



# Managing Behavioral Disruptions in Early Grades

Reversing the Rising Frequency and Intensity of Student Misbehavior

## **Part IV: Enhance Support for Higher-Needs Students**

District Leadership Forum

# Audio Options



## Using Your Telephone

If you select the “Phone Call” option, please dial in with the phone number and access code provided.

This screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Choose ONE of the audio conference options". It has three tabs: "Phone Call" (selected), "Computer Audio - Connected", and "Call Me". Under the "Phone Call" tab, there is a dropdown menu showing a US flag, followed by the text "Dial: +1 669 900 6833" and "+1 646 876 9923". Below this, it says "Meeting ID: 222 255 629" and "Participant ID: 24". At the bottom, there is a "Done" button.

## Using Your Microphone and Speakers

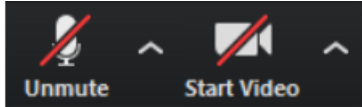
If you select the “Computer Audio” option, please be sure that your speakers or headphones are connected.

This screenshot shows the same dialog box as the previous one, but with the "Computer Audio" tab selected. The "Phone Call" tab is now inactive. In the center of the dialog, there is a large green button that says "Join Audio Conference by Computer". Below this button, there is a link that says "Test Computer Mic & Speakers". At the bottom of the dialog, there is a checkbox labeled "Automatically join audio by computer when joining a meeting".

# Using Zoom

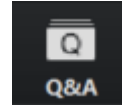
## Mic and Video Controls

Click the mic and camera pictures until they have a red line indicating they are both off.



## Asking a Question

To ask the presenter a question, type it into the Q&A panel and press send.



# Managing Behavioral Disruptions in Early Grades



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1

## Prevent Misbehavior Through Early Intervention



1. Transition Program for Incoming High-Risk Kindergarteners
2. Universal Behavioral Screening to Identify Students in Need of Support
3. Teacher Home Visit Program
4. Trusted Adult-Student Relationship Mapping

2

## Create Conditions for Positive Classroom Behavior



5. Self Regulation-Friendly Classroom Audit
6. Expanded Time for Free Play
7. Districtwide PBIS Implementation
8. Standardized Behavior Guidelines and Data Collection

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## Promote the Social Emotional Well-Being of Students and Teachers



9. Direct Instruction of Key Social-Emotional Skills
10. Embedded SEL Routines for Adults
11. Teacher Burnout Coping Supports

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## Enhance Support for Higher-Needs Students



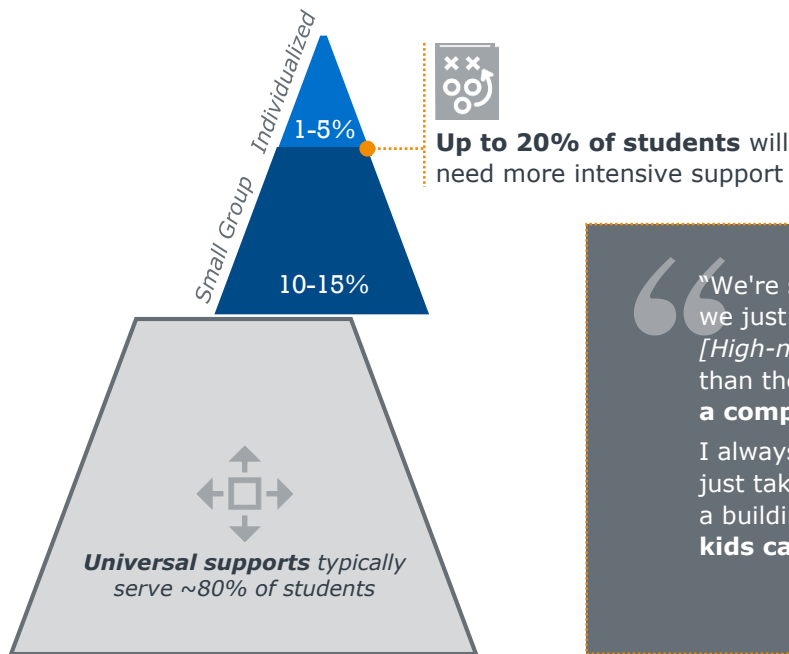
12. Trauma-Informed Perspective of Student Behavior
13. Cross-Functional Behavior Health Intervention Team
14. Cognitive Behavioral Support for Students with a History of Trauma
15. Reintegration-Focused Alternative Classroom



# Impossible to Prevent All Behavioral Challenges

A Small Number of High-Need Students Can Consume Educator Time

**Even In An Optimized Tiered System of Supports, Some Students Will Need Additional Behavioral Interventions to Be Successful**



“We're seeing things that, quite frankly, we just didn't see even 10 years ago. *[High-needs students]* tend to be younger than they used to be, **and for some, it's a complete lack of behavioral control.** I always call them the "runners"—kids just taking off. When you're looking at a building of 750, **a handful of those kids can keep a lot of people busy.**”

Superintendent, IA



# Overwhelmed by the More Challenging Cases

## How Do Schools Best Meet Complex and Individualized Student Needs?

### Supporting Students in Least Restrictive Educational Setting Most Ideal...

“

“Students with early-starting conduct problems [...] are **disproportionately placed in restrictive educational environments** outside of mainstream classrooms.

