Selecting Improvement Strategies:

When selecting Major Improvement Strategies, CDE recommends that schools and districts consider a range of factors. The goal of these considerations is to identify strategies that meet identified needs, have a high level of evidence supporting their implementation, and can be implemented effectively within the context of the school and district. An intervention may be listed as a strategy or a strategy may encompass multiple interventions within it.

Selecting the Best Intervention or Strategy
Is the strategy **clearly defined** and supported by **high-quality research**?
Does the strategy address **needs** and **align to staff skills** and **competencies**?
Is there **leadership support**, **resources**, and **necessary time** for implementation?

Purpose of document

This document is intended to provide a tool that can be used for two primary purposes.

Selection of strategy: The strategy on the following page was a common strategy within Unified Improvement Plans during the 2017-18 year. This document can be used to inform the decision process about selecting strategies and identifying the key components that research has shown are essential for impact.

Analysis and critique of current strategy: If the strategy identified on page 2 is already being implemented, fidelity instruments (links on page 3) can help teams evaluate implementation and to identify any areas for ongoing development or focus. Subsequently, action plans can be created based on this review.
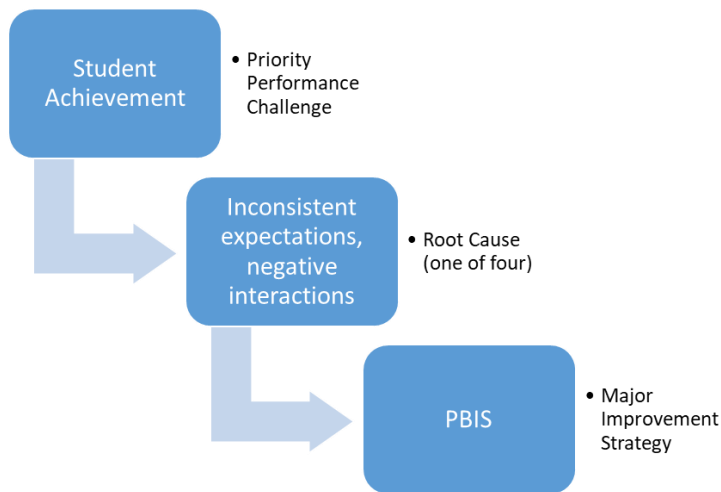
- **For example:** School A's PBIS leadership team completed the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (A PBIS implementation measure) at the end of their first year implementing PBIS, and scored below the recommended benchmark on the Tier I scale. After analyzing the results in relation to the eight core components of PBIS, the team identified that many components were in place. However, they decided to focus on two critical areas: teaching behavior expectations and using data for decision making. Based on this problem analysis, three action steps they identified were:
  - The PBIS team will develop grade-level appropriate lesson plans for teaching behavior expectations, and ensure teachers deliver the lesson plans within the first few weeks of the next school year.
  - Adopt the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) for instantaneous access to referral data, and complete the initial training prior to the start of the next school year.
  - During the next school year, the leadership team will engage in data based problem solving routines during monthly PBIS team meetings to identify student and system challenges. The team lead will be responsible for modeling these routines and building the teams efficiency in this practice.

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Four Domains for School Improvement			
Culture of Performance	**Academic Systems**	**Turnaround Leadership**	**Talent**

Sample Strategy: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Challenge: *School A,* an elementary school, found that they were struggling with Academic Achievement across subject areas and student groups.

Root Cause: When working to identify why this was the case, *School A* identified inconsistent student expectations among classrooms, data showing negative interactions between staff and students, and teachers not receiving reinforcement or guidance on managing student behavior and lessons.

Major Improvement Strategies: In order to address their root causes, *School A* elected to implement PBIS to create more consistency in behavior expectations as one of their strategies (the other was related teacher coaching and feedback). The description of their approach is: *"Establish and maintain a schoolwide behavior system that ensures a positive, consistent learning environment for students and staff so everyone achieves their potential."*

Evidence supporting this strategy: The School included the following statement in their UIP.
"There is gold standard evidence ("Strong" under ESSA) that suggests that when the key components of PBIS are implemented, it can lead to improved feelings of school safety, reduction in behavioral referrals and improved student academic performance in elementary schools. http://www.pbis.org/research."

Contextual Fit: The school included the following in their UIP.
"This strategy was selected as it meets the needs of our students and will help us to build a more consistent culture where more students have access to learning. In addition, our district has appointed a PBIS coordinator who will help our team analyze data and will provide training as we are getting started."

