate to our goal : Relationships, Representation and Systems Change.
- Using voice, cultural inclusiveness, community-based, and using these interviews to assist the Native Voices PBIS project reach our elders to gain from their perspective change that can be implemented in our children's educational process.

### **Elder Interview Questions:**

- What is your educational philosophy?
- What prompted you to get into the educational field?
- What were your goals when you started working in education?
- Do you think you accomplished the goals you set for yourself from the beginning of your career?
- How have you seen relationships built between our educational system and our children in your career?
- What do you wish for future teachers/educators who work with and represent our children/students?
- From our main themes of Relationships, Representation, and Systems Change, what would you recommend to future teachers/educators in regards to reaching and teaching our children/ students?. How can we help reassure families that your recommendations will be heard and used in school systems? (After beginning our interview, this question will assist in grounding the work we are doing.)
- Describe how your first relationship was built with a student who needed extra support in learning?
- In what way did you advocate for your students in meetings with school co-workers?
- How could we hold school districts accountable for teaching our children in “a good way” that reflects our/their culture and way of life?
- If you could make a recommendation to a young student about when encountering racism in school/life, how would you prepare them to overcome that moment? What words of advice for when they encounter marginalization or microaggression?

### **THEMES IDENTIFIED IN THE INTERVIEWS**

The following themes were identified after each interview.

Theme	Elder Responses During Interviews
<b><u>Relationships</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need to establish relationships with the whole American Indian community, not just the children.</li> <li>● As Indian Education staff - need to be present to have your voice heard because sometimes you are the only advocate for certain students.</li> <li>● Non-Native staff serve an important role because it can't just be American Indian Education staff to "fix" the challenges facing AI students.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Representation</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Being present as American Indian Education staff. Showing up to team meetings and being a part of discussions that affect the outcomes for American Indian students.</li> <li>● Making sure that American Indian culture is visible within the school building.</li> <li>● Having American Indian staff serve in leadership roles within the school.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Systems Change</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Systems take a long time to change and we need to be dedicated to doing something for a sustained amount of time. We can't give up too soon.</li> <li>● Systems need to be built so they outlast any individual that is serving in any particular role.</li> </ul>

## **SIGNIFICANT QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS**

“Always what we did. We sat there. That's why we sit there. I am a token. But, that's ok. Sometimes they had problems. She would go to everything (every meeting). To meet with everyone. If you aren't there, they aren't thinking about our students. You have to be there at the meetings, whether you are there as a token or not.” - Lowana Greensky

“You pay me, my job is to talk about American Indian students. I am their advocate. They want them to be invisible, when they are included with students. When you are at the table, you are thinking specifically of American Indian students.” -Lowana Greensky

“Be honest about your relationships. Be honest if you have a relationship with your students and families or not. Describe how your first relationship was built with a student who needed extra support in learning? Until that relationship changes we can’t make much of a system change. It is all about those relationships.” -Lowana Greensky

“When Covid hit, people realized it’s not just education, it’s childcare so we can go to work, it’s feeding our kids now. We have to feed them breakfast, lunch and dinner and on the weekends. When we are talking about school, we are talking about other stuff that is going on. Collaborative: public health, social services, education, probation. All these programs should be intertwined in your school.” -Lowana Greensky

“We know that when we implement strategies that are going to serve a specific need that may be disrupting your classroom environment that it’s going to have a positive impact on every student in that classroom.” -Susan Ninham

Every Monday morning we set aside time either by grade or content area and they looked at data. We reviewed our behavioral data, our attendance data, and our academic data. We would come together and decide, what do we need to do for X (student). That was a really helpful process for us to have that opportunity every week to review what our students were doing and how they were performing - and what were the things that we were trained in that we could utilize to better provide a positive learning environment for our students.” -Susan Ninham

“Within that PBIS framework, one of those things is building those personal relationships with kids and within the kids. So within our advisory program we utilized the Developmental Design program and we started to build those relationships among our kids and staff. Another thing we utilized was that all staff were required to be out in the hallway greeting kids, talking with kids, and just doing overall monitoring of the environment between every period.” - Susan Ninham

## **ADDRESSING PBIS CORE FEATURES**

This year, the workgroup began working on small projects that look at components of the PBIS core features. All of these projects are generated through the small workgroup discussions and input from community stakeholder discussions. The core features of PBIS, as outlined by MN state statute, are:.

- 1)3 to 5 positive expectations, taught and practiced
- 2)Acknowledgement and feedback system
- 3)Consistent and specialized supports for student needs

4)Data-based decision making

5)Continuum of interventions for all, integrated and aligned with supports to ensure academic success

6)Team-based approach

Two of the core features were explored this year, consistent and specialized support for students needs and data-based decision making.

## **CONSISTENT AND SPECIALIZED SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS NEEDS**

The first project that the whole workgroup participated in was collecting and reviewing classroom managed and office managed behavior flow charts that were being utilized in their schools or school district. The group anticipated that since these flow charts represented the process of deciding how behaviors are supported and managed in the schools that this review may identify components of positive change. A concern is that Native children being removed from classrooms due to subjective behavior responses and a need to identify ways to create engaging and safely supportive environments.

