The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (6th Grade – Adult)

Understand and manage one's emotions

		CASEL Domain	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-Adult
1		Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of complex graded emotions in self and others.	Learners will be able to recognize and label a variety of graded emotions in self and others as they occur and evolve over time.	Learners will be able to identify how the process of recognizing and labeling emotions informs thinking and influences relationships.
2		Self-Management	Learners will be able to express their emotions in an appropriate and respectful manner using a variety of modalities (e.g., verbal and nonverbal).	Learners will be able to express their emotions in an appropriate and respectful manner in different environments, with different audiences, using a variety of modalities (e.g., verbal and nonverbal).	Learners will be able to understand and explain how their expression of emotions can influence how others respond to them.
3		Self-Management	Learners will be able to identify what triggers a strong emotion and apply an appropriate calming or coping strategy to defuse the emotional trigger.	Learners will be able to consistently use appropriate calming and coping strategies when dealing with strong emotions.	Learners will be able to predict situations that will cause strong emotions, and plan and prepare to manage those emotions.
4		Focus Attention	Learners will be able to independently use organizational skills and strategies to focus attention in order to work toward short-term personal and academic goals.	Learners will be able to independently use organizational skills and strategies to focus attention by working toward long-term personal and academic goals.	Learners will employ focusing skills independently and understand their importance in achieving important goals in times of adversity.
5		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to provide support and encouragement to others through perspective taking, empathy, and appreciation for diversity.	Learners will be able to demonstrate empathy to others who have different views and beliefs.	Learners will be able to demonstrate connectedness, through empathy and engagement to their communities.
6		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to recognize expressions of empathy in society and communities.	Learners will be able to evaluate verbal, physical, and environmental cues to predict and respond to the emotions of others.	Learners will be able to evaluate verbal, physical, social, cultural, and environmental cues to predict and respond to the emotions of others.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

SELF-CONCEPT (6th Grade - Adult)					
Develop positive self-identity and recognize self as a lifelong learner					
No.		CASEL Domain	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-Adult
7		Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to use optimism and a "growth mind set" to recognize strengths in self in order to describe and prioritize personal skills and interests they want to develop.	Learners will be able to set priorities to build personal strengths, grow in their learning, recognize barriers, and employ solutions.	Learners will be able to maintain a "growth mind set" about their abilities to succeed and grow and will persist through challenges.
8		Self-Awareness	Learners will be able to self-reflect on their values and beliefs and how their behaviors relate to those values and beliefs.	Learners will be able to use self-reflection to determine if their behavior is reflective of their personal values and modify behavior to match their beliefs.	Learners will be able to use self-reflection to assess their behavior for authenticity, honesty, and respect and articulate how this impacts their greater community.
9		Self-Awareness Social-Awareness	Learners will be able to identify how family and culture impact their thoughts and actions.	Learners will be able to reflect on their own beliefs relative to different familial and societal norms.	Learners will be able to explain how their beliefs can impact their growth and success, and advocate for their beliefs.
10		Self-Management	Learners will be able to consistently set attainable, realistic goals, and persist until their goals are achieved.	Learners will be able to reflect on the progress of personal goals in order to adjust action steps and time frames as necessary.	Learners will be able to set short- and long-term group goals, and create a plan to execute those goals. They will be able to analyze progress and collaborate to adjust goals when needed.
11		Self-Awareness Self-Management	Learners will be able to identify successes and challenges, and how they can learn from them.	Learners will be able to recognize barriers to succeeding and identify supports to help themselves.	Learners will be able to demonstrate perseverance when dealing with challenges and adversity.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

		SOCIAL COMPETENCE (6th Grade - Adult)			
Establish and maintain positive relationships by respecting others, practicing social skills, and making responsible choices while recognizing and connecting to the community at large				
No.		CASEL Domain	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-Adult
12		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to show respect for other people's perspectives.	Learners will be able to identify positive ways to express understanding of differing perspectives.	Learners will be able to demonstrate conversational skills to determine the perspective of others.
13		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to reflect how cross-cultural experiences can influence their ability to build positive relationships.	Learners will be able to support the rights of individuals to reflect their family, culture, and community within the school setting.	Learners will be able to support the rights of all individuals to reflect their family, culture, and community in society.
14		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to identify discrimination of individuals and groups based upon perceived differences.	Learners will be able to assess for personal bias and evaluate strategies to oppose stereotyping.	Learners will be able to develop ethical arguments from a variety of ethical positions to evaluate societal norms.
15		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to recognize the emotional, physical, social, and other costs of negative relationships.	Learners will be able to independently seek and sustain positive, supportive relationships.	Learners will be able to maintain positive relationships and use effective strategies (e.g., boundary setting, stating your needs, and recognizing warning signs) to avoid negative relationships.
16		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to use active listening and assertive, clear communication when expressing thoughts and ideas.	Learners will be able to use assertive communication, including refusals, to get their needs met without negatively impacting others.	Learners will be able to use assertive communication, including refusals, in a variety of settings and with a variety of audiences to get their needs met, without negatively impacting others.
17		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to recognize and respond appropriately to constructive feedback.	Learners will be able to accept constructive feedback.	Learners will be able to evaluate constructive feedback and provide constructive feedback when needed.

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program and its Alignment with Wisconsin's Social Emotional Competencies

SOCIAL COMPETENCE (6th Grade - Adult)					
18		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to work cooperatively and productively in a group and overcome setbacks and disagreements.	Learners will be able to formulate group goals and work through an agreed upon plan.	Learners will be able to recognize how each group member's skills contribute toward group goals.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE (6th Grade – Adult continued)					
Establish and maintain positive relationships by respecting others, practicing social skills, and making responsible choices while recognizing and connecting to the community at large					
No.		CASEL Domain	6th-8th	9th-10th	11th-Adult
19		Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to apply negotiation skills and conflict resolution skills to resolve differences.	Learners will be able to self-reflect on their role in a conflict to inform their behavior in the future.	Learners will be able to consistently resolve inter-personal conflicts across settings (e.g., school, work, community, and personal relationships).
20		Decision Making	Learners will be able to generate a variety of solutions and outcomes to a problem with consideration of well-being for oneself and others.	Learners will be able to apply steps of systemic decision making with consideration of well-being for oneself and others.	Learners will be able to consider a variety of factors (e.g., ethical, safety, and societal factors) in order to make decisions that promote productive social and work relations.
21		Social Awareness	Learners will be able to identify how social norms for behavior vary across different settings and within different cultures.	Learners will be able to identify the purpose of social norms for behavior across situations and how these norms are influenced by public opinion.	Learners will be able to evaluate the ways in which public opinion can be used to influence and shape public policy.
22		Decision Making Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to identify the impact of their decisions on personal safety and relationships.	Learners will be able to use negotiation and refusal skills to resist unwanted pressures and maintain personal health and safety.	Learners will be able to evaluate factors that impact personal and community health and safety, and apply appropriate preventative and protective strategies (e.g., health and wellness, sleep, healthy relationships).

