



# Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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**To:** District 97 Board of Education; Dr. Kelley, Superintendent

**From:** Dr. Felicia Starks-Turner, Senior Director of Student and Administrative Services  
Dr. Carrie Kamm, Senior Director of Equity

**RE:** MTSS-Behavior Action Plan and Request for Job Posting for Middle School Culture & Climate Coach and Elementary Culture & Climate Coaches

**Date:** May 14, 2019

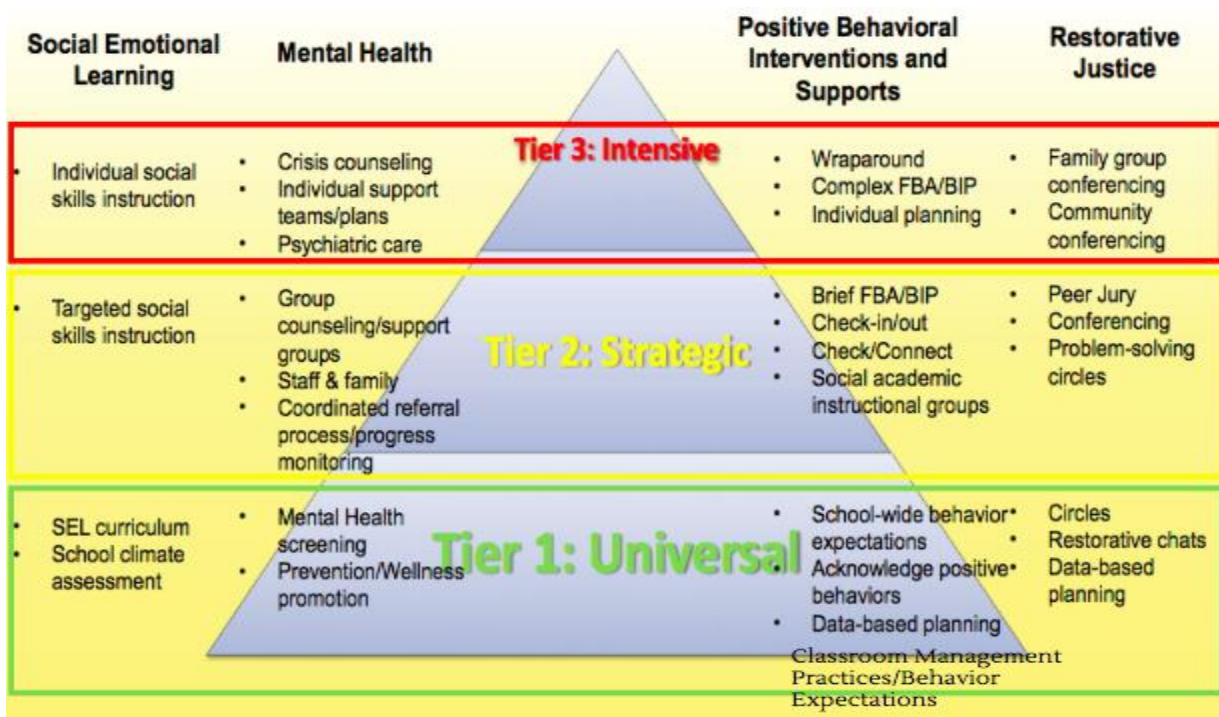
**Type of Report:** Informational

## Introduction

In an effort to create a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child, District 97 is engaged in multiple initiatives to support a positive culture and integrated systems of support at each of our schools. By having defined and integrated systems that address systems and practices at the district, school, and classroom level, our staff will be able to strategically support the social-emotional and behavioral needs of each student. At the same time we are working to strengthen our systems of support, we are also working to address the racial disproportionality and disproportionality of students with disabilities who experience exclusionary discipline. Our initiatives that support social-emotional learning, Positive Behavior Interventions (PBIS) and Supports, restorative practices, and trauma-informed care are commonly referred to as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support-Behavior, or MTSS-B. The purpose of this report is to share our MTSS-B multi-year action plan and request that the Board of Education permit us to post for the following positions that will support implementation of the action plan: a second Middle School Culture and Climate Coach and two Elementary Culture and Climate Coaches.

## Overview of MTSS-B

MTSS-B is comprised by social-emotional learning (SEL), mental health supports, PBIS, and restorative practices. The visual below shows how each of these is organized around tiered levels of support. Tier 1 are universal supports that all student have access to, Tier 2 supports are for those students are in need of additional support beyond Tier 1, and Tier 3 supports are for students who are in need of more intensive intervention.



