

PBIS THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL LENS

by

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The purpose of this study is to understand the lack of behavioral support in schools in the Czech Republic and design a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) framework that best fits their needs, with contextual fit in mind. Although there is strong evidence for the effectiveness of PBIS in the United States, research on the effectiveness of PBIS in other countries, particularly the Czech Republic, is limited. PBIS is so successful in the United States because of its contextual fit (OSEP National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2018). PBIS consists of three tiers within the framework: Tier One, which is for all students, Tier Two, which includes targeted practices for students who need support past Tier One, and Tier Three, which provides intensive and individualized practices for students who need support beyond Tiers One and Two (Center on PBIS, 2023).

PBIS can be adapted to fit a school and their unique context. Designing a PBIS framework for the Czech Republic needs significant input from all parties involved to fully understand their needs. Three surveys targeting staff, administration, and parents/guardians were distributed, all at four primary schools in Prague who were currently in the beginning stages of implementation of PBIS. The purpose of the surveys was to gain a better understanding of where they currently are in the implementation process, along with what challenges they are facing. The findings from these surveys will help design a PBIS framework that best fits the needs of Czech primary schools with similar contextual factors, helping them maintain and expand PBIS across the Czech Republic.

## **Method**

This survey study was designed to understand the challenges with PBIS implementation in the Czech Republic in order to create a better contextual fit. Surveys were sent out to gather information, including questions to assess data both qualitatively and quantitatively. Three

surveys were created: one for parents/guardians, one for staff, and one for administration. The surveys were translated by a translator, then checked for accurate representation of meaning by a native speaker and PBIS leader in country. Surveys were developed and distributed via Qualtrics.

### *Setting*

Through a partnership with COSIV (Czech Professional Society for Inclusive Education) and Prague City Schools, four primary schools that are currently in the beginning stages of implementation of PBIS were surveyed. Prague is the capital and largest city in the Czech Republic. Prague is home to more than 1.3 Czechs. Primary schools in the Czech Republic are for students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades (ages 6 to 10). In the Czech Republic, teaching behavioral expectations is commonly regarded as solely the parent's responsibility. Although behavior is not typically taught in schools, students receive grades for their behavior, which can affect what secondary school they can attend (general or vocational) due to entrance requirements, meaning that a behavior in primary grades can affect a child's future and career path.

### *Participants*

Across the three surveys, there were 135 respondents—five administrators, 74 parents/guardians, and 56 teachers, all associated with Prague City Schools.

### *Materials*

The survey was created and distributed electronically via Qualtrics. Respondents were sent a link to the survey via email by their school administrator. The survey was translated and reviewed by multiple native Czech speakers, including COSIV employees.

### **Data Collection**

Three different surveys were created for this research: one for administrators, one for staff, and one for parents/guardians. Each survey had scale, open response, and multiple-choice

questions. Surveys were sent from COSIV to school administrators, who then distributed the survey link to teachers and parents/guardians. Respondents had approximately one month to complete the survey.

*Administrator Survey.* The administrator survey contained six questions: two Likert scale questions and four open-ended questions. Administrators were asked questions about the effects of PBIS in their schools, teacher and parent support, positive results of PBIS, and barriers they have encountered with the implementation process.

*Parent/Guardian Survey.* The parent/guardian survey contained nine questions: five Likert scale questions, three yes/no questions, and one open-ended question. Parents/guardians were asked questions about their understanding of PBIS, changes they have seen within their child since PBIS has been implemented, their child's mental health, and what changes they think could help with the implementation process.

*Staff Survey.* The staff survey contained ten questions: five scale questions, three open ended questions, and two multiple-choice questions. Staff were asked questions about their feelings about PBIS, results with their students, buy-in, barriers to PBIS implementation, and ways to motivate staff members to attend PBIS training.