SOCIAL COMPETENCE (6th Grade – Adult continued)					
23		Social Awareness Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to advocate for themselves.	Learners will be able to advocate for their needs and the needs of others by utilizing educational and community support networks.	Learners will be able generate positive choices and proactively advocate for themselves and others across settings (e.g., school, community, work, and personal relationships).
24		Decision Making Social Awareness Relationship Skills	Learners will be able to, with adult guidance, create an action plan that addresses a need in the classroom, school, or community.	Learners will be able to independently create an action plan that addresses real needs in the classroom, school, and community.	Learners will be able to analyze opportunities to improve their community and engage in civic activities to influence issues impacting various communities.

The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u>: Rationale, Research, Competencies, and Implementation Practices

Submitted by Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D., NCSP

<u>Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning Model</u>

Project ACHIEVE's <u>Behavioral Instruction and Intervention (PBSS/SEL) Component</u> focuses on implementing a comprehensive positive behavioral support and social-emotional learning system within a school. This component is guided by Project ACHIEVE's evidence-based Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning model (PBSS/SEL).

Many districts and schools are particularly interested in this multi-tiered school-wide model to address the following issues:

- School safety and prevention,
- Positive school culture and classroom climate,
- Classroom discipline and management,
- Student engagement and self-management,
- Teasing, taunting, and bullying,
- Harassment, hazing, and physical aggression,
- Office discipline referrals and suspensions/expulsions,
- Disproportionality and effective approaches to replace zero tolerance policies,
- Strategic and intensive/crisis management services, supports, strategies, and interventions
    for behaviorally challenging and unresponsive students, and
- Preventing and responding to students' mental health status and needs.

Implementation here starts by emphasizing (a) effective school discipline, classroom management, and student self-management processes and strategies; that extend to (b) the development of strategic social, emotional, and behavioral interventions for challenging and non-responsive students; and that (c) utilize intensive and crisis management approaches for the most seriously-involved students—approaches that include comprehensive school-based mental health systems of services, supports, strategies, and programs (see Appendix B for the PBSS/SEL Implementation Evaluation protocol).

Overall, the PBSS/SEL model uses a whole-school approach that includes students, staff, administration, and parents to teach and reinforce (a) students' interpersonal, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills and interactions; (b) establish positive, safe, supportive, and consistent school climates and settings; and (c) build school and district capacity such that the entire process becomes an inherent part of the district and school's strategic and continuous improvement process.

Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning (PBSS/SEL) Goals

While the ultimate goal of Project ACHIEVE's PBSS/SEL model is the development of sustained and independent social, emotional, and behavioral competence and self-management for all students, there are a number of complementary student, staff, and school goals.

In total, they involve the following:

Student Goals:

Student social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management as demonstrated by:

- High levels of effective interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills and behaviors by all students;

- High levels of critical thinking, reasoning, and social-emotional application skills and behaviors by all students; and

- High levels of academic engagement and academic achievement for all students.

Staff Goals:

- High levels of effective instruction and classroom management across all teachers and instructional support staff; and

- High levels of teacher knowledge, skill, and confidence relative to analyzing why students are academically and behaviorally underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful, and to implementing strategic or intensive academic or behavioral instruction or intervention to address their needs.

School Goals:

- High levels of positive school and classroom climate, and low levels of school and classroom discipline problems that disrupt the classroom and/or require office discipline referrals, school suspensions or expulsions, or placements in alternative schools or settings;

- High levels of the consultative resources and capacity needed to provide functional assessment leading to strategic and intensive instructional and intervention services, supports, strategies, and programs to academically and behaviorally underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful students;

- High levels of parent and community outreach and involvement in areas and activities that support students' academic and social, emotional, and behavioral learning, mastery, and proficiency; and, ultimately,

- High levels of student success that result in high school graduation and post-secondary school success.

Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning (PBSS/SEL) Components

There are five critical components in Project ACHIEVE's PBSS/SEL that facilitate school discipline, classroom management, and students' social, emotional, and behavioral self-management (see Figure 1 below; Knoff, 2012):

- Positive School and Classroom Climate, and Staff and Peer Relationships;
- Explicit Prosocial Behavioral Expectations in the classrooms and common school areas and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skill Instruction;
- Student Motivation and Accountability
- Consistency relative to the implementation of all of the above components; and
- The Application of the above to all school settings and all peer interactions (including those that prevent teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression)

These components are briefly described below. The implementation of these components is typically guided by the School Discipline or PBSS Committee comprised of teacher representatives from every grade level, as well as others representing the different instructional support groups in the school, related services and special education personnel, the administration, and selected others.
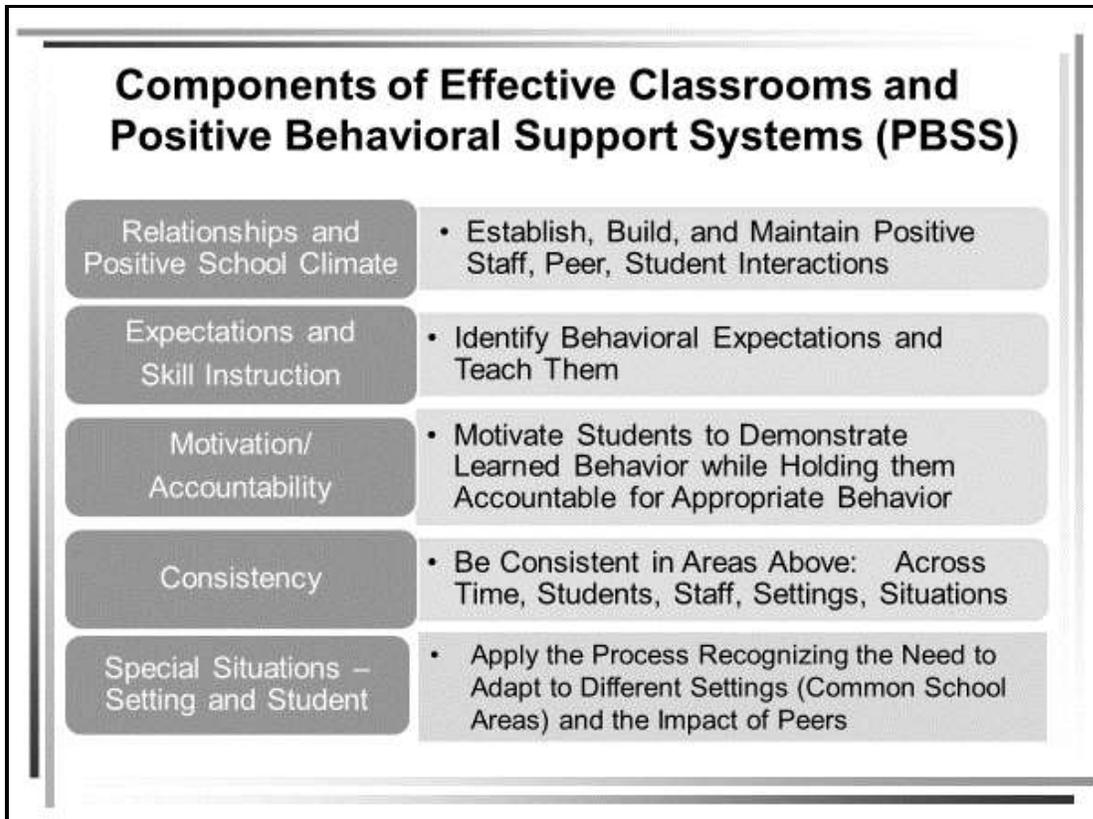
Figure 1. Source: Project ACHIEVE Press, 2011.

