

Ohio's Commitment to Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

Ohio's strategic plan for education, [Each Child, Our Future](#), highlights the need for a positive climate in every school to support students' well-being, academic achievement and future success. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) create a consistent, safe and positive school climate. PBIS provides a framework to support students, families and educators' transition back to school that emphasizes students' health and safety, social and emotional needs, and behavioral and academic growth during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. PBIS also helps support students by focusing on their strengths and building on their confidence to succeed. PBIS is a research-based system that utilizes a positive approach to discipline, which leads to a reduction in office referrals, in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions that decrease instructional time for students.

The Ohio Department of Education is required by law¹ to submit a report to the Ohio General Assembly that includes the following:

1. A summary of the best practices for implementing a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports framework by school districts throughout Ohio; and
2. The total number of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions issued by a school district or building to students in prekindergarten through grade 3, disaggregated by category of offense and disaggregated within each offense by sex, race, economic disadvantage and disability

[House Bill 318](#) addresses multi-tiered behavioral supports in the interest of reducing disciplinary referrals, especially for prekindergarten through grade 3 students. Per this policy, district implementation of PBIS now is a non-graded reported measure on the 2019 Ohio School Report Cards. This report highlights Ohio's robust PBIS initiative and provides information about best practices from award-winning schools and districts across the state.

WHAT IS PBIS?

PBIS is a framework that guides districts and schools in developing policies and practices that proactively define, teach and support appropriate student behavior. PBIS creates consistent, predictable learning environments that increase positive behavior and academic outcomes for each student by teaching behavioral expectations across all environments (from the bus, to the classroom and in the hallways, to the lunchroom). Schools effectively implementing PBIS promote positive behavior through encouragement and reinforcement and provide correction of inappropriate behavior through prompting, reteaching and opportunities for behavior correction.

PBIS BEST PRACTICES FROM OHIO'S SCHOOLS

Ohio has a longstanding PBIS Network. Guided by the Department's Office of Integrated Student Supports, the network develops training, coaching materials, guidance and resources to support the scaling up of PBIS in Ohio schools.

The Ohio PBIS Network identified nine best practices, included below, for the effective implementation of PBIS. These nine best practices are based on best practices identified by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Program's Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and elements of the Tiered Fidelity Inventory, an assessment measuring the extent to which school teams apply the core features of PBIS.

¹ Section 9, HB 318, 132nd General Assembly

PBIS BEST PRACTICES

1. Consistent administrative leadership and involvement guide the necessary cultural shift and systemwide efforts for successful implementation of PBIS.
2. Team-based structures, such as building-level teams and district-level teams, are in place to ensure implementation of practices. These teams assess, problem-solve and plan for the implementation of PBIS.
3. Each school district (or building) identifies three to five positively stated behavioral expectations, such as being safe, respectful and responsible.
4. The three to five behavioral expectations are taught explicitly in settings across the school environment, including the classroom, hallway, cafeteria and restroom. Lesson plans are created and employed throughout the school year.
5. Districts and schools develop systems to consistently acknowledge and reinforce students who demonstrate the behavior expectations. Well-developed acknowledgment systems are tailored to the developmental levels of the students, are constructed to minimize the use of tangible rewards and promote student responsibility and motivation.
6. Districts and schools establish consistent systems for the correction of behavior errors. This includes clear policies and procedures for addressing classroom-managed behaviors and office-managed behaviors (minor vs. major behaviors).
7. PBIS teams consistently collect and analyze data for problem-solving and decision-making. The data is collected at the schoolwide, small-group and individual student levels and reviewed at least monthly.
8. A multi-tiered system of support is available to meet the varying needs of students. All students receive core instruction and reinforcement of the schoolwide behavioral expectations (Tier I). Small-group instruction and additional social or academic skill practice is provided as supplemental supports for some students (Tier II). Individualized assessment, intervention plans and wraparound services are provided for students who need comprehensive supports (Tier III).
9. Practices are implemented in a culturally responsive manner that honor and reference the varied cultural backgrounds of the students. Staff receive training and ongoing professional development to promote cultural awareness and sensitivity. Staff periodically review discipline data and address any disproportionality patterns. Students and families are actively engaged in the planning and implementation process.

BEST PRACTICES IN OHIO'S SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

Clermont Northeastern Local Schools began the implementation of its PBIS framework in 2014. The district attributes its success to the strong commitment from both administration and staff. The primary goal is to promote success within the school community through consistent expectations, procedures and a focus on positive behaviors, while utilizing data to respond to individual students' needs. The intervention system, branded as "The Rocket Way," is doing just that. Restorative practices are embedded in the district's framework to foster learning environments that are rigorous in both expectations and support as learners are continuously challenged. The district did not have any out-of-school suspensions or expulsions reported for prekindergarten through grade 3 for the 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 school years.