## **Results**

### *Administration Results*

Overall, administration had a mostly positive outlook on PBIS. When asked how much they agreed with the following statements: (1) PBIS has had a positive impact on my school and (2) We recommend that teachers implement PBIS, or positive behavior support, in all school subjects, all administrators fully agreed with the statement. However, when asked how much they agreed with the statement "teachers are motivated to cooperate in the long-term

implementation of PBIS,” most administrators felt either neutral or that they partially agree. Administrators were then given a scale of 1-10. Their results are shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Administration 1-10 Scale Questions (English Translation)*

	Range	M
On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do educators support the implementation of PBIS at school?	4 - 8	5.75
On a scale of 1 to 10, how supportive are parents of implementing PBIS at school?	1 - 5	3.25
On a scale of 1 to 10, how has morale improved in your school?	4 - 7	5.75
On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent have you actually implemented the principles of PBIS?	6 - 9	6.75

*Note:* 1 being none at all, 10 being full support/all

Administrators were then asked a series of open-ended questions to gain a deeper understanding of how the PBIS implementation process was going. The first open-ended question asked what would motivate them to cooperate in the long-term implementation of PBIS at their school. Most responses stated they are motivated enough and do not need further motivation or the effort to create a better environment for their students is enough. The next question asked if they recommended PBIS training for their teachers. One respondent said no, while the others said yes (n=4). The next open-ended question asked what barriers they have encountered with PBIS implementation. Most respondents cited teacher buy-in as a large barrier in the implementation process. One administrator said that they need to “arouse more interest of

educators” and another said, “the only problem is the desire and willingness of the teachers to get involved.” The final open-ended question asked what positives they have seen as a result of PBIS. Most respondents agreed that PBIS has helped them to create a unified set of rules for the school, along with a more welcoming and safer environment.

*Parent/Guardian Results*

When asked on a scale of 1-10 (1 being not familiar at all and 10 being extremely familiar), how familiar parents are with PBIS, the average score was 3.02, indicating most responses were not very familiar. When asked on a scale of 1-10 (1 being not involved at all and 10 being extremely involved), how involved parents are with PBIS implementation, the average score was 2.31, indicating parents are not involved much in PBIS implementation. When asked how much they agreed with the following statements: (1) “I am satisfied with the behavior support changes that are/have been implemented at my child's school” and (2) “my child has expressed that he likes the new behavior support processes/procedures,” most parents responded that they were neutral/did not have a strong opinion. Parents’ responses to Likert scale questions are included in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Parent/Guardian Likert Scale Questions (English Translation)*

	Range	M
“I have noticed an improvement in mental health or psychologically in my child.”	1 - 5	3.08

“My child can get mental health support if needed.”	1 - 5	3.75
“Mental health support is considered one of the priorities at the school.”	1 - 5	3.41

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*Note:* 1- I do not agree at all; 2- I partially disagree; 3- neutral; 4- I partially agree; 5- I totally agree

When asked an open-ended question about what positives they have seen with PBIS, most parents felt that they could not see any because they are unfamiliar with PBIS. In response to this question, one parent said, “I have no idea what PBIS is - I don't even know that something like this is happening at school.” Another parent responded, “None - I don't know what the school is doing under this program, no one informed us, not even in class meetings.” Parents were also asked an open-ended question about what changes they think should be made to PBIS implementation. Most parents echoed similar sentiments to the previous question, saying that they had no idea what PBIS was. One parent even said, “Since I only found out about PBIS now, I am surprised. I found two mentions on the school website, but no one ever informed us.”

*Staff Survey*

Staff were first asked to rate a series of statements on a Likert scale. Their responses are included in Table 3.

**Table 3**

***Staff Likert Scale Questions (English Translation)***

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“The management of our school supports the implementation of PBIS.”	1 - 5	4.72
“The time it takes to phase in PBIS is manageable for me.”	2 - 5	4.17
“My students have a good understanding of the expectations (or values) of the school.”	2 - 5	3.87
“My students understand well how to behave in the classroom.”	2 - 5	4.10
“I would recommend introducing some PBIS principles to other teachers.”	2 - 5	4.11

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*Note:* 1- I do not agree at all; 2- I partially disagree; 3- neutral; 4- I partially agree; 5- I totally agree

