Book Study

Prepared by the
Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) Project

Best Behavior: Building Positive Behavior Support in Schools

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(Sopris West, 2005)

Book Description:
Best Behavior provides information about evidence-based techniques for establishing a positive school climate. This book provides information about school-wide supports, classroom management techniques, and supports for challenging students. The book includes many reproducible forms that leadership teams can use or modify to build the checklists and monitoring systems needed to within the system. The procedures recommended by *Best Behavior* align well with the MTSS for Behavior framework.

Target Audience: (Please check ALL the appropriate categories that apply to this book)
- **Structuring teams**
- **District Leadership Teams**
- **Behavior**
- **Building Leadership Teams**
- **Tier 1 teachers**
- **Elementary Team**
- **Secondary Team**
- **Curriculum**
- **Core**
- **Intervention**

Section One: Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports

-Chapter 1: Welcome to *Best Behavior*-

Brief Overview:
Chapter One provides an overview of the book and a list of learning objectives for each chapter. This chapter points out that the book is based on the approach developed by Positive Behavior Supports.

Discussion Questions:
1. Discuss the five things listed on page 9 that are included in a Positive Behavior Supports approach.
2. Complete and share the reflection form on page 15. Did other staff members participating in this book review have similar perceptions and feelings?

-Chapter 2: *Best Behavior* Staff Development: What It Looks Like-

Brief Overview:
To effectively install a program like that described in *Best Behavior* takes about two to three years. These practices must be aligned with and integrated into the buildings school improvement efforts.

Discussion Questions:
1. How will staff be trained in your building?
2. How will student progress be monitored in your building?
3. Do you feel your building will be willing to allot the amount of time recommended for professional development?

-Chapter 3: Introduction to the Challenge of Antisocial Behavior-

Brief Overview:
This chapter provides a description of antisocial behavior in schools and emphasizes the importance of early identification of students who need extra support. The authors describe the "risk path" that many students travel as their behavior problems worsen. Punishment is not a solution but many positive behavior support practices work for school and classroom discipline, and a three-tier model of schoolwide discipline strategies is described.

Discussion Questions:
1. Why is it important to identify students needing extra support early? Does your school have a way to identify at-risk students early?
2. As you think about the Risk Path, are there practices in your school that may worsen student behavioral problems?
3. Does your staff believe that punishment is not a solution? Does your staff believe that punishment might be replaced by effective discipline practices?

-Chapter 4: School Organization: Getting Started with *Best Behavior*-

Brief Overview:
This chapter describes the foundations of an effective discipline plan, has the team complete a needs assessment, and then set goals based on the results of the needs assessment.

Discussion Questions:
1. What are the foundations of an effective discipline plan? Complete the reflection on page 35.
2. Have staff complete the self-assessment survey. Will there be roadblocks to getting staff to complete the survey?
3. Set goals and complete action steps based on the results of the survey. What can you do to help ensure that the action steps get done?

-Chapter 5: Defining Schoolwide Behavior Expectations-

Brief Overview:
Effective schoolwide expectations create a culture of consistency, state expectations positively, target all forms of behavior, are taught to all students, and are known by all students and adults. This chapter outlines features of effective schoolwide expectations and leads you through defining expectations for your school.

Discussion Questions:
1. Why do you think your building needs schoolwide behavior expectations?
2. Complete the activity in Figure 6 on page 45. What did you learn from comparing school rules and classroom rules?
3. Discuss the examples of elementary (Figure 7), middle school (Figure 8), or high school (Figure 9) rules and expectations, depending on the level you teach. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the matrix you reviewed?
4. Define the schoolwide expectations for your building. Are there some missing? How might your building develop needed rules? Are any of your current rules interfering with building a positive school climate? How might your building eliminate no longer needed rules?

-Chapter 6: Teaching Schoolwide Behavior Expectations-

Brief Overview:
Expected behaviors are taught to students just like subject matter is taught. A lesson plan for teaching each expected behavior needs to be developed. Then a schedule for teaching lessons throughout the year needs to be developed.

Discussion Questions:
1. What are the features of positive behavioral expectations?
2. Why do expected behaviors need to be taught like other subjects?
3. What are the components of a lesson plan for teaching expected behavior? Why do you think that both examples and non-examples are included?
4. Develop a lesson plan for teaching an expected behavior. Have a peer critique your lesson plan. What will be the most difficult part of getting all teachers to teach behavioral lessons in your building?
5. Discuss the sample schedule for teaching behavior expectations. Why do you think this building scheduled the lessons as they did?