Ten different flow chart responses were collected and reviewed by the workgroup. The workgroup identified the supportive examples or components of the flow charts as well as the potentially problematic elements. Below is a summary of the feedback.

Supportive Examples:

- Social Conference approach since it promotes support rather than removal
- Consequences that are promoted through a restorative approach
- No prescribed consequences for certain behaviors instead consider what is appropriate for this child and situation instead.
- Re-direction
- Sentence structures for use with minor behaviors which helps to reduce power struggles if the words can be used authentically.
- Adding a first consideration on whether a child may have a behavior intervention plan and a prompt to follow that if that is the case. Good reminder upfront that not everyone is following the schoolwide behavior plan.
- Intermediate level of classroom managed and major behaviors. This is important because after 3 minors they raise the situation. This helps so low level behaviors do not escalate.
- Definitions of each category of what kind of behavior it is describes it rather than listing specific behaviors.
- Gives Incidents and levels of reteaching and guided practices and modeling behavior
- Gives Expected behaviors
- Categorizes and gives examples and levels of Teacher action, discretion and Administrative Interaction and support

### Problematic Examples:

- Flow chart skips directly from observing, evaluating in severity of behavior and responding with redirection or team responses.
- No indication of minor behaviors and if they can be done multiple times.
- Use of the words "Repeated or continuous minors." This is difficult to disrupt. What does repeated and continuous mean for example in the context of work refusal?
- Does not prompt individuals to consider the context and purpose of the behavior and to be responsive to that first
- Lying, cheating, and theft are listed on both minor and major without advice.
- Take a break, calm down room, or buddy room-All prescribed responses that do not consider motivation or reason for behavior or if this is an effective strategy. Also, note who is with the students in the buddy room?
- Overall approach is more related to documentation instead of responses. Documentation is important but not enough. It will not replace safe, supportive and responsive management.
- The conference with the student - Does this indicate they can tell their side of the story/behavior/etc?
- Complete a "Fix It Plan"
- Definitions of each category of what kind of behavior it describes rather than listing specific behaviors. This might be problematic if everyone has a different definition and can justify it.
- Use of the words: "Big Deal Incidents" or not being prepared for class being treated as a problem behavior when there may be other explanations.
- Restorative Chats occurring with high level administrators instead of where the restoration is needed.

### DATA BASED DECISION MAKING

The work group discussed the measurement of PBIS with the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) and the use of the Cultural Responsive Field Guide in the process of measuring fidelity and creating meaningful action plans. The TFI is used to provide a valid, reliable, and efficient measure of the extent to which school personnel are applying the core features of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS). The TFI is divided into three sections. The group focused on the Tier 1: Universal SWPBIS Features. The Cultural Responsive Field Guide was first published in 2016 and revised in 2021. It states that SWPBIS is not fully implemented unless it is culturally responsive. Cultural responsiveness includes:

- (a) holding high expectations for all students
- (b) using students' cultures and experiences to enhance their learning, and
- (c) providing all students with access to effective instruction and adequate resources for learning (Klingner et al., 2005).

One of the work group team members was able to discuss this with their PBIS team and leadership in their district on April 25. Laurie Eide from Nashwauk Keewatin Greenway Indian Education arranged to have the Greenway PBIS team accompanied by Indian Education take the tier one TFI with the added guidance of the Culturally Responsive Field Guide. This meeting was held on May 2 at the Greenway school. It was facilitated by Erin Engness, North PBIS coordinator, virtually. Dan Torrez observed virtually. Govinda Budrow provided in person support to the team and the powerpoint with examples and nonexamples of what each TFI meant using the Culturally Responsive Field Guide for PBIS. Greenway staff that participated were three Indian Educators, Principal, and at least eight teachers.

The Greenway team discussed and scored the TFI first and then had the added component of reviewing with the Culturally Responsive Field Guide examples on each TFI. Most TFI scores were readjusted by the team and lowered based on discussion surrounding the cultural field guide examples. This allowed for stronger consideration and tangible actions that the Greenway team could consider in their approach to PBIS. Taking the TFI with the Culturally Responsive Field guide allows the Greenway team to meet and take action on the items that were identified for improvement in the process.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

In planning for the next phase of this initiative, we are anticipating more work dedicated to exploration and implementation of PBIS Core Features.

1. We are looking to ensure the workgroup has representation from at least the five identified regions: Metro, South, Northwest, Northcentral, Northeast.
2. The workgroup will continue to focus on collecting the voices and stories of the individuals by expanding to more elders, AIPACs and other community groups. These voices and stories are critical to our continuing work, as the educators on this workgroup will be looking for specific areas to focus their energy around implementation models.
3. Investigate ways to add authentic student voice in the process of understanding the experience and how the stories can impact positive change.
4. Identify and implement ways that core feature interpretation of PBIS can be improved to better support Indigenous communities.
5. Explore feedback from TNEC and consider how to affect positive change for each action item.