

## *Checklist for Advocates of School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Integrated with Mental Health*

This checklist is for advocates who wish to promote at the state level an educational reform—school-wide positive behavior support (PBS)—integrated with mental health reforms based on systems of care that provide effective services.

Additional information on these reforms and how they can be and have been linked is available in *Way to Go*, a Bazelon Center publication. The Bazelon Center has also produced a set of fact sheets on these topics. This checklist supplements these materials and is designed for use in conjunction with them.

Advocates should ask the following questions, and follow up as recommended:

- 1) Is the state department of education committed to school-wide PBS?  Yes  No
  - If not, join with other education, family and advocacy groups to urge its adoption.
  - Urge the governor’s office and legislative leaders to promote and fund a state PBS initiative.
  
- 2) Is the mental health authority working through a partnership with the state department of education on the school-wide PBS initiative?  Yes  No
  - If not, meet with the head of the state mental health authority and the child mental health director to encourage them to do so.
  - If necessary, advocate for the governor’s office and the legislature to require the mental health authority’s participation on such an initiative.
  
- 3) Has the state mental health authority endorsed the system of care approach (following federal principles for a system of care), and does it have a plan to support such systems around the state?  Yes  No
  - If not, urge the state mental health authority’s child mental health staff to attend national meetings on systems of care and to consider applying for a federal system of care grant from the Center for Mental Health Services.
  - Advocate for legislative support for resources to expand systems of care around the state (use Fact Sheet #3 to explain these issues to legislators).
  
- 4) Does the state mental health authority have programs, training and practice standards designed to ensure that mental health providers furnish the most effective services?  Yes  No
  - If not, urge the agency to develop these programs and standards. You should consider partnering in your advocacy with forward-thinking providers who would like to promote quality improvement.
  - Seek an appropriation from the legislature for this purpose. (Use Fact Sheet #3 to educate your legislators on this issue).

- 5) Is there a state PBS implementation team? If so, is the mental health authority on the team?  Yes  No
- If not, advocate with the education department to put a team in place and to invite mental health authority representation.
  - Inform the mental health authority that such a team exists and urge that a representative request the opportunity to participate.
  - Use Fact Sheets #1 and #3 in your advocacy.
- 6) Are families adequately represented on this team?  Yes  No
- If so, is this through a family-run organization? (An organization can provide backup support to families.)
  - If not, advocate with the education department and the mental health authority to include families in all aspects of state-level planning, oversight and monitoring. (Use Fact Sheet # 4 in your advocacy.)
- 7) Does the leadership team include representatives from child-serving agencies?  Yes  No
- If not, urge the education and mental health authorities to reach out to, at a minimum, child welfare, juvenile justice, substance abuse (if separate from mental health) and health.
- 8) Do you believe members of the state leadership team have an adequate understanding of how to integrate school-wide PBS with systems of care and effective mental health services?  Yes  No
- If not, urge participants on the leadership team to review information on school-wide PBS from the national technical assistance center ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)).
  - Take copies of *Way to Go* to key members of the leadership team and bring to their attention the recommendations in Chapter 4.
  - Urge these leaders to fully embrace PBS-mental health linkage at the state level.
- 9) Has the state leadership team developed cross-agency goals and objectives and a concrete plan for how the initiative will be implemented around the state?  Yes  No
- If not, urge the team to engage in this exercise before moving to implementation.
  - Ensure that family members are full participants in goalsetting.
- 10) Do mental health systems of care exist in areas where the school districts and local schools have adopted school-wide PBS?  Yes  No
- If so, urge both the state department of education and the mental health authority to use those areas as pilots for a school-wide PBS initiative integrated with mental health. Such pilots should strongly focus on how to serve children in PBS Tiers Two and Three (those with more severe problems).

- 10) Has the state leadership team taken advantage of national PBS and systems of care technical assistance resources and brought national trainers into the state to work with schools that are implementing school-wide PBS?  Yes  No
- If not, urge the state leadership team to do so or have a member of the legislature write to the head of the department of education to encourage this.
  - If necessary, advocate with the legislature for funds to cover the expense of such training.
  - Be sure the training includes leadership training for families and youth as well as training for families whose children are in PBS schools.
- 11) Does the state-level initiative fully involve families and ensure that school districts and schools will also engage families appropriately?  Yes  No
- If not, advocate family representation on state, district and school PBS leadership teams.
  - Urge training for family leaders and for families of students in PBS schools.
  - Encourage the hiring of family liaisons at the school level to support and assist other parents.
- 13) Has the state leadership team specified how schools that implement school-wide PBS should meet the needs of students in PBS Tiers Two and Three who have mental health needs?  Yes  No
- If not, the leadership team should be urged to require districts and schools to develop formal linkages with community mental health agencies.
  - The leadership team should also be urged to establish a procedure to assess the ability of local mental health agencies to deliver the most effective practices in addition to providing consultation and education for schools.
- 14) Has the state leadership team a set of outcomes it intends to measure at the school level (and has it required schools to report the necessary data)?  Yes  No
- Will these data be compiled into a report card to allow comparison of schools implementing a school-wide PBS initiative integrated with mental health to non-PBS schools?  Yes  No
- If not, urge the leadership team to adopt such a plan or, if necessary, have the legislature require that it do so.
  - Encourage collection of data on school discipline actions, school engagement and school success, parent involvement, teacher retention and family, youth and teacher satisfaction. (See *Way to Go*, Chapter 4 for more detailed list of potential outcome measures.)

- 15) Have the state education and mental health agencies fully mapped available funding sources and redirected funds from less effective activities to those that support PBS?  Yes  No

Do they know what other federal funds may be available to support the initiative?  Yes  No

- If not, urge agencies to engage in comprehensive mapping of funding sources.
- Urge them to review various sources of information on potential funding, including Chapter 5 of *Way to Go*, the information on the website of The Finance Project (<http://www.financeproject.org/>), information on financing on the Bazelon Center’s website ([www.bazelon.org](http://www.bazelon.org)) and other national sources.
- Explain how funding streams from various agencies that have common goals and objectives can and should be brought together to create a package of resources supporting implementation.
- Be sure resources are aligned to the initiative’s goals so that funding does not drive services.

- 16) Have the state education and mental health agencies reviewed their own policies to identify barriers or opportunities for incentivizing appropriate supports for children?  Yes  No

- For example, is training in behavior management required for teacher certification?
- Are guidelines under the IDEA appropriate for identifying children with emotional disturbance?
- Are Medicaid funds available for effective community mental health services for children in school?
- Do mental health system rules regarding use of funds allow community providers to furnish consultation and education to school personnel?

Advocates should ensure throughout the planning and implementation process that key members of the legislature are fully informed and engaged in supporting the initiative. Likewise, senior executive branch officials, including the governor, need to be brought on board.

As the initiative moves forward, urge leaders in the legislature to ask the executive branch for regular reports on:

- children’s progress and well-being;
- the use of various disciplinary actions in school;
- school success in PBS schools compared with non-PBS schools; and
- a status report on PBS implementation and linkages between education and mental health at the state and local levels.