-Chapter 7: Schoolwide Recognition and Reward Systems: Creating a Positive School Culture-

Brief Overview:
Consistent implementation of a schoolwide recognition system by all the adults in the school is critical for success of the system. Recognition of positive behavior should be public because of the modeling effect. A schoolwide recognition plan should be developed that uses rich and varied reinforcement strategies.

Discussion Questions:
1. Discuss the group's feelings about praise, rewards, and recognition systems. Does the reflection on page 62 address some of the group's concerns? Why do you think it is important to develop a recognition system for your building?
2. What are the features of a schoolwide recognition system?
3. Does your building have a reward and recognition plan? Does it involve a token system? Sometimes it helps those resistant to such a system to point out that a token system is as much to ensure that adults are providing recognition for positive behaviors as to encourage students to engage in positive behaviors. Use the checklist in Figure 15 on page 67 to review your schoolwide recognition system.

-Chapter 8: Active Supervision of Common Areas-

Brief Overview:
This chapter describes active supervision, where it should be used, and the seven features of active supervision. Previously established rules for common areas are reviewed and a checklist for assessing common-area supervision is provided.

Discussion Questions:
1. What is active supervision? Why is it so important in common areas?
2. Conduct a jigsaw activity where each member of your group reads and describes a different feature of active supervision. At the completion of the jigsaw, have each member of your study group describe which feature they think is most important and why.
3. What is the two-minute rule?
4. Consider having your group work together to complete the checklist for common-area supervision. Then develop an action plan based on what the checklist reveals to you.

-Chapter 9: Using Discipline Referrals to Diagnose Schoolwide and Individual Student Needs-

Brief Overview:
This chapter outlines how to review and revise you office discipline referral procedures and forms, and how to identify student and programmatic needs based on patterns in the referral data.

Discussion Questions:
1. Complete the reflection on page 95 individually, then discuss each question with the group.
2. Does your building's discipline referral form contain all the elements listed on page 95?
3. Discuss the Key Indicators and related rules on page 96. Does your building collect this type of information? Do you take action based on these or similar rules?
4. Complete the activity on page 97. As a group, discuss what you learned from this activity.
5. Review the example forms on pages 99-102. Are there aspects of any of these forms that you think you would like to include in your building's referral form?

Section Two: Classroom Management

-Chapter 10: Classroom Organization: The Foundation of Classroom Management-

Brief Overview:
The focus for behavior moves from the school to the classroom in this chapter. An effective classroom environment begins with classroom organization.

Discussion Questions:
1. Complete the reflection on page 107 and discuss your answers with others in your group.
2. Complete the Classroom Organization Form on page 114. Share a copy of the form with a peer and make an appointment with them to get together after 3 weeks to see how well you accomplished the organization you planned on the form. (You may want to complete the classroom organization checklist first, to get ideas for completing the Classroom Organization Form.)

-Chapter 11: Designing and Teaching Classroom Behavioral Expectations-

Brief Overview:
Classroom expectations should be short, simple, and clear. They need to be taught the first few days of school. Students need a rationale for each rule and how the rule relates to the schoolwide expectations. Students need to be reminded of the expectations both verbally and through classroom posters. Expected behaviors need to be taught, reviewed and practiced throughout the year.
Discussion Questions:
1. Complete the Visualizing Success Activity on page 118. Discuss your five things with others in your group. Are they all the same? Is it ok if these five things are different for different teachers?
2. Complete the Classroom Expectations Matrix on page 119.

-Chapter 12: Preventive Interactions-

Brief Overview:
Preventive interactions discussed in this chapter are methods to secure students' attention (attention signal), use of direct speech when interacting with students (alpha commands), and a predictable response sequence with students who are noncompliant.

Discussion Questions:
1. Discuss the reflection questions on page 122 as a group. Are there differences in how different teachers deal with these scenarios?
2. What is an attention signal? When is it used?
3. What are the characteristics of an alpha command?
4. Discuss the examples of a predictable response sequence. Have you used these in your classroom? How would you feel about using this sequence?

-Chapter 13: Using Consequences to Change Group and Individual Behavior-

Brief Overview:
This chapter discusses using both positive and corrective consequences to manage behavior in the classroom. These consequences serve to provide differential feedback regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior. The chapter also describes classwide motivational systems, and includes examples of games and ways of charting student progress.