Although intended to benefit students, research suggests that restrictive placements may **exacerbate the maladjustment** of youth with conduct problems.”

*Powers, C., Bierman, K., Coffman, D.  
“Restrictive Educational Placements,” 2016*

”

### ...But Managing Persistent or Intense Behavior Remains Difficult



Assessing underlying cause of the behavior is **time-consuming**, complicated



Behavioral outbursts may **compromise safety** of student, classmates, teacher



Teachers implement behavior modification strategies **inconsistently**



Interventions **insufficiently monitored, adjusted**

# Disruptive Events Impact Classrooms Negatively



And Exclusionary Response Leaves Underlying Student Needs Unaddressed

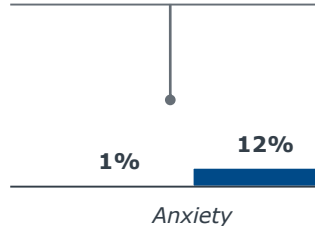
**“The impact of these disruptive events can vary from a few minutes to 45 minutes. We have had to stop math lessons, writing lessons, reading lessons, and even art projects. There are students who are here to learn and can’t get the attention they require because a handful of students are struggling so much they demand all of the teacher’s attention.”**

*Third Grade Teacher, OR*

**Educators Resort to Suspension More Frequently For Students Who Struggle the Most, But Without Proper Supports Student Behavior Unlikely to Change**

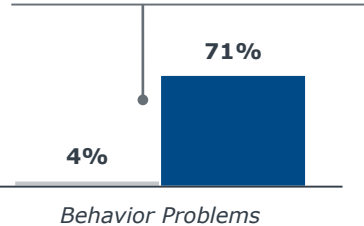
**14x**

**Children with anxiety** 14 times more likely to be suspended or expelled from pre-K



**43x**

**Children with behavioral problems** 43 times more likely to be suspended or expelled from pre-K



■ Share of Pre-K Population ■ Share of Suspensions, Exclusions



**50%**

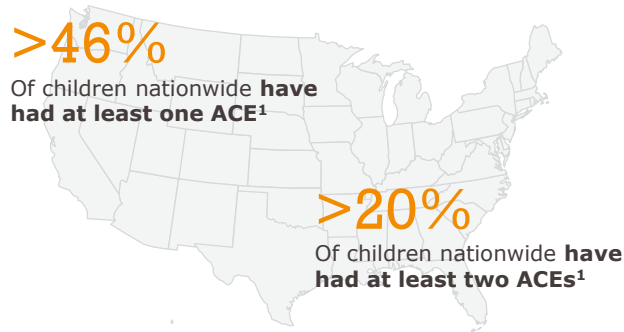
Up to 50 percent of suspended students **receive subsequent suspensions**

Sources: Novoa, C. Malik, R., "Suspensions are Not Support: The Disciplining of Preschoolers With Disabilities," Center for American Progress, January 2018; Owen, J. Wettach, J. Hoffman, K., "Instead of Suspension: Alternative Strategies for Effective School Discipline; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Trauma a Significant Driver of Student Misbehavior

With a Troubling Impact on Students' Behavioral and Social Functioning

## Early Traumatic Experiences Prevalent Across the Country



## District Leaders See Many Sources of Trauma in Their Own Communities



### Family instability

(e.g., abuse, neglect, parental drug use)



### Sudden incidents

(e.g., accident, death)



### Natural disasters



### Refugee populations

## Children Who Face Adverse Events More Likely to Struggle in School

**2x**

Children ages 6+ with two or more ACEs are **twice as likely to be disengaged from school**

**4x**

Children ages 3 to 5 with two or more ACEs are four times more likely to:

- Have trouble **calming themselves down**
- Be **easily distracted**
- Struggle to **make and keep friends**



# Understanding the Impact of Adversity



## Research Shows Toxic Stress Can Hinder Children's Cognitive and Social-Emotional Development



Children exposed to chronic poverty-related stressors experience **reduced gray matter volumes** in the frontal and temporal cortex and the hippocampus<sup>1</sup>

**3-4%**

Below developmental norms for families **at 150% of poverty line**

**8-9%**

Below developmental norms for families **at 100% of poverty line**

“Adjusting for potential confounders [...] experiencing ACEs is associated with below-average language and literacy skills, math skills, **attention problems, social problems, and aggression**. [...] With few exceptions, increased ACEs were associated with increased odds of below-average academic skills and behavior problems.”

*Jimenez et. al., "Adverse Experiences in Early Childhood," 2016*

1) Parts of the brain responsible for planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making, moderating social behavior, emotional association, among other functions.