Component 1: Positive School and Classroom Climate, and Staff and Peer Relationships

If anyone has lived in or experienced a toxic environment—at home, in the workplace, at school—then you know the impact of climate on learning, behavior, attitudes, social interactions, and your own mental health. Many times, these environments exist because of the relationships within them.

Effective schools work consciously, planfully, and on an on-going basis to develop, reinforce, and sustain positive and productive relationships so that their cross-school and in-classroom climates mirror these relationships.

Critically, however, these relationships include the following: Students to Students, Students to Staff, Staff to Staff, Students to Parents, and Staff to Parents.

But functionally, the collaboration required involves training, implementation, and reinforcement. For example, students need to learn the social and interactional skills needed to build positive relationships with others, and the peer group has to "buy into" the process.

Similarly, teachers need to recognize the importance of committing to effective communication, collaboration, and collegial consultation. But, they also need to have the skills to accomplish these. . . in good times and bad.

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Component 2: Explicit Prosocial Behavioral Expectations and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills Instruction

Students—from preschool through high school—need to know the explicit social, emotional, and behavioral expectations in the classrooms and across the common areas of the school. These expectations need to be communicated as "what they need to do," rather than "what they do not need to do." More specifically, teachers and administrators need to teach students to (a) walk down the hallway, rather than not run; (b) raise your hand and wait to be called on, rather than don't blurt out answers; (c) accept a consequence, rather than don't roll your eyes and give me attitude.

In addition, student expectations need to be behaviorally specific. It is not instructionally helpful to talk to students in constructs—telling students that they need to be "Respectful, Responsible, Polite, Safe, and Trustworthy." This is because each of these constructs involve a wide range of behaviors, and students do not necessarily know which behaviors different adults want at any particular point in time.

Thus, we need to describe exactly what we want the students to do (e.g., in the hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, and on the bus). And we teach students specific behaviors, rather than constructs (e.g., "Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible").

Said a different way: You can't teach a behavioral construct; we need to teach the behaviors that **represent** the construct.

But we also must **teach** students the social, emotional, and behavioral skills we expect. This instruction is exactly the same as when we teach a football team, an orchestra, a drama club, or an academic task. Specifically, we need to teach the skills and their steps, demonstrate them, give students opportunities to practice and receive feedback, and then apply their new skills to "real-world" situations.

This all means that we need to communicate our behavioral expectations to students, and then teach them. Functionally, this means that our schools need to consciously and explicitly set aside time for social skills instruction (see below), and then embed the application of this instruction into their classrooms and group activities—for example, during cooperative and project-based instruction.

A crucial "anchor" to this component is a preschool through high school social skills curriculum that is taught to all students in their general education classrooms. The ultimate goal of a social skills program is to teach the interpersonal, prosocial problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills that students need to be socially, emotionally, and behaviorally successful. Conversely, when we teach students

prosocial skills, they are then unlikely to engage in inappropriate internalizing or externalizing behaviors. Relative to externalizing behaviors, for example, good social skills help students to prevent, respond to, and/or de-escalate situations that might—in their absence—result in serious levels of aggression and/or violence.

While this PBSS/SEL component can use any well-designed, evidence-based social, emotional, and/or behavioral skills program, Project ACHIEVE typically uses the evidence-based Stop & Think Social Skills Program which was designed to address all of the characteristics above. Organized in four age- and developmentally-sensitive levels (from Preschool through Middle/High School), this program is ready-made for this multi-tiered PBSS/SEL component. More specifically, at a primary prevention level, the Stop & Think Social Skills are taught to all students focusing on practical skills that help all students to be successful in most situations and settings. Among these skills are: Listening, Following Directions, Asking for Help, Ignoring Distractions, Dealing with Teasing, Accepting a Consequence, Dealing with an Accusation, Setting a Goal, and Understanding Your Own or Someone Else's Feelings.

At the secondary and tertiary prevention levels, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program is used more strategically, and it is connected to other needed behavioral interventions, self-control and anger management strategies, and behavior therapy interventions. For example, for situations where there is significant bullying and aggression, the social skills can be organized into strategic skill clusters (a) for aggressive and violent students: Relationship skills (e.g., Asking for Help, Apologizing, Dealing with Peer Pressure), Emotional Control skills (e.g., Understanding your Feelings, Dealing with Anger, Avoiding Trouble), and Consequence/ Response skills (e.g., Dealing with Fear, Failure, and Accusations); (b) for victims: Prevention skills (e.g., Avoiding Trouble, Evaluating Yourself), Problem-Solving skills (e.g., Asking for Help, Dealing with Peer Pressure), and Protection skills (e.g., Dealing with Fear, Standing Up for Your Rights, and Walking away from a Fight); and (c) for peer on-lookers or by-standers: Recognition skills (e.g., Understanding your Feelings, Evaluating Yourself), Response skills (e.g., Being a Good Leader, Dealing with Peer Pressure), and Resolution skills (e.g., Problem Solving, Dealing with Consequences).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is the primary focus of this document. We will discuss it and its research bases and rationale in a later section.

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Component 3: Student Motivation and Accountability

Accountability: Implementation and Research. Even when students have mastered their social skills, they still need to be motivated to use them. And when the peer group (who says, "Be cool") competes against teachers and other educators (who say, "Focus on school"), the importance of school-wide accountable approaches is apparent. School accountability processes consist of meaningful incentives and consequences that motivate students to use their prosocial skills. These processes are important because (a) socially skilled students still need motivation to use their skills, (b) some students (called performance deficit students) lack this motivation,

and (c) some students are more reinforced by demonstrating or the outcomes of inappropriate behavior than appropriate behavior.