Discussion Questions:
1. What are the characteristics of positive consequences? Brainstorm other examples of positive consequences that might be added to the list on page 133.
2. What are the characteristics of corrective consequences? Brainstorm other examples of corrective consequences that might be added to the list of page 134.
3. What are the characteristics of classwide motivational systems? Discuss the steps in the activity on page 142. Would anyone be willing to try out one of the games described in this chapter? If so, ask them to report back to the group the results of the classwide motivational system they used.

-Chapter 14: Responding to Escalating Behavior and Verbal Harassment-

Brief Overview:
This chapter describes teachers' assumptions about power struggles and how these may lead to escalating behaviors. The phases of the escalation cycle are described, along with basic approaches to preventing escalating behavior. The authors describe ways to defuse escalation and provide a summary of the critical components of a comprehensive intervention plan.

Discussion Questions:
1. Think about the assumptions about power struggles listed on page 151. Do you share these assumptions? Discuss how they can lead to behavioral escalation.

2. Do a jigsaw where each group member reads about each phase of the escalation cycle and describes it to the other members of the group. Does this cycle match what you've experienced with students who have lost control of their behavior?

3. Review and discuss Table 2 on page 160. Do you think the strategies described might be useful in dealing with the phases of the escalation cycle?

4. Discuss Colvin's approach to defusing escalation in Figure 20 on page 163. Discuss how you might support each other in learning and applying these steps.

-Chapter 15: Thinking Functionally About Behavior-

Brief Overview:

This chapter describes a functional behavior assessment (FBA), describes how to conduct an FBA, provides an example the information gathered during an FBA, and illustrates how FBA information is organized into a summary statement.

Discussion Questions:
1. What is a functional behavioral assessment and what are the outcomes of an FBA?
2. What is the difference between an antecedent event and a setting event?
3. What are the components of an FBA summary statement?
4. Why do you think that developing a hypothesis about the maintaining function of a behavior is so important?

-Chapter 16: Building Positive Behavior Support Plans for Challenging Students-

Brief Overview:

This chapter describes how the information collected from the functional behavioral assessment can be used to develop a behavior support plan. The chapter provides suggestions for interventions based on the hypothesized function of the behavior at both the universal and targeted levels. Examples are provided of a behavior plan, questions to ask about students with challenging behaviors, and an individual student point chart.

Discussion Questions:
1. What are the Big Ideas about positive behavior supports?
2. What is the link between functional assessment and positive behavior supports?
3. What are the pieces of a behavior plan?

-Chapter 17: Adapting Curricula to Prevent Problem Behavior-

Brief Overview:
Curricula can be adapted in several ways as a preventative practice, including changing the context, presentation, and behavior expectations. Seven steps for adapting curricula and instruction are provided, as well as a form to help organize modifications to instruction.

Discussion Questions:
1. Discuss Table 4 on page 199. Are there other methods you have used to adapt curricula in your classroom for students at-risk for problem behavior? Discuss the relationship between behavior difficulties and learning problems.
2. What are the seven steps for adapting curriculum and instruction?
3. Review the form on pages 201 and 202. Would someone in the book study group be willing to try out the form and report back to the group?

-Chapter 18: Teaching Students Who Are At-Risk to Self-Manage Their Behavior-

Brief Overview:
This chapter describes the four components of self-management: self-monitoring, self-recording, self-evaluation, and self-delivery of reinforcement. The chapter describes how to set up a self-management routine and provides four checklists that might be used as part of such a routine.

Discussion Questions:
1. Why might you want to teach self-management and self-control skills? Do you think some students might be more successful with learning and using these skills than others?
2. Conduct a jigsaw where each person reads about a different component of self-management and describes that component to the others.
3. Discuss the steps to setting up a self-management routine.

-Chapter 19: School/Home Collaboration

Brief Overview:
This chapter provides strategies for teachers regarding communication with parents. The chapter includes reproducibles that teachers can provide to parents regarding communication, cooperation, limit setting, problem solving, and confidence building with their children.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the communication strategies for teachers. Do you agree with the do and don't list?   Are there other things you would add to those lists?
2. Discuss the handouts for parents. Do you think the content of the handouts is worthwhile? When might you provide parents with handouts like these?