# Lack of Understanding Exacerbates Student Issues

## Knowledge Important First Step in Changing Teacher Mindset and Approach

**Study in Brief:** *"Impact of Trauma-Informed Care Professional Development on [...] Knowledge, Dispositions, and Behaviors Toward Traumatized Students"*



**Large, urban** school district



**552 participants**, classified and certified staff



**3.5 hour** trauma-informed care (TIC) professional development



**Pre-post test**, 52 item *Trauma-Informed Care Dispositions Survey*

Found that TIC<sup>1</sup> professional development resulted in a **statistically significant change in:**

- Overall knowledge of TIC
- Self-ratings on 21 of 26 disposition subscales
- Self-ratings on 9 of 10 behavior subscales

## 2x

Teachers **lacking an empathetic mindset** are twice as likely to suspend students over the course of the school year<sup>2</sup>

### Sample Disposition Measures

*"I feel empathy for students when they are having problems"*

*"I try to look at student's side of a disagreement before making a decision"*

*"I give students opportunities to make choices and decisions"*

*"I believe it is important to learn about students and their community"*

### Sample Behavior Measures

*"I utilize strategies with the intent to create a safe environment for students"*

*"I use active listening strategies when interacting with students"*

*"I give students positive reinforcement for good behavior"*

1) Trauma-Informed Care

2) 9.6% suspension rate versus 4.8 %

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Sources: Goodwin-Glick, K., "Impact of Trauma Informed Care Professional Development on School Personnel Perceptions and Knowledge Dispositions, and Behaviors Toward Traumatized Students," Bowling Green State University Graduate School of Education, May 2017; Parker, C., "Teacher Empathy Reduces Student Suspensions," Stanford University, April 2016; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Providing a Trauma-Informed Point of View

## Growing Number of Frameworks Exist to Create Trauma-Informed Schools

### Popular Trauma-Informed Care Frameworks Share Four Main Components

|   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Flexible Framework,</b><br/>Helping Traumatized Children Learn<br/>(<i>Massachusetts Advocates for Children</i>)</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Compassionate Schools Initiative</b><br/>(<i>Washington State OSPI<sup>1</sup></i>)</li> </ul>                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Sanctuary Model</b><br/>(<i>By Dr. Sandra L. Bloom</i>)</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators</b><br/>(<i>National Child Traumatic Stress Network</i>)</li> </ul>                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative</b><br/>(<i>Missouri DESE<sup>2</sup></i>)</li> </ul>  |



**Schoolwide focus** to address broad impact of toxic stress rather than providing treatment only to those experiencing acute trauma symptoms



**Dedication to a safe school environment**  
(*e.g., physical safety, psychological safety, orderly and welcoming learning environment*)



**Building student skills**  
(*e.g., resilience, coping, relationship building*)



**Building staff capacity** to support students experiencing toxic stress, trauma  
(*e.g., instructional strategies, effective discipline, strategies to prevent burnout*)

### Despite Interest, Districts Take Fragmented Approach to Trauma-Informed Care



**Efforts exclusively at school, individual level**  
(*e.g., book reads, conferences*)



**District-developed training available, but optional for interested staff**

1) Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
2) Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

# Hardwiring a Trauma-Sensitive Approach

*Champaign Community Unit 4 Schools* Implements Universal TIC Training

## District Leaders Find Trauma Lens Integral to Effectively Meeting Student Needs

### ◆ GOAL SETTING

### ◆ CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

### ◆ IMPLEMENTATION



#### Superintendent Sets District-Wide Expectation

- **In 2017**, superintendent sets school culture and climate professional development goal
- Motivated by efforts to address opportunity gap evident across the district

*“All district staff will be trained in trauma-informed care by the end of school year 2018-19”*



**5-hour “Trauma 101” training created by district clinicians** (*i.e., school psychologists, social workers*) in partnership with Center for Childhood Resilience

#### Training topics include:

- Definition, prevalence of trauma
- Impact of trauma on the brain
- Strategies to support children impacted by trauma
- Compassion fatigue and self-care



#### “Train the Trainer” Enables Delivery Across District

- **Application process** used to recruit, select interested staff
- **Equal number** of clinicians and administrators selected
- **Administrators, clinicians deliver content in pairs** to provide both the clinical and classroom perspectives on trauma-informed practice

#### Profiled Institution:

*Champaign Community Unit 4 Schools, IL*



# Rapid Roll-Out Has Noticeable Impact

## Nearly All Staff Trained in One Year, Exclusively Leveraging Existing PD Time

*Multiple Delivery Models Provide Schools With Flexibility to Integrate TIC Training With Other PD Needs*

### 15 of 19

**School buildings fully trained by fall 2018** as well as all transportation staff



### Model 1

- **Use 1 full day** of district-controlled PD time
- Approach used to train all middle schools at the same time