This PBSS/SEL component helps schools establish and implement grade-level and building-wide accountability systems that include progressively tiered and developmentally-appropriate and meaningful incentives and consequences that motivate and reinforce students' appropriate interactions. This is accomplished by creating, formalizing, and implementing a "Behavioral Matrix" that establishes a set of behavioral standards and expectations for all students. Created predominantly by staff and students, this matrix explicitly identifies, for all grade levels, behavioral expectations in the classroom and in other common areas of the school (connected with positive responses, incentives, and rewards), and different "intensities" levels of inappropriate student behavior (connected with negative responses, consequences, and interventions as needed). Relative to the latter, Intensity I (Annoying) behaviors involve "routine" discipline problems that teachers handle with corrective prompts; Intensity II (Classroom Disruption) behaviors involve more challenging behaviors that teachers handle with prompts plus classroom-based consequences; Intensity III (Major Disruption/Antisocial) behaviors are more serious, usually involving office referrals and strategic intervention; and Intensity IV (Severe or Dangerous/Code of Conduct) behaviors are the most serious, generally involving office-based consequences and intensive interventions.

Critically, because the behaviors at each intensity level are agreed upon by staff, and then taught and communicated to students, student behavior is evaluated against a set of explicit "standards" (rather than individually or capriciously by teachers or administrators); staff responses to both appropriate and inappropriate student behavior are more consistent and expected; and students know, in advance, what will occur for incidents of, for example, teasing through physical aggression. All of this facilitates an atmosphere that reinforces student responsibility and self-management.

With the Behavioral Matrix as the primary school-wide accountability vehicle, a number of "evidence-based principles" (Kazdin, 2000; Kerr & Nelson, 2002) are fused into staff practice: (a) all students in the school experience five positive interactions (collectively, from adults, peers, or themselves) for every negative interaction; (b) students are largely motivated through positive, proactive, and incentive-oriented means; (c) when consequences are necessary, the mildest possible consequence needed to motivate students' appropriate behavior is used; (d) consequences, not punishments, are used; (e) when consequences are over, students must still practice the previously-expected prosocial behavior at least three times under simulated conditions; (f) staff differentiate and respond strategically to skill-deficit versus performance-deficit students; and (g) staff recognize that incentives and consequences must remain stable because previous inconsistencies may have strengthened some students' inappropriate behavior.

All students—at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels—are held accountable to the Behavioral Matrix. However, as students engage in Intensity III and IV behaviors, the need for functional assessment and strategic intervention becomes more apparent.

Too often, schools create "motivational programs" for students that involve incentives and consequences that the students couldn't care less about. Thus, it looks good "on paper," but it holds no weight in actuality- - from the students' perspectives.

At other times, schools forget that they need to recognize, engage, and activate the peer group in a motivational program. This is because, at times, the peer group is actually undermining the program by negatively reinforcing those members (on the playground, after school, on social media) who are "playing up to the adults" through their appropriate behavior.

On a functional level, both incentives and consequences result in positive and prosocial behavior. The incentives motivate students toward the expected behaviors, and the consequences motivate students away from the inappropriate behaviors (and toward the expected ones).

But critically, educators need to understand that you can only create motivating conditions. That is, we can't force students to meet the behavioral expectations. When we force students to do anything, we are managing their behavior, not facilitating self-management. While we have to do some management to get to self-management. . . if we only manage students' behavior, then they will not (know how to) self-manage when the adults are not present.

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Component 4: Consistency

Establishing and sustaining positive school and classroom settings, Stop & Think Social Skills instruction, and the implementation of the Behavioral Matrix and other student motivation and accountability processes are necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for effective, safe, and self-managing schools. Interdependently, staff need to establish and maintain positive school and classroom climates; teach, apply, and reinforce their social skills program; and implement meaningful incentives and consequences in a consistent manner.

Thus, in order to be successful, staff need to (a) demonstrate consistent prosocial relationships and interactions—resulting in consistently positive and productive school and classroom environments; (b) communicate consistent behavioral expectations, while consistently teaching them; (c) use consistent incentives and consequences, while holding student consistently accountable for appropriate behavior; and then (d) apply all of these components consistently across all of the settings and peer groups in the school.

When staff are consistent, individual students, and small and large groups of students learn, use, and value the behavioral expectations within a school.

When staff are inconsistent, however, students feel that they have been treated unfairly; they sometimes behave in different ways for different staff or in different settings; they become manipulative—pitting one staff member against another; and they often

emotionally react—some getting angry when inconsistency occurs, and others simply withdrawing because they feel powerless to change it.

Thus, staff (perhaps through the School Discipline/PBSS Committee) need to observe and monitor their consistency in real time; evaluate how they are implementing different facets of the PBSS/SEL component; and formally and informally survey staff communication, collaboration, trust, commitment, and cohesion in this regard.

Staff also need to empower students to become part of the process. For example, students need to contribute to their school's prosocial atmosphere of prevention, while also communicating a "no-tolerance" attitude for inappropriate peer behavior. In this way, the students can help their school create conscious and explicit prosocial values, expectations, norms, procedures, and interactions that, for example, can help prevent or respond to such antisocial (but prevalent) behaviors as teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and aggression. This can be done both during the school day, as well as during extracurricular, sports, club, and after-school music and art activities.

Consistency is a process. It can't be downloaded onto a computer, or including in staff's annual flu shots. Instead, it needs to be "grown" experientially over time, and then sustained in an ongoing way. It is grown through effective strategic planning with explicit implementation plans, good communication and collaboration, sound implementation and evaluation, and consensus-building coupled with constructive feedback and change.

It's not easy. . . but it is necessary both for PBSS/SEL and school success.

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Component 5: Applying the Process to All Settings and Across Different Peer Groups

The last component of the school PBSS/SEL blueprint focuses on the application of the previous four components across all of the settings and peer interactions in the school. This involves a recognition that the classroom-based PBSS/SEL strategies need to be transferred into the common areas of the school, and that the student-centered strategies need to factor in the significant influence of different peer groups.

Relative to the former area, it is important to understand that the common areas of a school are more complex and dynamic than the classroom settings. Indeed, in the hallways, bathrooms, buses, cafeteria, and on the playground (or playing fields), there typically are more multi-aged or cross-grade students, more interactions, more space or fewer physical limitations, fewer staff and supervisors, and different social demands. As such, the positive social, emotional, and behavioral interactions that occur in the classroom need a more strategic approach to generalize them into the common school areas.

Accordingly, students need to be taught how to demonstrate their interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills beyond their classrooms and in every common school area. Critically, this training needs to be tailored to the social demands and expectations of these settings.

Relative to the latter area, it is important to understand that the peer group is often a more dominant social and emotional "force" in a school than the adults. As such, the PBSS/SEL blueprint is consciously applied (relative to climate, relationships, expectations, skill instruction, motivation, and accountability) to help prevent **peer-to-peer** teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression.

This is done by involving the different peer groups in a school in group "prevention and early response" training, and motivating them—across the entire school—to take the lead relative to prosocial interactions. When the peer groups in a school are trained, motivated, and reinforced to do "the heavy prosocial lifting," the more successful the staff and the school will be relative to maintaining a positive school climate and a consistently safe school.

