



- - Demonstrated Ability to Positively Impact School Climate - -

Research shows that a positive school climate is a critical component of student achievement. When students feel safe and secure in their schools and when they develop positive relationships with the adults who teach and care for them, they want to attend school and, while there, can better focus on learning.

As school climate improves, so does teacher retention and teacher job satisfaction, according to research. In fact, just a 1% improvement in school climate was found to decrease discipline actions per student by 1.35 percent (e.g., improve school climate by 10% = 13.5% reduction in disciplinary referrals).

How does a school generally approach discipline?

Schools tend to focus on individual situations or individual student behavior outcomes rather than the entire school climate. This approach doesn't consider the reason why behaviors may be occurring. The traditional way of dealing with these problems is to punish students with the hope that future problems will decrease. When that does not occur, schools often turn to the enforcement of tougher policies for violations. This approach is seldom effective, causes more work for educators, and may create negative climates and attitudes in schools.

What makes PBIS different?

The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework utilizes a problem-solving approach that improves the entire school climate by using data to identify the reasons negative behaviors are occurring and implementing changes and interventions that address those reasons. PBIS is a preventative and proactive framework of addressing inappropriate behavior through fair and consistent discipline practices.

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has been implementing PBIS, a research-validated, school-based framework for improving school climate since 2008. Georgia public schools had a 34% reduction in yearly suspension rate from 2007 through 2017. To date, more than 1,400 schools across the state are at various stages of PBIS implementation.

*PBIS has not only changed my school,
it has changed my life both personally
and professionally...it is so much a
part of our culture.*
—Jim Finch, Principal-Mary Persons HS