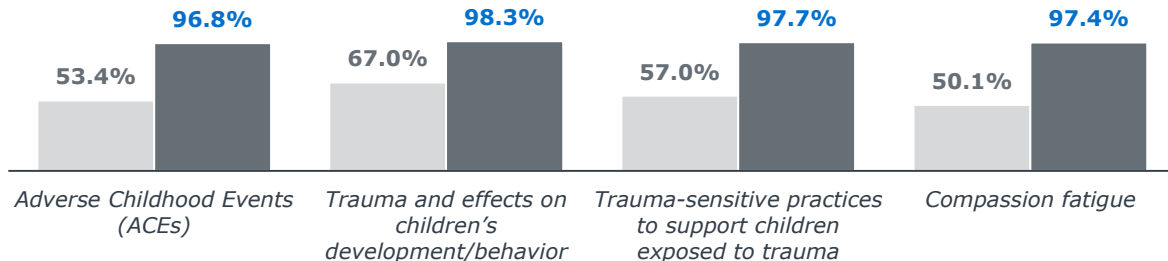
### Model 2

- **Use 1 half-day** (~3 hours) of district or building PD time
- **Use 2 additional hours** at next school faculty meetings to finish training

## Training Leads to Significant Gains in Knowledge on Key Trauma-Related Topics

"My knowledge of \_\_\_\_\_ is"; % of "very good/excellent" responses<sup>1</sup>

■ Before Training ■ After Training

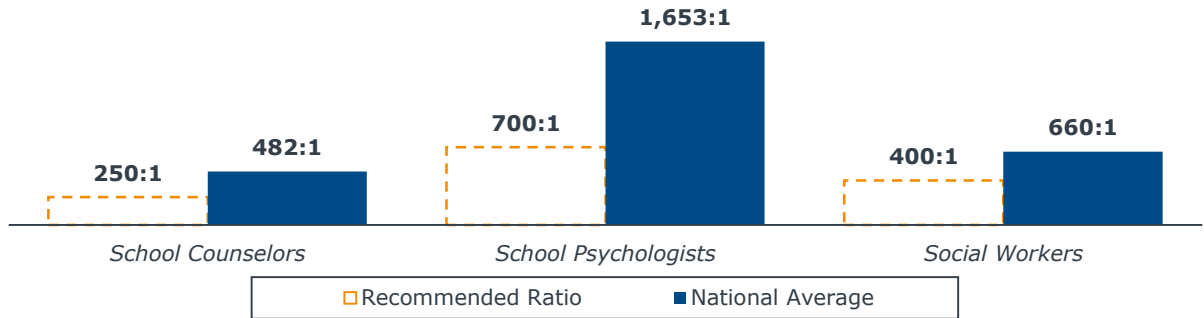


1) n=300 participants

# Difficult to Meet Student Need for Support Services

Staffing, Procedural Inefficiency Make Students Likely to Fall Through Cracks

## Counseling and Social Work Services Perpetually Stretched Thin...



## ...And Referral Processes Lead to Inconsistency in Student Intervention

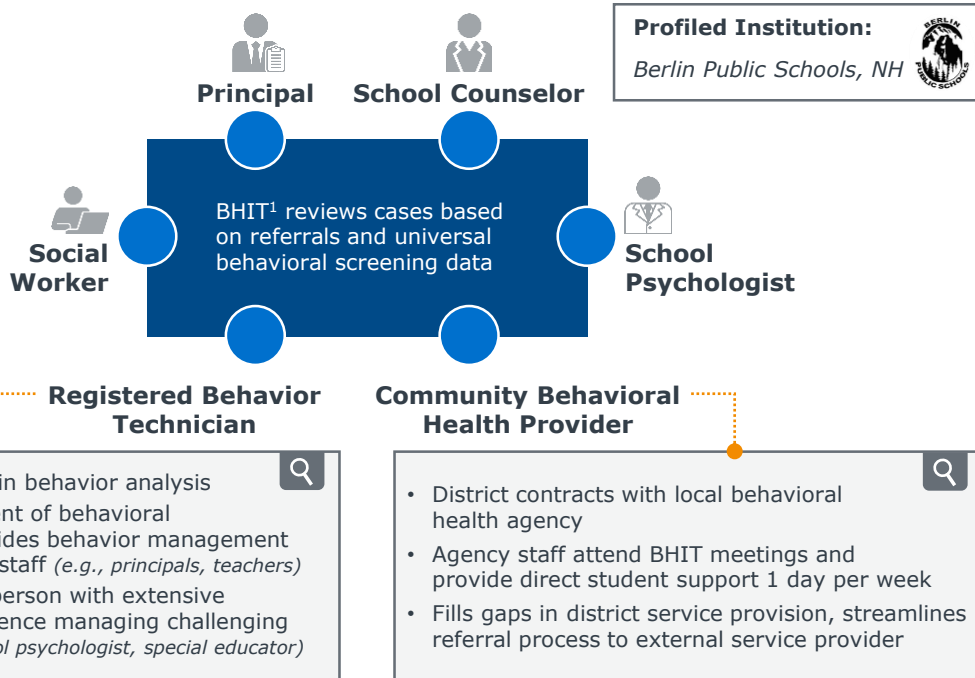
"The bulk of our referrals [to counseling services] come from staff members, but if you have six teachers one could refer [a student] to a social worker, another could refer them to a counselor, and another to the psychologist. **The referrals could be going in all directions.**"

*Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, CA*

# Providing Coordinated Behavioral Health Support

Behavioral Health Intervention Team Leverages Cross-Functional Expertise

## School-Level Teams Collaborate to Address Behaviors of Concern

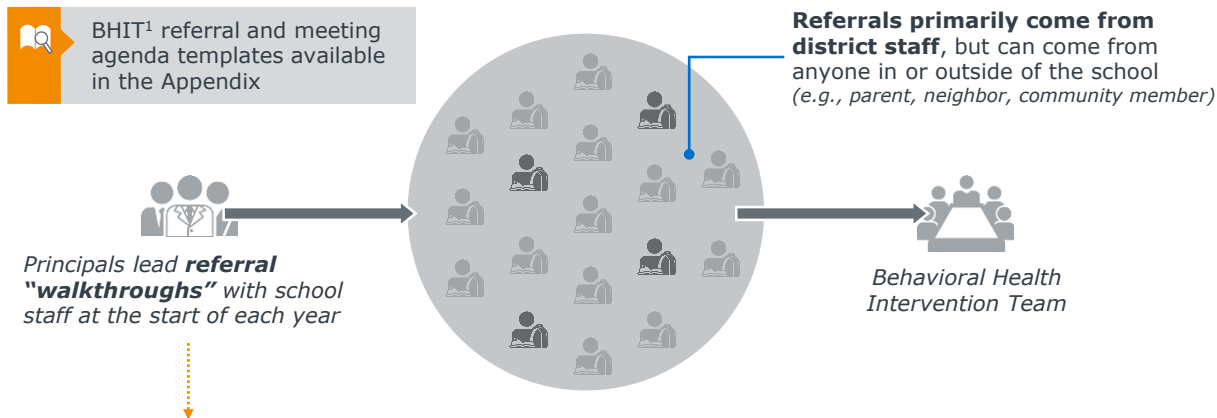


1) Behavioral Health Intervention Team.

2) Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

# Optimize Referrals to Behavioral Health Services

## Staff Education Key to Identifying Students Most in Need of Support



### "Walkthroughs" focus on:

- **Overview** of referral, service planning process
- **Identifying** internalized and externalized behaviors of concern
- **Being specific, clear** in articulating behavioral issues on referrals

### DO refer—behavior that is observable, measurable

- ✓ Violent outbursts
- ✓ Social withdrawal
- ✓ Intense emotions (e.g., *anger, fear, sadness*)
- ✓ Chronic headaches, stomachaches

### Do NOT refer—broad student circumstances, minor behavior infractions

- x Parental separation, divorce
- x Grandparent illness
- x Not following directions
- x Talking with peers during instruction