At times, however, the preventative approach within this component does not work. When this occurs, there are persistent or significant setting-specific problems in the common areas of the school, or across different peer groups relative to teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and physical aggression.

In order to develop strategic interventions for these situations, the School Discipline/PBSS Committee is taught to how to conduct a "Special Situation Analysis"—a functional and ecological assessment of a specific common area or peer-related situation that investigates the following domains: (a) Student Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (b) Peer Group Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (c) Teacher/Staff Characteristics, Issues, and Factors; (d) Environmental Characteristics, Issues, and Factors such as the physical plant and logistics within the specific setting; (e) Staff and Student Incentives and Consequences; and (f) Resources and Resource Utilization. The peer group part of the analysis is especially important as many incidents that occur in the common areas of a school are often peer-mediated (e.g., Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Rigby, 2000), and thus, understanding the presence and potential involvement of student "perpetrators," "victims," and "by-standers" becomes essential.

Once the functional assessment is completed, its results are linked to relevant interventions that are resourced, implemented, and evaluated.

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills: An Introduction

It is a simple fact that how students feel, feel about themselves, behave, and get along with others strongly predicts their interactions and even their achievement in school. Indeed, if students are feeling pressured, bullied, or unsafe, they focus more on these emotional conditions than on academic instruction and learning. If they are unsure of themselves, lack self-confidence, or are self-conscious, they may not believe that they can succeed. If they do not have the behavioral skills to pay attention, work independently, or organize themselves, their academic work may suffer. If they cannot relate to others, work cooperatively in a group, and prevent or resolve conflicts, they will not socially survive (Knoff, 2012).

We have known for decades that students' social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management in school is essential to their academic and interpersonal success (Cawalti, 1995; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993/1994, Ysseldyke & Christenson, 2002). While a strong academic program with effective instruction and a focus on real-world knowledge and skills is essential to student achievement and understanding, it is evident that (a) a positive and supportive school and classroom climate, (b) with positive and productive student and teacher interactions, and (c) effective classroom management also are necessary. Indeed, these components are among the top six predictors of students' academic achievement (Goodman & Schaughency, 2001; McNeely, Nonemaker, & Blum, 2002; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

More specifically, reviews of over 200 studies of school-based programs (Durlak, et al., 2011; Payton, et al., 2008) revealed that classroom time spent on addressing the social, emotional, and behavioral skills and needs of students helped to significantly increase their academic performance and their social and emotional skills, and that the students involved were better behaved, more socially successful, less anxious, more emotionally well-adjusted, and earned higher grades and test scores. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2002), all of this contributes to and enhances students' time-on-task and their academic success:

> "Improving the social and emotional climate of schools, and the social and emotional soundness of students, advances the academic mission of the schools in important ways. . . Satisfying the social and emotional needs of students does more than prepare them to learn. It actually increases their capacity to learn." (p. 10)

And so, social skills training is essential for <u>all</u> students in the schools—a primary setting in their lives where they can learn, practice, and master some of the interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict resolution, and emotional coping skills and strategies that become foundational to their physical and mental health and wellness (Knoff, 2000a, 2000b). Critically, these skills also are essential to all teachers as a necessary part of classroom management. And, as noted above, these prosocial skills are needed by students to facilitate both their social and academic progress, development, and proficiency.

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The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u>

While there are hundreds of social skill programs available and marketed to educators and schools, less than ten of these social skills programs are either evidence-based or well-researched (Arkansas Department of Education, 2009). This brief overview focuses on one of these programs, the <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> (Knoff, 2001), and summarizes the research on the characteristics of successful social skills instruction by using this Program as an exemplar.

The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> is written for classroom teachers with implementation at the preschool to Grade 1, Grades 2/3, Grades 4/5, and Grades 6 through 12. At the same time, the Program has been implemented strategically at the high school level, in alternative and juvenile justice facilities with students who are 18 years old and beyond, and in residential and day treatment programs for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. There also is a <u>Stop & Think Program</u> for parents—to help guide them on how to teach and reinforce prosocial skills at home from preschool through early adolescence.

The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> was designated an evidence-based and national model prevention program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2000. It was designated a "Promising Program" relative to its research efficacy and clinical implementation by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2003 (see also Quinn, Osher, Hoffman, & Hanley, 1998). And, it was designated a "Select" program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel.org) in 2002. The <u>Stop & Think Program</u>, as an embedded component to Project ACHIEVE, is now included in the registry of SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

From a research perspective, the <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> is based on the ecological work of Bronfenbrenner (1977); the strategic planning approaches of Cook (1990), Valentine (1991), and Knoff (2007); the cognitive and social learning theory research of Meichenbaum (1977) and Bandura (1977); and the social skills research of Goldstein (1988) and Cartledge and Milburn (1995). The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> also is the anchor of Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; Knoff, 2009, 2012) which has been implemented in over 2,500 schools nationwide since 1989.

From a practical perspective, everything about the <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> is about the development of <u>all students' social competency and social, emotional, and behavioral self-management</u>.

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Social Competency and Student Self-Management Defined

Because of genetic, biological, and developmental factors, students' social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management look different across the age span. Nonetheless, these two areas are collectively defined as a child or adolescent's ability to:

- Be socially, emotionally, and behaviorally aware of themselves and others;
- Demonstrate successful social, emotional, and behavioral interactions and skills; and
- Effectively control their own emotions, so that appropriate proactive and/or prosocial behavior independently occurs.

Critically, competency and self-management exist along a continuum from social-emotional competency and self-management (i.e., how students feel) to cognitive-behavioral competency and self-management (i.e., what they think and then what they do). In the former areas, students' emotional control, as well as positive feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and attributions represent essential goals and outcomes. In the latter areas, these goals and outcomes are extended—both in the classroom and across the common areas of a school—to include students' positive interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and social-emotional coping skills.

More specifically, on a social level, important self-management skills include those that contribute to effective (a) listening, engagement, and responding; (b) communication and collaboration; (c) social problem-solving and group process; and (d) conflict prevention and resolution. On an emotional level, important self-management skills include (a) the awareness of one's own and others' feelings, (b) the ability to manage or control those feelings and other emotions, as well as the ability (c) to use coping skills to minimize the emotional effects of previous situations, and (d) to demonstrate appropriate behavior even under conditions of emotionality. Finally, on a behavioral level, important self-management skills include those that help students to demonstrate appropriate behavior in the classroom and across the common areas of the school, and to be actively engaged in their own learning—whether in the classroom or on a more independent level.

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The Scientific Foundations of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program

Before any social skills or social emotional learning program is adopted and implemented in a school, it must demonstrate its evidence-based capacity to be successful—relative to objectively measured student outcomes—across a wide variety of settings, students, staff, and implementation conditions. While the Stop & Think Social Skills Program has demonstrated its evidence-based success (hence, its SAMHSA designation), it still is important to clearly identify its scientific foundations. To this end, the research-based characteristics of the Stop & Think Social Skills Program are cross-walked below with the seven primary characteristics of an effective social skills program.