The district wanted to build a system that would continue if any staff member was no longer with the district. The district has been able to maintain the same level of progress while teaching virtually during the pandemic, as the expectations and implementation efforts have remained the same. A high school intervention specialist says Clermont Northeastern High School has a positive school climate where differences are celebrated, high expectations are set and met, successes are celebrated and respect for all is present.

Willoughby-Eastlake City School District has a robust PBIS framework that is designed to improve the overall academics and behavior of the school environment. Through its program, the district teaches and rewards students who show respect, demonstrate responsibility and are ready to learn. The key attributes of

the district's PBIS framework include preventive activities, data-based decision-making and a problem-solving approach. To ensure ongoing monitoring of policies, practices and training to address the learning needs of children impacted by trauma, all staff in the district have received trauma-informed care training. Rather than suspending or expelling students, the district has an alternative discipline program. The district has seen a reduction in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for prekindergarten through grade 3, from 68 in the 2018-2019 school year to 37 in the 2019-2020 school year. The district's success is a combination of teacher buy-in and leadership. The district meets quarterly and the buildings meet monthly to focus on building data to determine what types of interventions are needed. A high school teacher says that PBIS works for all. It allows for a nurturing, positive environment that facilitates growth in all students. Implementation of PBIS in the school building has led to improvement in the school culture.

Perrysburg Exempted Village Schools has experienced success throughout the past school year with its continued implementation of PBIS. The district has all grades, teachers, administrators and support staff using "Jacket Way" language. The district has been adjusting its matrices to provide clear and succinct language for students. It is working on adding a deeper level of restorative justice into its program when implementing Tier II supports. Data analysis has provided meaningful conversation and dialogue between all levels of staff, which have led to creative problem-solving solutions. The district did not have any out-of-school suspensions or expulsions reported for prekindergarten through grade 3 in the 2018-2019 school year or 2019-2020 school year.

The district feels the implementation of the PBIS framework is successful, largely due to staff buy-in. Strong leadership teams bring much passion to their jobs. The district also has a lot of financial support provided by local businesses within the community.

CELEBRATING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS IN OHIO

The schools mentioned above are not alone in their success with PBIS. Each year, the Ohio PBIS Network recognizes Ohio schools implementing PBIS with fidelity through a recognition system. Schools can earn recognition at the bronze, silver or gold levels. Ohio schools and districts apply to their regional state support teams for this recognition, and awards are announced each fall. The schools receive certificates of award, are recognized at the annual statewide PBIS Showcase Conference and are encouraged to present their work at the showcase to teach other schools and districts about their practices.

Two hundred thirty districts and schools received awards for the 2018-2019 school year. Many of these award winners open their doors to neighboring districts wishing to observe exemplar PBIS practices. A list of PBIS award winners can be found on the Department's [PBIS Recognition, Visitation and Showcase webpage](#).

The Department recognizes many schools and districts continued to implement PBIS during the 2019-2020 school year. Due to ordered school building closure in spring, the 230 schools and 11 districts that were awarded recognition for the 2018-2019 school year will be awarded at the same levels for the 2019-2020 school year. The recognition award recipients include 20 gold awards, 45 silver awards, 165 bronze awards and 11 district awards. For example, if a school was a bronze winner for the 2018-2019 school year, the Department will recognize the school at the same level for the 2019-2020 school year. This option does not require schools or districts to submit any application materials or take any further action.

ELIMINATING OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS FOR OHIO'S YOUNGEST LEARNERS

Ohio law requires districts and community schools to eliminate out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for students in prekindergarten through grade 3 by the 2021-2022 school year for offenses without

exemptions outlined below. Schools are required to phase in reductions in the number of out-of-school suspensions or expulsions allowed for prekindergarten through grade 3 students, using the district's 2018-2019 school year data as a baseline.² Districts, community schools, STEM or STEAM schools established under chapter 3326 of the Ohio Revised Code, and college preparatory boarding schools established under chapter 3328 of the Ohio Revised Code are expected to gradually decrease suspensions as follows:

School Year	Percent of Out-of-School Suspension/Expulsion Reductions
2018-2019	0% reduction
2019-2020	25% reduction
2020-2021	50% reduction
2021-2022	100% reduction

School districts and community schools will receive their 2019-2020 out-of-school suspension and expulsion data for students in prekindergarten through grade 3 in a separate communication from the Department, and reduction will be monitored accordingly. The reduction and elimination requirements do not include out-of-school suspensions or expulsions related to circumstances that pose significant danger to school and student safety. Districts and schools are not required to reduce or eliminate out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for the following reasons:

- Bringing a firearm to a school or on any other district property;³
- Bringing a firearm to an interscholastic competition, extracurricular event or any other school program or activity that is not on the district's property;⁴
- Bringing a knife capable of causing serious bodily injury to a school or other school property, interscholastic competition, extracurricular event, or other program or activity sponsored by the school or in which the district is participating;⁵
- Possessing a firearm or knife capable of serious bodily injury (including any initially brought on school property by another person) at a school or other district property, interscholastic competition, extracurricular event, or any other school program or activity;⁶
- Committing an act that is a criminal offense when committed by an adult and that results in serious physical harm to persons or property while the student is at school, on other district property, or at an interscholastic competition, extracurricular event, or any other school program or activity;⁷
- Making a bomb threat to a school building or any premises at which a school activity is occurring at the time of the threat.⁸

Out-of-school suspension and expulsion data for prekindergarten through grade 3 students in public school districts and community schools for the 2019-2020 school year can be found on the Department's [webpage](#). The data are disaggregated by category of offense and further disaggregated by sex, race, whether the student has been identified as economically disadvantaged and whether the student has a disability.

These statistics are calculated using data reported in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) by districts and community schools for the 2019-2020 school year. The numbers provided represent the

² Section 9, HB 318.

³ ORC 3313.66(B)(2)(a)

⁴ ORC 3313.66(B)(2)(b)

⁵ ORC 3313.66(B)(3)

⁶ ORC 3313.66(B)(3)

⁷ ORC 3313.66(B)(4)

⁸ ORC 3313.66(B)(5)

number of discipline *incidents* and do not represent the actual *numbers* of students who were suspended out of school or expelled in prekindergarten through grade 3. Any school district or community school with numbers in any offense category and/or disaggregated category made up of fewer than 10 students will be displayed as <10 in the associated spreadsheet. The data are disaggregated by category of offense:

- 1. Immediate Health and Safety Exemptions** – A prekindergarten through grade 3 student was issued an out-of-school suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the district or community school necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, student’s fellow classmates, classroom staff or teachers, or other school employees.
- 2. Out-of-school Suspensions and Expulsions Without Exemptions** – A prekindergarten through grade 3 student was issued an out-of-school suspension or expulsion by the district or community school, but the offense was not listed as an exemption in Ohio Revised Code. This category of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions must be gradually eliminated by the 2021-2022 school year.
- 3. Ohio Revised Code 3313.66 Exemptions** – A prekindergarten through grade 3 student was issued an out-of-school suspension or expulsion for an offense the Ohio General Assembly identified as a necessary reason for suspension and expulsion listed above.
- 4. Data Reporting Error** – This category represents out-of-school suspensions or expulsions of prekindergarten through grade 3 students that were not coded in EMIS as any of the above categories.

Discipline Reason	Statewide PK-3 Offense Count for 2019-2020
A prekindergarten through grade 3 student was issued an out-of-school suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the district or community school necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, student’s fellow classmates, classroom staff or teachers, or other school employees.	6,687
A prekindergarten through grade 3 student was issued an out-of-school suspension or expulsion by the district or community school, but the offense was not listed as an exemption in Ohio Revised Code. This category of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions must be gradually eliminated by the 2021-2022 school year.	3,827
A prekindergarten through grade 3 student was issued an out-of-school suspension or expulsion for an offense included in the ORC 3313.66 (B)(2)-(5) exemptions, as he or she posed significant danger to school and student safety.	2,004
Data Reporting Error: An out-of-school suspension or expulsion of a prekindergarten through grade 3 student was not coded in EMIS as any of the categories above.	752
Statewide Total for prekindergarten through grade 3 out-of-school suspensions and expulsions	13,270

Ohio districts and community schools issued 13,270 out-of-school suspensions and expulsions to prekindergarten through grade 3 students in the 2019-2020 school year. Of these 13,270 out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, 8,691 were incidents determined to be a significant risk to student and school safety or the immediate health and safety of students and staff. These 8,691 out-of-school suspensions and

expulsions are included in Ohio Revised Code exemptions. However, 3,827 out-of-school suspensions and expulsions were issued to prekindergarten through grade 3 students for out-of-school suspensions and expulsions without exemptions. Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions in this category must be reduced and ultimately eliminated by 2021-2022.⁹ The number of students in prekindergarten through grade 3 who were suspended or expelled out of school may be lower than a typical year due to the state-ordered school building closure beginning March 16, 2020.