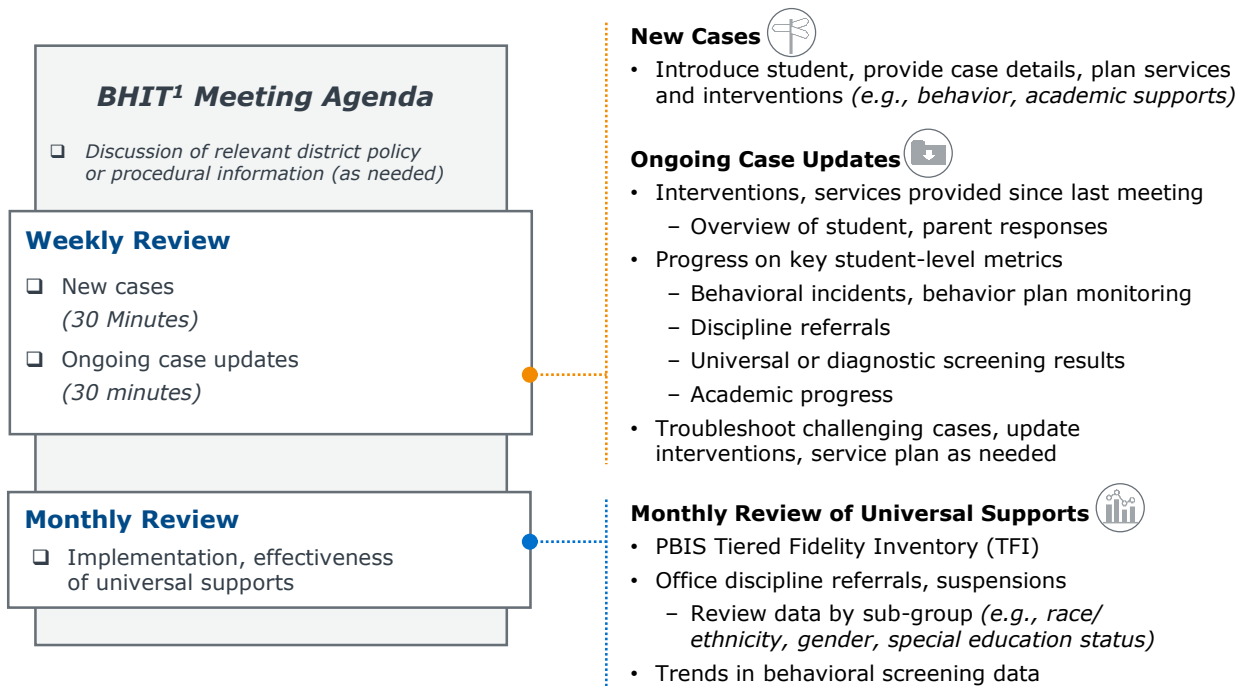




# Dedicated Time to Assess Student Needs, Progress

## Standing Meetings Focus Attention on Behavioral Health Needs

### Team Meetings Balance New Case Intake with Case Monitoring, Data Review



1) Behavioral Health Intervention Team.

# BHIT<sup>1</sup> Enhances Capacity to Meet Student Needs

## Diverse Professional Backgrounds and Team Approach Ensure Berlin Public Schools' Students Access the Behavioral Health Supports They Need

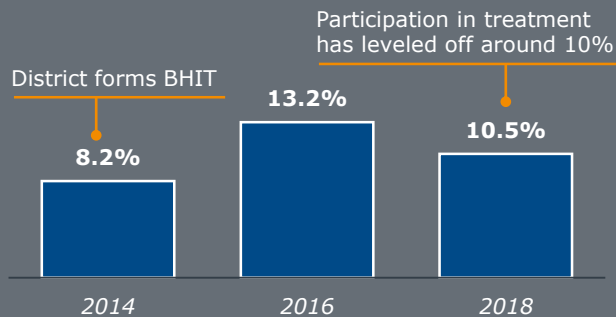
**15%** Of students **are typically reviewed** by the BHIT in a year

“Our Behavioral Health Intervention Team is a relatively large group **with lots of varied perspectives** that we find make it more likely that we can, using a collaborative process, latch on to a best way forward to help students succeed behaviorally.”

Bob Thompson, Program Manager,  
Office of Student Wellness

BERLIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Percentage of Students Receiving Treatment at Community-Based Behavioral Health Agency



For more best practices, see EAB's study "**Responding to Students of Concern: Best Practices for Behavioral Intervention Teams**" including:

- [Campus-Wide Basic Training Campaigns](#)
- [Role-Based Differentiated Behavioral Health Training](#)
- [Behavioral Intervention Team Training Models](#)
- [Running a Best-In-Class Behavior Intervention Team Meeting](#)

1) Behavioral Health Intervention Team.

# Developing a School-Based Trauma Intervention

## Clinical Support Helps Children Process Experience, Builds Coping Skills

### Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)

- **Developed by a team of clinician-researchers** from the RAND Corporation, UCLA<sup>1</sup>, Los Angeles USD<sup>2</sup>
- Clinical group and individual intervention **for grades 5-12**
- **Designed to reduce symptoms** of PTSD, depression, behavior problems
- **Uses cognitive-behavioral techniques** (e.g., relaxation, cognitive restructuring, exposure)
- Multiple clinical and randomized control trials showing impact
  - **42% reduction** in PTSD symptoms
  - **14% reduction** in behavior problems

### "Bounce Back" Program an Adaptation of CBITS for Elementary School Students



#### 10 Group Sessions

- 1 hour, once per week
- Focus on coping skills, feelings identification, relaxation exercises, social support, problem solving



#### 2-3 Individual Sessions

- Clinician helps each child develop a "My Story" trauma narrative



#### 1-3 Parent Sessions

- Provide strategies to reinforce skill building at home
- Child's trauma narrative shared with parent at end of program

1) University of California at Los Angeles.

2) Unified School District.