<u>Characteristic 1</u>. **Social skills programs teach sensible and pragmatic interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills that are needed by today's students and that can be applied, on a daily basis, by preschool through high school students.**

Social skills are behaviors that students learn—just like they learn academic skills. While we often focus on what we <u>don't</u> want students to do ("don't fight," "don't talk back," "don't interrupt," "don't tease or taunt other students"), social skills focus on the behaviors that <u>we want students to do</u>. Significantly, when students perform desired behaviors, they rarely do inappropriate behaviors at the same time.

The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> is organized in four age- and developmentally-sensitive levels: Preschool through Grade 1, Grades 2 and 3, Grades 4 and 5, and Middle/High School (Grades 6 through 12). As part of a school-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS) approach, Stop & Think social skills are designed to be taught in ALL regular classroom settings in a school by general education teachers. For students with greater need and more challenging behaviors, the social skills also can be taught in more targeted social skills training groups by special education teachers, related services, and mental health support professionals.

As noted earlier, over the past number of years, a number of national efforts have converged to highlight the need to teach students the prosocial, emotional, and behavioral skills that will help them to successfully interact with teachers and peers during whole-class presentations, in labs and cooperative learning groups, and while working on projects or studying with one or two other students. On a social-interpersonal level, these skills also facilitate students' interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping abilities such that they get along with peers and adults in school, community, and home settings. Finally, these skills can be applied and extended to situations such that students are better able to understand, accept, and interact with individuals from different gender, racial, cultural, socioeconomic, geographic, disability-specific, and other backgrounds.

In order to accomplish all of these goals/outcomes, the elementary-level <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> approach has been adapted at secondary level because these students need to learn, master, and demonstrate skills in their classroom and across their schools, but the instruction also needs to address broader academic, social, and life contexts. Indeed, secondary-level students need to personally understand and commit to using their interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills on individual, peer-group, and large-group levels.

Given this, the secondary-level <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> has activities in three major interdependent areas:

- Understanding Yourself through History, Literature, and Current Events;
- Understanding Your Peers through Facilitated and Open-Ended Group Discussion; and
- Learning and Mastering Prosocial, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills through Instruction and Practice.

The **Understanding Yourself through History, Literature, and Current Events activities** use, for example, primary and secondary source materials describing (a) current or historical events; (b) excerpts from literature and other writings; (c) YouTube or other multi-media videos; and/or (d) virtual or actual newspapers/news stories, magazines, or TV/Cable interviews or documentaries to put specific social, emotional, or behavioral skills into a meaningful context that connects and engages students. These activities give students a chance to vicariously experience the importance and implications of the skills—from both past and present contexts, thereby increasing their understanding of the importance of the skills, and facilitating their commitment to learning and using them. Ideally, these activities challenge students to examine their own lives, standards, and beliefs, and to consider what they need to do to increase or improve their social, emotional, and behavioral interactions individually, with others, and for "the common good."

The **Understanding Your Peers through Facilitated and Open-Ended Group Discussion activities** focus on helping students to share, discuss, and understand each other's attitudes, expectations, beliefs, and perspectives on relevant topics related to the interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills and functioning in the classroom and across their school. These activities also facilitate the development of the positive group identities, interactions, and supports needed to create strong and unified peer groups in the classroom, across the school, and within the community.

On a broader level, all of this is also geared to strengthening the positive influence and impact of the different student groups in the school such that the student body—as a whole—is "defining and determining" the climate and culture of the school, while the faculty and staff are able to take a more "behind-the-scenes" supportive role. Said a different way: the goal here is to let the student body take responsibility for the positive, prosocial climate of the school. There are more students than staff. Let the students do "the heavy lifting." Let them leverage their peers for the positive. . . as a way to eliminate the negative.

To accomplish all of this, the activities in this area will initiate and sustain small and large group discussions such that students learn about and are able to discuss, debate, agree, disagree, come to a consensus, or agree-to-disagree on important peer-related topics. These topics will largely relate to the other two areas of the curriculum. Moreover, these activities will help diverse groups of students to feel comfortable talking, working, and socially interacting together—sharing, for example, aspects of their diverse backgrounds, talking about current events and issues in their classes or community, learning about the results or consequences of different decisions or behaviors, and exploring ways to promote respect and understanding in their own lives.

The **Learning and Mastering Prosocial, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills through Instruction and Practice activities** focus on teaching students the emotional, thinking (i.e., cognitive), and behavioral processes and skills needed to learn, master, apply, and independently demonstrate important interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills for personal, small group, large group, classroom, and school/academic use. Thus, the activities here will be geared largely to skill instruction and

generalization.   As noted above, the foundation underlying these activities will be the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (Knoff, 2001).

On a more skill-specific level, the Stop & Think Program curriculum at the secondary levels is organized into the following skill clusters:

Foundational Skills

    Listening *
    Listening: The Process of Listening
    Active Listening
    Listening: Strategies to Become a Better Listener
    Following Directions *
    Asking for Help *
    Staying on Task/Ignoring Distractions *

Communication Skills

    Beginning/Ending a Conversation *
    How to Take your Turn or Interrupt a Conversation *
    Expressing Your Opinion/Using "I" Statements

Interpersonal and Respecting Individual Differences Skills

    Giving/Accepting a Compliment *
    Compliment Cards
    Friendliness and Support
    Expressing Concern for another Person
    How to Offer to Help Someone Else
    Respecting Others' Different Appearances
    Respecting Others' Different Opinions
    Civilized Disagreement
    Accepting Others' and their Differences

Organizational and Scheduling Skills

    Setting a Goal *
    How to Set Goals
    Time Management
    Time Management Strategies

Group Productivity Skills

    Forming Partners
    Interviewing Your Partner
    Working in a Cooperative Group

Home Court Advantage
Think-Pair-Share
Sharing the Air
Saving the Last Word
Gallery Walk
Establishing Group Ground Rules
Goal Setting for Group Improvement
Where Do You Stand?
Hearing Everyone's Ideas First
Arguing Both Sides
Planning Group Projects
Keeping Individual Project Logs
Midcourse Corrections

Academic Supporting Skills

Participating in Classroom Discussions
Answering Questions during Lessons
Asking Follow-Up Questions
Doing Seatwork or Independent Work Assignments
Overcoming Off-Task Triggers
When You Finish a Classroom Paper or Assignment
Studying for Tests
Taking Timed Tests
When You Have a Substitute Teacher
Becoming a Better Speaker
Creating Better Speeches