What does effective PBIS implementation look like?

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) is a schoolwide systems approach aimed at establishing positive student culture and individualized behavior supports necessary to create a safe and effective learning environment for all students (Sugai & Horner, 2009). PBIS is an evidence-based practice with multiple randomized control trials and real-world implementation effectiveness studies supporting the program's impact on reducing problem behaviors, reducing in- and out-of-school suspension rates, enhancing school climate, and even improving academic performances (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Horner et al., 2009; see also http://www.pbis.org/research). It is very important to note that the effectiveness of PBIS is based on implementing the eight core components described below. While each component is researched informed, these components are most effective when implemented together. To this end, PBIS developers have created multiple validated implementation fidelity measures such as the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI; Algozzine et al., 2014; McIntosh et al., 2017) to assist schools in effectively implementing all eight core components[1].

1. **Establish administrative leadership:** School principals and administrators must actively support and participate in PBIS implementation.
2. **Develop team-based implementation:** All tiers of PBIS implementation are supported by teams responsible for installing all core features. Team composition varies by tier with the Tier 1 responsible for the installation of school-wide systems, and Tier II and III teams responsible for more intensive small group and individual student supports. All teams use efficient operating procedures such as regular meeting format and agenda, minutes, roles, and action plans.
3. **Define behavior expectations:** As part of PBIS installation, schools define five or fewer positively stated behavior expectations. Further a school should develop a behavior matrix or similar document to provide clear examples by setting/location (e.g., classroom, hallway, and cafeteria) for student and staff behaviors. This core component is rooted in both behavioral theory and prevention logic in that behavior is rule governed, a function of environment factors, and the development of new problem behaviors can be prevented by minimizing triggering events by creating predictable environments.
4. **Teach behavior expectations:** Behavior expectations are taught directly to all students in classrooms and other school settings (e.g., during assemblies). Lesson plans and teaching schedules are created to ensure behavior expectations are taught. Additionally, school teams use re-teaching as a tool for addressing behavioral challenges as they arise (e.g., noisy passing periods) by developing appropriate lesson plans. "Whether considering individual students or all students in a school, priority is given to directly teaching social behaviors that increase social and academic success at school" (Sugai & Horner, 2009, p. 310).

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[1] The eight components were defined based on the implementation features highlighted in the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI; Algozzine et al., 2014). Additional details on the research base for PBIS were paraphrased from Sugai and Horner (2009).

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PBIS core components, continued

5. **Acknowledge and reward appropriate behavior:** School teams develop a written set of procedures for specific behavior feedback that is linked to behavioral expectations, and used across all school settings by all staff. "If newly taught and acquired behaviors are to be strengthened, occur more often in the future, and maintained over time, students must receive positive feedback/acknowledgements for their displays of those behaviors" (Sugai & Horner, 2009, p. 313).
6. **Monitor and correct behavioral errors:** While defining, teaching, and acknowledging appropriate behaviors are most important for creating a prosocial environment, school teams must also develop a continuum of consequences for responding to problem behaviors. These steps include:
   - Defining problem behaviors that interfere with academic and social success,
   - Develop procedures and policies (e.g., discipline flow chart) for office-managed versus staff managed problems,
   - Develop school policies that emphases proactive, instructive, and/or restorative approaches
7. **Use data for progress monitoring and decision making:** School teams must have instantaneous access to discipline and fidelity data to engage in data-based problem solving and decision making practices. Teams must use discipline and academic data at least monthly. Finally, teams should engage in an annual evaluation of their PBIS system by documenting fidelity and effectiveness at improving student behavior outcomes.
8. **Family, school, and community partnerships:** School teams should routinely work with family and community stakeholders to provide input on universal foundations (e.g., expectations, consequences, acknowledgements).

PBIS Links:
- Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI; Implementation Measure): https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/SWPBIS%20Tiered%20Fidelity%20Inventory%20%28TFI%29.pdf
- CDE's PBIS Page: https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/pbis
- PBIS National TA Center: https://www.pbis.org/

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Evidence base
ESSA defines levels of research based on the quality of the study (Levels 1-4). CDE requires that schools and districts identify the research base for strategies that they select for their Unified Improvement Plans, and for applications for school improvement funds in the EASI application.
- The research on PBIS that is cited here meets the definition of Level 1 research. The research cited focused on the impact on student behavior and achievement when all PBIS components were implemented.
- For more information about the levels and definitions in ESSA: http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essaplanningrequirements

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