This year, the district has continued to support the development of each of these areas by providing targeted professional development, such as trauma-informed care practices for administrative leadership and social workers, PBIS Tier 1 training for our new Middle School Culture and Climate teams, providing school-level coaching on restorative practice action plans, and conducting Lunch and Learn sessions with students to understand school culture and climate efforts from their perspective. With all of our efforts there is still critical work to do strengthen our systems and align our efforts.

A district committee has been revising the Effective Student Behavior Handbook. Although it has not yet been finalized, it will move us away from zero-tolerance policies and exclusionary practices toward proactive approaches that focus on building student and staff skills and competencies, which, in turn, lead to greater productivity and success. The Effective Student Behavior Handbook moves us from a singular focus on safety to a comprehensive focus on creating the conditions that make every classroom and every school a great place to learn and grow. It embodies our belief as a school district that children learn by pushing and testing limits, getting feedback about their behavioral choices and making the changes needed to become contributing members of a community of learners.

### MTSS-B Action Planning Process

In June of 2018, ISBE cited District 97 for disproportionately excluding African-American students and students with IEPs from school due to out of school suspensions. Due to this citation, we had an opportunity to attend Loyola University Chicago's School Discipline Reform certificate program for reduced tuition. Participating in this program gave us access to experts in the areas of PBIS, school law, and restorative practices. The program culmination was designing a multi-year action plan for building on, and strengthening, our MTSS-B systems, structures, and practices.

As part of this program, we conducted a root cause analysis by reviewing our current suspension data and office discipline referral data to better understand why our African-American students and students with IEPs are experiencing exclusionary discipline at rates higher than other students. One root cause that has been identified is the lack of common expectations and understanding of Tier 1 supports and practices. Tier 1 supports, when implemented with fidelity, can be effective in preventing problem behavior and enhancing social and emotional skills for the majority of students (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, Leaf, 2012). A solid Tier 1 system is understood as a prerequisite for implementing other tiers. We followed up our root cause analysis with a [needs assessment](#) given to our school administrators to identify Tier 1 classroom practices that they saw as areas of need in terms of clearer expectations and professional learning. Classroom expectations/rules, classroom procedures/routines, and specific positive feedback were identified as areas to prioritize for professional learning and support.

District 97 is just beginning to provide professional learning on Tier 1 student response strategies, such as remind and redirect. Our PBIS Tier 1 foundation needs to be strengthened and this needs to be addressed through a commitment to professional learning and codified expectations on building positive teacher-student relationships, responding to student behavior, and integrating restorative practices. We also acknowledge PBIS school teams have not yet had specific training on how to use data to examine their own root causes related to racial/IEP disproportionality in discipline referrals and suspensions.

Our action plan (shared as a separate document) outlines our professional learning, progress monitoring, and data analysis plans for PBIS and restorative practice efforts. We acknowledge that moving away from more punitive discipline approaches, towards more restorative ones that emphasize an educative and holistic approach will require many learning opportunities for our staff, as well as for our families. This will require a multi-year plan and with job-embedded coaching and supports.

## **Staffing Requests**

At the Board of Education meeting on February 26, 2019, the district requested an additional Middle School Culture and Climate Coach and two Elementary Culture and Climate coaches. The Board of Education approved the budget for these roles, but requested a review of our action plan to inform the decision to approve the job postings. As we have moved toward a more job-embedded professional learning model (coaching at the individual teacher and team level), our instructional coaches have played a critical role in building the knowledge and skills of our staff as they have implemented new curriculum. We also believe that this same level of support for job-embedded learning is needed as we support teachers to embed social-emotional learning skills into daily instruction, apply Tier 1 restorative practices into their community building strategies and approach to discipline, and develop their knowledge and expertise in Tier 1 classroom practices and trauma-informed care. These positions align to our Racial and Educational Equity Policy-Implementation section C (Eliminating Discipline Disproportionality). In order to work towards eliminating discipline disproportionality, we need coaches who understand institutional and systemic barriers that exist at the school and classroom level that contribute to this disproportionality, can support teachers to create a culturally responsive approach to

classroom management that includes PBIS Tier 1 classroom practices, and can provide direct coaching and support to our PBIS/culture and climate school teams as they design solutions to address student behavioral needs and analyze school level data . We request that the Board of Education permit the district to post for these positions so that we can provide critical job-embedded supports for our teachers.