STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

Delaware
Positive Behavior
Support Project
School Climate & Student Success

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Funding and support from:
DE Positive Behavior Support Project – School Climate & Student Success

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MODULE STRUCTURE

- Module series goal:
  - Provide information to schools that can lead to improvements in **school climate** and **behavioral outcomes.**

- Module narratives provide additional information to accompany PowerPoint Presentation.
  - Endnotes throughout slides correspond to the references in the module narrative.

- Gold star = Resource on Delaware PBS website

WHAT ARE STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS?

- Quality of the interactions between students in a school-wide context
  - Peer acceptance
  - Social support

DELAWARE SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

On the *Delaware School Climate Survey*, student-student relationships is captured by items assessing:

- **students (including those of different races) getting along** and
- **students demonstrating friendliness**, **caring**, and **respect toward each other**

WHY ARE STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS IMPORTANT?

IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUALS

- Students **with** positive peer relations tend to have:

  - **Higher self-esteem** and a more **positive self-concept**[4-5]
  - Greater **satisfaction toward school**[6]
  - Greater **academic achievement**[7-8]
  - Greater **engagement in school**[9-13]

IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUALS

Students **lacking** peer acceptance and support from peers tend to experience:

- Fewer opportunities to learn social skills & develop healthy friendships[14]
- More internalizing problems[4-5, 15-17]
- More externalizing problems[4,15,18]
- Drug abuse[19]

- Bullying from others[20-21]
- Increased disliking of school or emotional disengagement[22]
- Greater academic problems, school avoidance, & increased risk of dropping out[23-26]

Student-Student Relationship **Contributing Factors**

- Student Characteristics
- Classroom Management & School-wide Discipline

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Factors contributing to **peer acceptance** and social support:
  - Social skills, especially prosocial skills
    - Being friendly, cooperative, helpful[8, 28-29]
  - Strong academic engagement and achievement among younger children [29-30]
  - Nonacademic skills such as musical or athletic ability applied in small groups or teams.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Factors contributing to **peer rejection**[28, 31-32]
  - Aggressive, disruptive, noncompliant behaviors
  - High social withdrawal or shyness
  - Low academic engagement
  - Deficits and deficiencies in the social-cognitive and emotional domains
  - Communication/language deficits
  - Difficulty with inhibitory control and delay of gratification

The relations between student characteristics and social rejection often are reciprocal.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Positive student-student relationships exist in classrooms and schools that include:
  - An authoritative approach: emotional support + structure
  - Teachers who avoid publically demonstrating a strong liking or disliking toward individual students
  - Teachers/staff who are responsive to social dynamics and peer group affiliations

- **Important Notice** · Peer acceptance increases in classrooms and schools in which responsiveness and student-centered practices receive major focus[37,44-45]

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Positive student-student relationships exist in classrooms and schools that include:
  - Opportunities for supervised student interactions
    - Peer-assisted learning activities
    - Extra curricular activities
    - Service learning opportunities

**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT &
SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE**
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Positive student-student relationships exist in classrooms and schools that include:

Behaviors & norms that support prosocial behavior, academic engagement, and promote caring

Behaviors & norms that oppose antisocial behavior

Examine School Climate Data

Classroom Management & School-wide Discipline

Student-Student Relationship **Recommended Strategies**

Student-student Relationship Building Activities

Curriculum-based Lessons
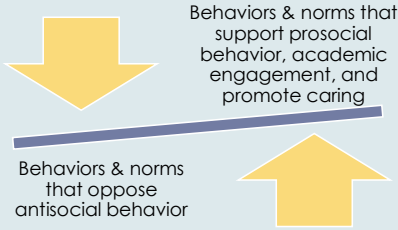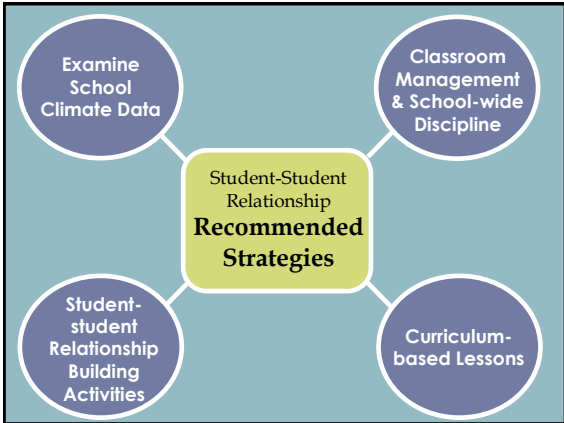
EXAMINE SCHOOL CLIMATE DATA
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Examine data, such as from *Delaware School Climate Survey*
  - Are student-student relationships viewed favorably across students, teacher/staff, and parents?
    - Unfavorable responses would indicate the need for interventions and related staff development.
  - Look at responses to specific items on surveys (e.g. Student-Student Relationship subscale.
  - Additional data should be gathered and examined to help determine *why*.
  - Share results with focus groups.

CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group guide
- Information on:
  - Designing questions
  - Recruiting participants
  - Conducting the group
  - Analyzing data
- Provides examples

from Duke University
(https://assessment.trinity.duke.edu/document s/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf)

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Implement strategies to prevent behavior problems *and* promote positive student-student relationships
  - Provide models of behaviors associated with peer acceptance
  - Use praise and other recognitions strategically
  - Encourage students to praise and reinforce one another for prosocial behavior
  - Develop class vision with students
  - Consistently communicate and highlight social acceptance
    - School-wide behavioral expectations
    - Classroom meetings
    - School-wide activities
    - Media (newsletter, website)
  - Strengthen *teacher-student* relationships

EFFECTIVE PRAISE & REWARDS

- Provides general strategies for effectively praising and rewarding students
- Gives specific script examples of what to do or what to say to students

- *Activity for staff practice also available.*

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Implement additional strategies for preventing behavior problems
- Communicate and collaborate with students' families
- Arrange seating to promote opportunities for positive social interactions and social acceptance
- Closely monitor and respond to social dynamics of the classroom and school
  - Observe peer interactions and affiliations
- Avoid encouraging hierarchical peer social networks
- Encourage students to talk to teachers, other school staff, and peers about what might be interfering with positive relations

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SOCIOMETRIC SEATING TOOL

Excel spreadsheet and instruction guide
- Students list 3 peers with whom they would like sit
- Track students' responses in Excel to see who is (and who *is not*) nominated by one another

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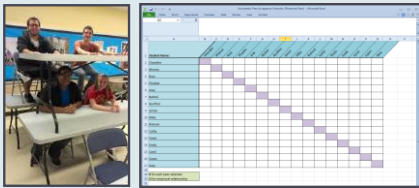
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- When correcting misbehavior, consider how actions taken might impact student-student relationships
  - Correct privately instead of publicly
  - Always combine correction with recognition of positive behavior
  - Teach skills to prevent behavior from reoccurring
  - Use inductive discipline; communicate impact of behavior on relations with others

CORRECTING MISBEHAVIOR

- Flow chart demonstrating how to:
  - Problem solve with student
  - Follow up to support future positive behavior

Disciplinary Encounters: 2-part Problem Solving Process

Part 1: Problem solving with the student

Step 1: Identify the problem behavior and explore why it occurred.

The following questions may be helpful.

Is what I did/did know happened correct?

Help me understand why this happened?

What led up to the problem?

What were you thinking or doing when it happened?

Was there something you wanted, used in do, or something you don't want to do?

Step 2: Discuss why the behavior is indeed a problem.

Invoke and discuss the punishment, if any.

Discuss additional reasons why the behavior presents a problem or how it impacts the self and others.

Step 3: Encourage responsibility for one's own actions, including accepting the consequences and "fixing" the problem.

Step 4: Have the student complete the collective action plan.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- In the classroom, consider implementing the Good Behavior Game.
  - Designed to provide the frequent monitoring and reinforcement of targeted behaviors.

- Handout that provides specific steps to implementing the game.

Good Behavior Game

The Good Behavior Game (GBG) is a classroom behavioral intervention that rewards students who demonstrate appropriate on-task behaviors. According to several studies, the use of this intervention led to reductions in student's off-task, aggressive, and antisocial behaviors (Dolan et al., 1993; Lannie & McCurdy, 2007). This intervention can be used on an entire classroom (broken up into groups by the teacher) or on a subgroup of students in the class.