Classroom and Building Routine Skills

Entering a Classroom
Transitions from One Classroom Activity to Another
Lining Up to Leave the Classroom
Hallway Walking
Passing in between Classes (During the School Day)
Using Your Locker
Taking Books and Other Materials to Class
Using the Restroom
Getting Food in the Cafeteria
Busing Food/Tables in the Cafeteria
Leaving the Cafeteria
Entering the Auditorium for an Assembly
The Dismissal Skill (At the End of the School Day)
Getting on the Bus
Riding on the Bus
When Your Teacher Asks You to Leave the Classroom (As a Consequence)

Keeping the School Clean
Being an Attentive Audience Member
Audience Behavior
Free Play during Physical Education Time
Reporting an Accident or a Dangerous Situation

Conflict Prevention and Resolution Skills

How to Generate Choices and Make Decisions
A Seven Step Problem Solving Process
Understanding Your/Others' Feelings *
Understanding Your Rights and Responsibilities
Being Honest/Acknowledging your Mistakes
Apologizing/Excusing Yourself *
Conflicts: Types, Causes, and Strategies
Steps to Mediating a Conflict
Conflict Resolution: How to Phrase Concerns
Win/Win Approaches to Conflict Management
Negotiating
Conflict Resolution: How to Confront a Person
Finding Solutions: Conflict and Behavior
Resolving Conflicts Peacefully
Standing Up for a Friend
Accepting Consequences *
Avoiding Trouble/Conflict Situations *
Deciding Whether to Follow the Group
Dealing with Peer Pressure *
Dealing with Teasing *
Dealing with Being Rejected or Left Out *
Dealing with an Accusation *
Showing Understanding of Another's Feelings/Empathy
Dealing with Another Person's Anger or Emotionality *
Walking Away from a Fight/Conflict *

Wellness, Emotional Control, and Coping Skills

Identifying Your Inner Voice
Understanding Your/Others' Feelings
Understanding What Causes Anger
Anger Management Techniques
How to Relax and Control Your Emotions
Evaluating Yourself *
Standing Up for Yourself or Your Rights/How to be Assertive *
Dealing with Fear or Anxiety *
Responding to Failure *
Dealing with Anger *

Cyber-Communication and Respect Skills

Leadership and Ethical Decision-Making Skills

  Being a Good Leader *
  Characteristics of Leaders
  How to Think Through Ethical Dilemmas
  Tolerance

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   Characteristic 2. **Social skills programs address problem situations, as identified by both adults and students, that occur in classrooms and common areas of the school on an almost every day basis (Kerr & Nelson, 2002).**

   The Stop & Think Social Skills Program also provides skills that teach students how to effectively interact in small groups, and regarding classroom and building routines. In the classroom, these routines help students to be prepared and ready to participate in academic activities. Across the common areas of a school, these routines help students to interact positively and safely, and to manage their behavior more responsibly and independently.

   These skills are embedded in the entire curriculum. They are listed in the skills outlined above in Characteristic 1.

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   Characteristic 3. **Social skills programs provide a defined, progressive, yet flexible, sequence of social skills that recognizes that some prerequisite skills must be mastered before other, more complex skills are taught. The program also must plan for ongoing social skills practice and reinforcement that occurs throughout the school year (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995).**

   As shown above, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program does have a preferred sequence of ten core skills and ten advanced skills that are field-tested and teacher-friendly. While this sequence is preferred, it is not absolute. As long as teachers are mindful that some social skills prerequisite to later skills, they can re-sequence skills to respond to specific behavioral goals, challenging classroom problems, or desired curricular or character education themes.

   Beyond this, the Stop & Think Social Skills Program integrates the learning principles of "massed" and "distributed" practice into its process by reviewing and revisiting many social skills at the preschool to elementary to middle/high school levels. In doing this, the Program is able to teach the "same" skill with higher, more developmentally appropriate expectations over time, and ensure that the skills are applied in situationally appropriate ways.

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<u>Characteristic 4</u>. Social skills programs use a universal language that is easy for students to learn, facilitates cognitive scripting and mediation, and facilitates the conditioning or reconditioning of prosocial behaviors and choices leading to more and more automatic behavior (Ladd & Mize, 1983; Meichenbaum, 1977).

Social skills in the <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> are taught using two essential processes: (a) a universal language or set of steps that facilitate the cognitive and physical conditioning of new behavior, and (b) a pedagogical approach that uses behavioral/social learning theory strategies to guide effective instruction.

(a) The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills Program</u> uses a universal five-step language whenever a social skill is taught, reinforced, or implemented. The five steps are:

- Stop and Think!
- Are you going to make a Good Choice or Bad Choice?
- What are your Choices or Steps?
- Do It!
- Good Job!

The <u>Stop and Think!</u> step is a self-control, impulse-control, and/or self-management step designed to classically condition students to take the time necessary to calm down and think about how they want to handle a situation.

The <u>Good Choice or Bad Choice?</u> step is an operant conditioning step that motivates students toward the choices they make and the behaviors they exhibit. Typically, teachers prompt students as to the positive outcome(s) or reinforcement(s) that will result when they make a Good Choice. Conversely, students are guided to consider the negative outcome(s) or consequence(s) that will occur if they make a Bad Choice. These potential positive or negative reinforcements are designed to motivate students to "Make a Good Choice."

The <u>What are your Choices or Steps?</u> step uses cognitive behavioral psychology and mediational learning strategies to help organize, prepare, and guide students to think about appropriate behavior before enacting it. This is where teachers teach the specific "skills scripts" for each Stop & Think skill so that students learn and are able to demonstrate (in the next step of the process) their "Good Choices"—that is, their prosocial skills. There are two types of skill scripts—scripts that teach social skills in a step-by-step sequential fashion ("Step" skills), and scripts where students consider and select one of a number of possible good choices ("Choice" skills).

For example, the Following Directions skill script below is an example of Step skill because there is only one correct sequence that will result in successful behavior:

1. Listen to the Direction.
2. Ask yourself if you Understand the Direction (if not, Ask a question).
3. Repeat the steps of the Direction silently to yourself.
4. Get ready to Follow the Direction.

The Dealing with Teasing skill script below demonstrates the elements of a Choice skill where students learn to evaluate different interpersonal situations so that they can strategically choose the best choice:

1. Take deep breaths and count to five.
2. Think about your good choices. You can:
    a. Ignore the teasing.
    b. Ask the person to stop.
    c. Walk away.
    d. Find an adult for help.
3. Choose and Act Out your best choice.

Once students have thought about the good social skill choices or steps needed for a particular situation, they then are prepared to behaviorally demonstrate them.

Thus, in the <u>Do It!</u> step, students behaviorally carry out their plan, implement the social skill chosen, and evaluate whether or not it has worked. With younger elementary school-aged students, teachers may need to repeat the skill steps as their students follow them, and they might even need to physically guide students through some skills. Older students, with prompting, will repeat the Stop & Think steps silently to themselves, performing the prosocial behaviors more independently and automatically.