# District Offers Trauma Support in Every School

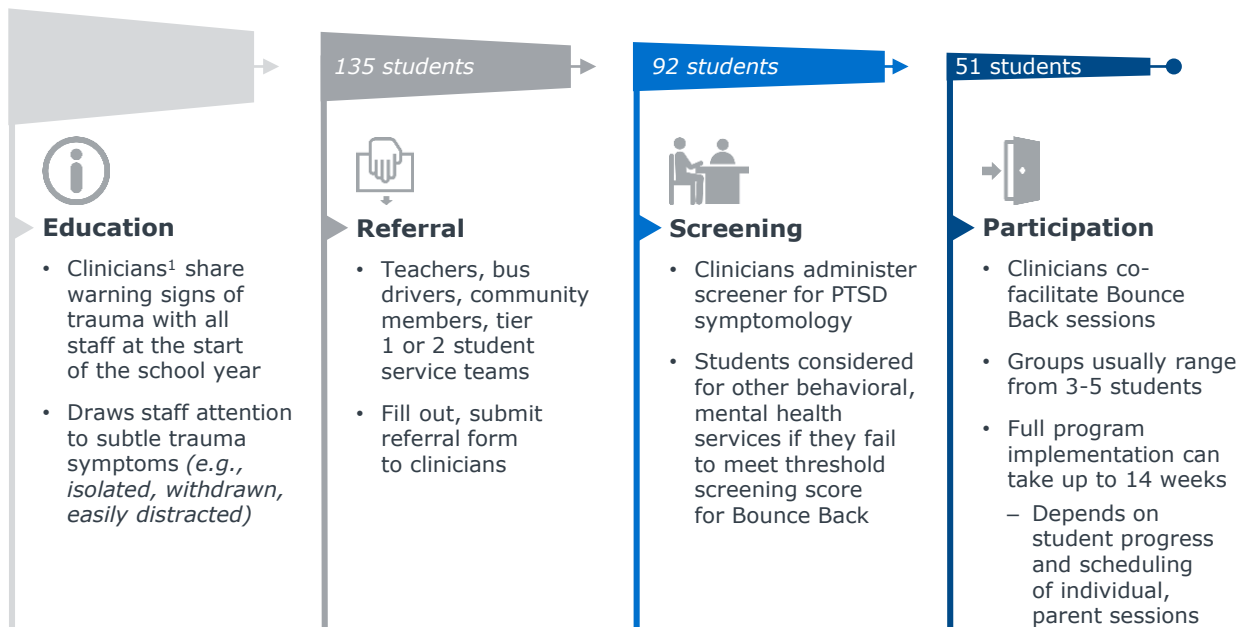
## Profiled Institution:

Champaign Community Unit 4 Schools, IL



## Key Components of Bounce Back Implementation at Champaign Unit 4 Schools

*Including Referral and Participation Data from Year 1 of Implementation*



1) School psychologists and social workers.



# Parents, Teachers Important Part of Student Recovery

## Help Extend Skill Building Outside of Bounce Back Sessions

### Parents



#### Initial Consent

- Schools address any parent apprehension via phone calls or in-person meetings
  - Clarify goals of the program, emphasize focus on skill building



#### Ongoing Participation

- Informal phone or e-mail exchanges to provide update on sessions (*e.g., skills being taught, student progress*)
- Attend at least one clinical session with the student



Find sample Bounce Back templates and resources in the Appendix



### Bounce Back Sessions

### Teachers



#### Weekly Updates

- E-mail sent to teachers of participating students detailing skill being covered that week
  - Provides strategies for skill reinforcement in the classroom



#### Transition Support

- Some students struggle to transition back to class after their session
  - Upon returning to class, student shares new skills, strategies they learned with their teacher
  - Incorporate reminders (*e.g., pictures on their desk*) to use strategies throughout the day

# Setting Students on the Right Path

## Bounce Back Students Show Significant Reduction in Trauma Symptoms

### Formal Program Evaluation Shows Immediate and Sustained Benefits

*Connecticut Department of Children and Families,  
Statewide CBITS and Bounce Back Evaluation Report*

**39%** **Reduction in PTSD symptoms**  
for children participating in  
Bounce Back program

### Program Participation and Follow-Up at *Champaign Community Unit 4 Schools*

**80**  
Total kids served  
in the Bounce Back  
program since 2016

**90%**  
Over 90 percent of Bounce  
Back students experienced  
reduction in PTSD symptoms



“Children who received Bounce Back **immediately demonstrated significantly greater improvements** in parent- and child-reported posttraumatic stress and child-reported anxiety symptoms over the 3-month intervention. [...]

The treatment group maintained or showed **continued gains in all symptom domains** over the 3-month follow-up period.”

*Langley et. al., "Bounce Back: Effectiveness  
of an Elementary School Based  
Intervention," 2015*



**Monitor student  
progress,** ongoing needs  
following intervention



Begin, continue other  
**school-based interventions**  
(e.g., check-in/check-out,  
skill building groups)



**Refer to external services**  
(e.g., social work, mental health)



# How to Maintain a Productive Learning Environment?

Some Behavioral Issues Remain Difficult to Address in the General Classroom

## Educators Struggle to Balance Needs of the Entire Classroom with Supporting Progress for Students with Persistent or Unsafe Behaviors



**1<sup>st</sup> grade student**

**Daily emotional outbursts**, often elopes or becomes violent toward school staff

**Chronically absent**, family experiencing homelessness



**3<sup>rd</sup> grade student**

**Easily frustrated**, repeatedly aggressive toward other students

**Reading on grade level**, making sufficient academic progress



**4<sup>th</sup> grade student**

**Brings box cutter to school**, triggers zero-tolerance suspension

**No prior history of behavioral issues**, parent appeals decision



### Key District Challenges

*How can we support this student while determining appropriate long-term service needs (e.g., behavioral, special education, wraparound)?*