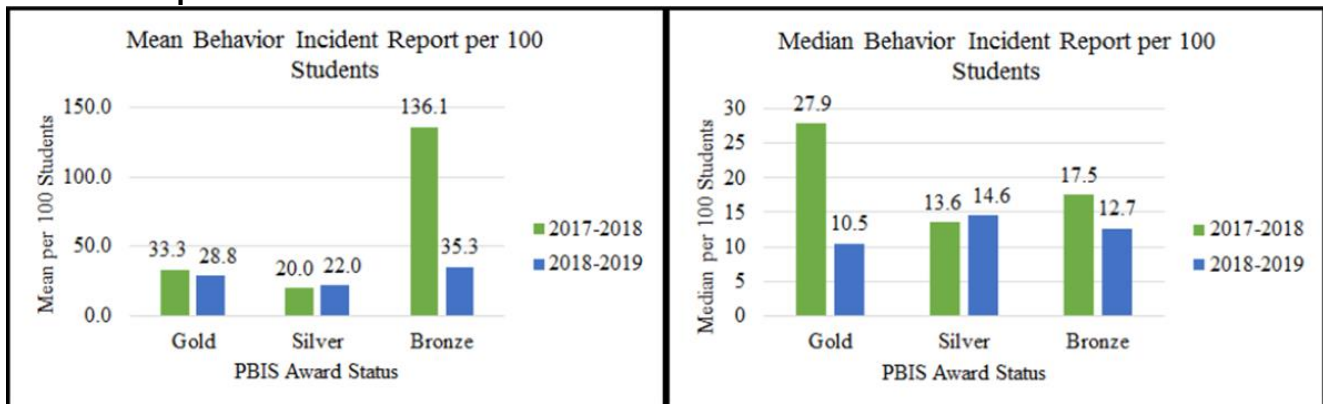
PBIS: AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY FOR REDUCING OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

Ohio schools implementing PBIS with fidelity have demonstrated noteworthy reductions in their rates of office discipline referrals, suspensions and expulsions. With these reductions, administrators and teachers have more time to focus on academic progress, and students who previously were removed from the academic environment now spend more time receiving instruction. Further, decreased behavior distractions in the classroom lead to an increase in academic instruction time for other students in the classroom. The graphs below illustrate the data for Ohio schools implementing PBIS with fidelity. Comparing the gold winners to the bronze winners demonstrates that high-fidelity implementation results in fewer discipline referrals and fewer out-of-school suspensions.

The sample used for the graphs below consisted of 209 schools recognized for implementing PBIS with a high degree of fidelity in 2019. The schools received gold, silver or bronze awards depending on criteria determined by the state support teams and Ohio PBIS Network. The schools represented 38 of Ohio’s 88 counties. The sample showed a mix of urban, suburban and rural schools. Additionally, 136 of the schools were elementary schools and 68 were middle/high schools.

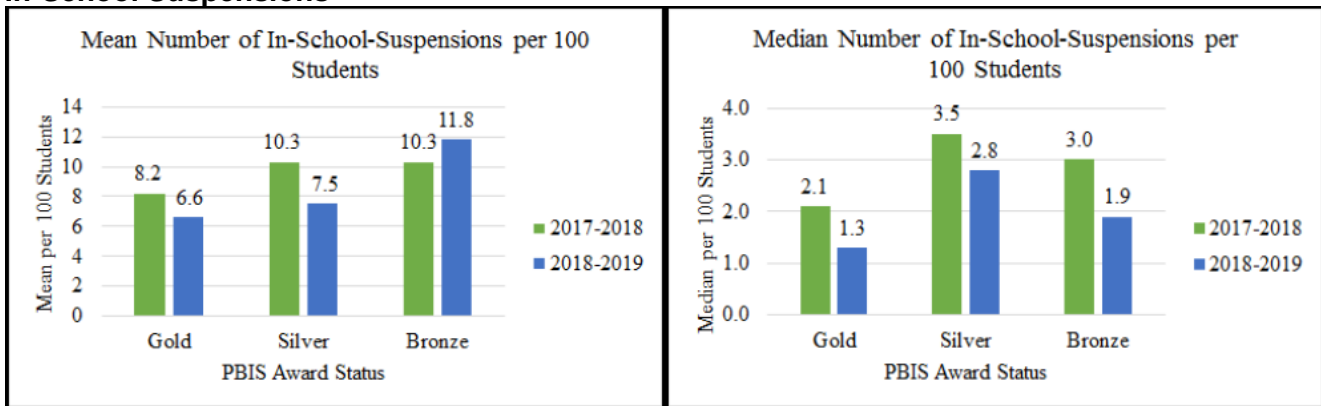
The graphs below show the means for the various outcome measures for 2017-2018, the year before the award application, and 2018-2019, the year of the award application, for bronze, silver and gold award recipient schools. The figures on the left show mean data and the figures on the right show median data.