The game uses an interdependent group contingency technique in which a group of students earns points based on the group's performance as a whole. These points are recorded on the board and can later be exchanged for privileges or rewards. Although teams will often compete with one another, all teams can earn the total number of predetermined points for following the rules. The particular rules and number of points to be earned can vary depending on teacher preference and the behaviors he or she wants to target.

Below is a brief synopsis of how to implement the game. These steps are taken from *School Discipline and Self-Discipline* by George Bear. To learn more about the game, please refer to Chapter 8 of the book.

Here's a brief synopsis of how to implement the game:

1. Divide the class into two or more teams. It is usually recommended that teams consist of 3-7 players, although this may vary. Teams should be fairly balanced with regards to students' academic and behavioral skills. If one student is continually disruptive (and thereby causing his or her whole team difficulty earning points), considering making this one student a separate team.
2. Determine the rules of the game (typically around 3-4 rules) and provide students with examples to clearly define expectations.
3. Indicate what the rewards will be and when they will be provided. Consider asking students what they would prefer.
4. Divide the class time into a set number of intervals (usually around 5-10 minutes). If the class displays more problematic behavior, consider shortening the length of the intervals.
5. Decide the scoring process and how many points are necessary for students to earn the reward. At the end of each interval, groups could be awarded based on the following criteria.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTIVITIES
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Provide opportunities for peer-assisted learning
  - Peer mentoring, buddy systems
  - Consider whom you group together
  - Consider grouping students of different races/ethnicities
- Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities and sports
- Play games that promote fun and social interactions
- Identify and showcase students' skills and talents to help students to get to know each other
  - Example: "Yellow Pages" activity

YELLOW PAGES ACTIVITY

- Students make advertisements for skills they can offer the class
- Advertisements copied on yellow paper and made into book

from Responsive Classroom
(https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/class-yellow-pages)

CURRICULUM-BASED LESSONS
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Use multiple opportunities in and outside the classroom to teach lessons on peer relations
  - Highlight lessons within school subjects
  - Focus on student-student relationships during "teachable moments"
  - Highlight and discuss issues pertaining to social relationships in current events
- Adopt a packaged SEL curriculum
  - Lessons on relationship skills
  - Demonstrated improvement in peer relationships
  - Ex: PATHS, Second Step, Responsive Classroom

SEL PROGRAMS

- Resource (Excel sheet) provides expected outcomes for various programs by categories (e.g., academics, classroom quality, etc.)

- Pay special attention to the "Social Skills, Prosocial Behavior, and Aggression" column.

Recommended Strategies
### Students with Tiers 2 & 3 support needs

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STUDENTS AT TIER 2 & 3
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Apply the strategies already mentioned as appropriate at the universal level and for all students
  - With greater frequency and intensity
  - More comprehensive
  - More individualized
- Provide social skills/SEL training related to prosocial skills
  - Universal or Tiers 2/3
    - Incredible Years (pre-k – grade 2)
    - Coping Power (grades 4 – 6)
    - PEERS (middle and high school)
- Where appropriate, develop a behavioral contract

STUDENTS AT TIER 2 & 3
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- Ensure targeted students have a supportive relationship with at least one other person

- Work closely with the home in targeting social and academic skills

- Provide more intensive supports
  - Individual counseling, family therapy, or parent management training, and social services

Making a plan
Who is going to do **what** actions by **when**?
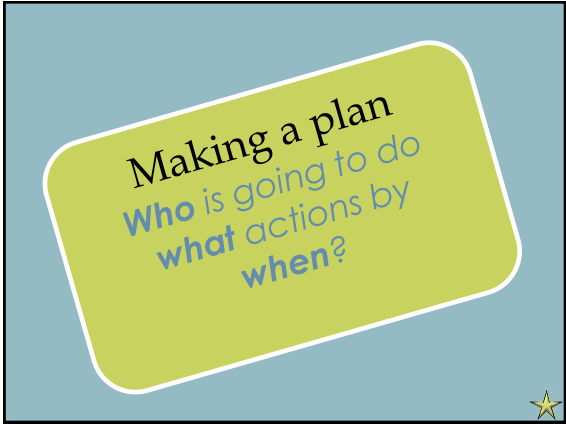
THANK YOU

- Based on areas of need identified by data, check out other resources provided through the **School Climate and Student Success Module Series**.
- www.delawarepbs.org

- Questions can be directed to Sarah Hearn
- skhearn@udel.edu

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