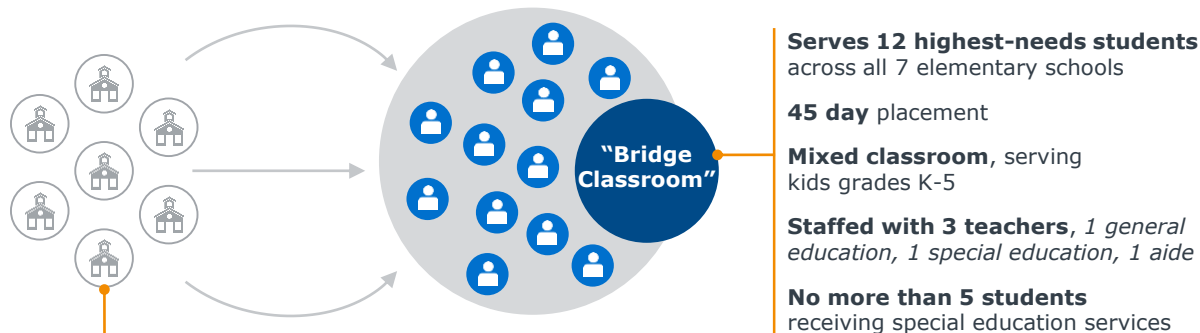
*How can we provide this student with the strategies they need to preserve a safe and productive learning environment?*

*How can we maintain academic instruction while working to prevent future behavioral issues?*

# Targeted Alternative Behavior Support Program

## Short-Term Placement Creates Space to Effectively Address Hardest Cases

### “Bridge Classroom” Allows Staff to Maintain Academic Instruction While Assessing Persistent, Challenging Behavioral Issues



#### Criteria for inclusion:

- Behavioral issue must be recurring (*i.e., placement can not be in response to a single high-needs incident*)
- All alternative interventions must be exhausted
- Can be an alternative to the few zero-tolerance discipline infractions

#### Profiled Institution:

Hamilton County Schools, TN





# Highly Structured, Therapeutic Classroom Setting

“Bridge Classroom” Focuses on Social-Emotional Skill Building



## Intensive Behavior Support



**Behavior intervention plan** created for each student when entering the program

- Targets 1-2 specific, measurable goals (*e.g., reduction in frequency of physically aggressive outbursts*)



Day begins with one hour of intensive, **explicit social-emotional skill instruction**



**Focus on therapeutic interventions** (*e.g., journaling, martial arts, puppetry, modeling clay*) while maintaining academic instruction



**Regular classroom teacher** comes once per week for 30-60 minute observations

## Strategic Reintegration

**Program start:** student is in bridge classroom full-time, attends lunch and some specials in general education setting

**Week 3-4:** student starts reintegrating into general classroom environment

- Check to see if skills are transferring, which strategies the student is using successfully

**By program end:** student is integrated back into regular classroom for the full day

- Several check-in points scheduled throughout the day to monitor transition

**Each student receives a “success kit”** to bring home and back into regular classroom

- Outlines interventions that worked best for each child (*e.g., adaptive seating, noise-canceling headphones*)
- Staff train regular classroom teacher on implementation, monitoring as needed

## Providing the Tools For Success



We have one student who is supposed to leave in 2 weeks, and he has really done wonderfully. He's very teachable, and he's out into the regular classroom now. When he's getting overwhelmed he gets out his noise-canceling headphones, he goes to his peace corner, he gets out his therapeutic journal and starts writing, he tells the teacher when he needs to leave the classroom.

That's what we're asking him. We're not asking him not to have feelings, we're not asking him not to get mad or frustrated, **we're just asking him to have an appropriate response when he is frustrated so that he's not hurting himself or others.**

**Since coming to the Bridge classroom he has had one incident in seven weeks' time versus about one a day.** So he's made a lot of progress, and we are super proud of him."

Jennifer Whalen, Behavior Specialist

HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

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# Archived Webconferences

Available On Demand at [eab.com](http://eab.com)

## Narrowing the Third Grade Reading Gap



Mitigate Summer Slide with Engaging Summer Programming

Embracing the Science of Reading

Develop and Implement Schoolwide Expertise in Science-Based Reading Instruction

Redesign Small Group Instruction to Target Student Skill Deficits

## Closing the College Access Gap



Creating a Culture of High Expectations and Building Student Confidence

Supporting More Informed Post-Secondary Choices

Removing Non-Academic Barriers to Application and Matriculation

## Meeting the Career Readiness Imperative



Strategies for Integrating and Scaling Early Career Exposure

Boosting the Quality and Frequency of Career Decision Support

Aiding Transitions to Careers through Professional Skill Development

## District Communications and Safety Collaborative



Lessons to Improve Your District's Image and Strengthen Community Relationships

## Teacher Recruitment Collaborative



Ideas and Tools for Improving the Recruitment and Hiring of Teachers in K-12 Districts



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