Office Discipline Referrals

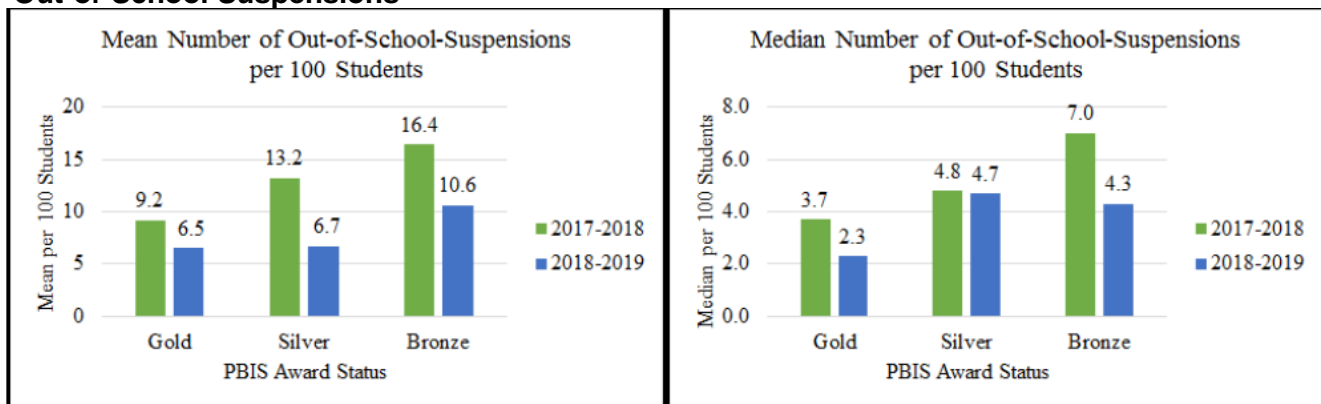


⁹ Section 9, HB 318

In-School Suspensions



Out-of-School Suspensions



Overall, the data show decreases in office referrals and in-school and out-of-school suspensions in schools receiving PBIS awards. Schools receiving gold and bronze awards improved from one year to the next in all three areas, indicating that schools that start implementing PBIS with fidelity (bronze) see an immediate decrease in discipline, and schools with the highest level of fidelity (gold) continue to have reductions in problem behaviors over time. Gold, silver and bronze schools reduced the median number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions per 100 students from the 2017-2018 school year to the 2018-2019 school year.

The 132nd General Assembly of the Ohio Legislature points to PBIS as a support to schools and districts to reduce and eventually eliminate out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for students in prekindergarten through grade 3. With more training opportunities and supports to implement PBIS, schools and districts are expected to eliminate out-of-school suspensions and expulsions by the 2021-2022 school year.¹⁰

EXPANDING PBIS

PBIS is a core component of *Each Child, Our Future*, Strategy 7, to meet the needs of the whole child. PBIS is an evidence-based, tiered framework and systems change process that requires ongoing training and coaching. In 2018, Ohio was awarded its second round of a five-year School Climate Transformation Grant by the U.S. Department of Education to expand PBIS training and coaching throughout Ohio. The Department is focusing on these five goals through 2023 to achieve this expansion:

- Goal 1: Build Ohio Department of Education and state-level capacity;

¹⁰ Section 9, HB 318

- Goal 2: Enhance local district and school capacity to implement PBIS;
- Goal 3: Improve coordination of state department efforts with appropriate federal, state and local resources;
- Goal 4: Incorporate opioid abuse prevention and mitigation strategies (including trauma-informed practices) into the PBIS framework; and
- Goal 5: Complement the state's existing efforts to address disproportionate rates of discipline and restraint and seclusion by increasing integration of culturally responsive practices into PBIS implementation.

The Department hired state and regional positions to support the expansion of PBIS training and coaching in the state. Staff in these regional positions conducted needs assessments followed by training and the development of coaching plans for each project area. The plans are designed to increase PBIS training and coaching capacity within state support teams and educational service centers to expand PBIS training and coaching for schools and districts.

The Department also is working to support schools and districts with aligning and integrating PBIS with other initiatives, such as prevention strategies, trauma-informed practices and social and emotional learning. As state, regional and local efforts expand training and coaching, incorporating prevention strategies into the PBIS framework and increasing culturally responsive practices, the needs of the whole child truly can be addressed.