Staff members were then asked questions on a scale of 1-10. First, they were asked how much they are trying to implement PBIS. The mean of the responses was 7.5. They were also asked how well students respond to PBIS school-wide values. The mean of the responses was 6.48. Next, they estimated that approximately 60% of staff members work to collaborate to implement PBIS. Most respondents reported that they are willing to spend 5-20 minutes to implementing school wide PBIS values. When asked an open-ended question about what would encourage them to attend PBIS trainings, the responses were varied. When asked what barriers there are to implementing PBIS, many staff members responded that staff reluctance and inconsistency is the biggest barrier, along with a high absenteeism in students. Positives that staff members reported as a result of PBIS include better relationships between students and teachers, improved student behavior, and consistent rules. Most respondents reported that there is a PBIS team at their school and that it is very powerful.



## Discussion

Each survey provided different insights as to what aspects of PBIS implementation were going well and what aspects needed more support or adjustment. With the administration survey, it seems that administrators have a positive outlook on PBIS, but struggle to motivate staff members and gain community (i.e., staff, parents) support. Many parents and teachers reported that they have a lack of understanding on PBIS. Training and educating the community is a crucial aspect of PBIS implementation and will help with buy-in and support (Sugai & Horner, 2009). Educating the community on the many benefits of PBIS, such as increased academic performance, improved social-emotional wellbeing, and reduced office discipline referrals will help the community to understand the benefits of implementing PBIS (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

Upon reviewing the parent survey results, it is evident that parents have not been included in the implementation process. According to Sheridan et al. (2019), including families' perspectives, values and voices within the development and implementation of the PBIS framework leads to a greater contextual fit and increased community support. By involving parents as critical partners in PBIS implementation, communication and collaboration are promoted, increasing the success of the framework.

Finally, staff survey results show a significant lack of unity and consistency amongst staff with PBIS. Again, informing staff members on the benefits of PBIS may help increase teacher buy-in. Not only does PBIS improve student outcomes, it also is beneficial to teachers, such as decreasing student absenteeism and reducing teacher burnout (Ross et al., 2012).

### *Implications & Suggestions for Future Research*

Upon review of the survey results, it is evident that PBIS implementation is improving the school climate in Prague City Schools, but several areas need to be improved to maximize

success. Parents must be educated on PBIS and included as a critical partner. Teaching parents about PBIS and regarding them as critical partners will not only allow for more transparency between school and home, but it will also allow for more consistency and communication about PBIS. Additionally, teachers must be trained more explicitly on the benefits of PBIS and the importance of school-wide consistency. Training teachers more thoroughly on PBIS will allow for more teacher buy-in and greater consistency with PBIS expectations across the school. Also, administration must work to identify successful reinforcements for teachers and plan for further stages of PBIS implementation. Offering highly desired reinforcers for teachers for PBIS training will help teachers to learn more about PBIS, while also maintaining a more positive outlook on the framework. Contextual factors that affect the research include the Czech culture typically maintaining a separation between school and home. While this is a cultural norm, the benefits of open communication between staff members and families vastly outweigh the custom.

For further research on this topic, a survey could be distributed to students at the same focus schools to understand student perspective on PBIS. Staff and parents should be continuously surveyed to see if buy-in, consistency, and education increases. Additionally, these schools should be followed as they continue with the implementation process to ensure that Tier One provides a solid foundation for the implementation of Tier Two and eventually Tier Three of the PBIS framework.

### *Conclusion*

The purpose of this survey study was to understand the current state of PBIS implementation in Prague City Schools. Specifically, the focus was to understand the challenges with PBIS implementation in order to create a better contextual fit. Surveys were sent out to gather the information, including questions to assess data both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Three surveys were created: one for parents/guardians, one for staff, and one for administration.

Surveys included numerical scales, Likert scales, yes/no questions, and open-ended questions.

Data were analyzed to see patterns, relationships, and commonalities within the three surveys.

Findings from the survey exhibit a lack of education within parents and staff members, resulting in a deficiency in teacher buy-in and family support. With an increased emphasis on education

and communication, the implementation of school wide PBIS can function with more uniformity across the school, increasing outcomes across the board, leading to the long-term success of

PBIS.

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