If the <u>Do It!</u> step works, students then are ready to go on to the last step. If a <u>Step Skill</u> doesn't work, students simply go back over the scripts in Step 3 and practice them more carefully. If a <u>Choice Skill</u> doesn't work, students are prompted to identify another possible social skill or to move to another good choice option. For example, if Ignoring does not stop a peer's teasing, then a student might decide to directly ask the peer to stop the teasing, telling how the teasing is making him or her feel. Once successful, it's on to the last step.

The <u>Good Job!</u> step uses the cognitive/behavioral skill of self-reinforcement such that students reinforce themselves for successfully using a social skill, responding appropriately to a situation or request. This step is important because students do not always reinforce each other for making good choices and doing a good job, and thus, they need to learn how to self-reinforce. Indeed, over time, students need to learn how to recognize when they are successful and how to reinforce themselves for a job well done. This is an essential step in the self-management process.

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<u>Characteristic 5</u>. Social skills programs systematically use a social learning theory model that includes teaching, modeling, role-playing, and providing performance feedback as part of the instructional process (Bandura, 1977; Goldstein, 1988). Such programs overtly plan and transfer students' use of social skills into different settings, with different people, at different times, and across different situations and circumstances (Stokes & Baer, 1988).

The evidence-based behavioral/social learning teaching process used by the Stop & Think Social Skills Program involves the following five components:

- Teaching the steps of the desired social skill.
- Modeling the steps and the social skills language (or script).
- Roleplaying the steps and the script with students.
- Providing Performance Feedback to the students relative to how accurately they are verbalizing the skill script and how successfully they are behaviorally demonstrating the new skill.
- Applying the skill and its steps as much as possible during the day to reinforce the teaching over time, in different settings, with different people, and in different situations.

When Teaching the steps of a desired social skill, teachers use the Stop & Think Program's universal language. As noted earlier, when they get to the What are your Choices or Steps? step, students are taught the specific choices or steps for the skill they are focusing on.

When Modeling a social skill, teachers verbalize the steps to a particular social skill while showing their students how to perform the associated behavior(s). Typically, this is done by having teachers re-create an actual classroom or school situation where the particular social skill is needed. For example, in modeling the Dealing with Teasing social skill, a teacher would have a student "tease" the teacher in front of the class. The teacher then would "talk through" the "script"—the universal Stop & Think language with the skill steps of the Dealing with Teasing social skill—while performing the appropriate behavior. Thus, during Teaching, teachers provide a context for and instruction in performing social skill behaviors. During Modeling, teachers show how to implement the skill, verbally and behaviorally, in a simulated situation.

After a teacher models a specific social skill, students are given opportunities to Roleplay or act out the social skill in re-created situations that are both relevant to the classroom and the social skill. Roleplays may be done in front of the class or in small or controlled group settings. Similar to directing a scene from a school play, the teacher focuses on having students accurately verbalize the social skill "script" that is being taught and performing the corresponding behavior(s) during every roleplay.

While students are roleplaying their social skills, teachers provide Performance Feedback. This feedback positively reinforces students when they correctly (a) verbalize the social skills steps, (b) demonstrate the appropriate skill or behavior, and (c) review their performance after the roleplay or practice session is over. This feedback also occurs when roleplays get "off script." Here, the teacher may "freeze" the actors, provide corrective feedback to bring students back "on script," and resume the "scene" so that students practice only accurate and appropriate behavior.

After the modeling and roleplay (with performance feedback) steps, teachers provide as many practice (or application) opportunities for students in the classroom so that they transfer the training and master the skill under more realistic circumstances. This occurs as teachers set up situations in the classroom that require students to apply, under

controlled and supervised conditions, their new social skills. It also occurs as teachers prompt the use of different social skills <u>as much as possible</u> from day-to-day, hour-to-hour, and minute-to-minute in the classroom.

Over time, all of this <u>teaching, practice, application, and infusion</u> help students to understand the importance of using specific social skills, and to master and use their prosocial skills more quickly and independently.

In summary:

<u>When Teaching and Modeling</u>: Teachers need to make sure that students:

  ➢ have the prerequisite skills to be successful
  ➢ are taught using language that they can understand
  ➢ are taught in simple steps that ensure success
  ➢ hear the social skills script as the social skills behavior is demonstrated

<u>When Practicing or Roleplaying</u>: Teachers need to make sure that students:

  ➢ verbalize (or repeat or hear) the steps to a particular social skill as they demonstrate its appropriate behavior
  ➢ practice only the positive or appropriate social skill behavior
  ➢ receive ongoing and consistent practice opportunities
  ➢ use relevant practice situations that simulate the "emotional" intensity of the real situations so that they can fully <u>master</u> the social skill and be able to demonstrate it <u>under conditions of emotionality</u>
  ➢ practice the skills at a developmental level that they can handle

<u>When Giving Performance Feedback</u>: Teachers need to make sure that the feedback is:

  ➢ specific and descriptive
  ➢ focused on reinforcing students' successful use of the social skill, or on correcting an inaccurate or incomplete social skills demonstration
  ➢ positive--emphasizing what was done well and what <u>can be</u> done well (or better) next time

<u>When Transferring or Applying Social Skills after Instruction</u>: Teachers need to make sure that they reinforce students' prosocial skills steps and behavior when students:

  ➢ have successfully demonstrated an appropriate social skill
  ➢ have made a "bad" choice, demonstrating an inappropriate social skill
  ➢ are faced with a problem or situation but have not committed to, nor demonstrated, a prosocial skill
  ➢ must use the skill in situations that are somewhat different from those used when the skill was originally taught and practiced

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Characteristic 6. Social skills training is an integral part of a building- or grade-level positive discipline and behavior management system that holds students accountable for their behavior and provides for consistency and implementation integrity (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Kerr & Nelson, 2002; Knoff, 2000a).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program is the anchor of Project ACHIEVE's comprehensive School-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; Knoff, 2002, March; 2012). The PBSS, one of seven Project ACHIEVE components (see www.projectachieve.net for more information), focuses on the organizational requirements and processes that result in effective building-wide prosocial behavior management processes and positive, skills-oriented student discipline procedures (Dwyer & Osher, 2000; Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Knoff, 2000b, 2012). At a functional level, the desired outcomes of this school-wide approach include: maximizing students' academic achievement, creating safe school environments and positive school climates, building effective teaching and problem solving teams that speed successful interventions to challenging students, increasing and sustaining effective classroom instruction, increasing and sustaining strong parent involvement, developing and implementing effective strategic plans, organizing building committees and student learning clusters, and developing effective data management systems for outcome evaluations.

While research has addressed many of these issues in a somewhat independent fashion, rarely have these factors been integrated into a unified, multi-dimensional process. When implemented effectively, three levels of self-management are addressed: (a) students are taught the self-management skills (at appropriate developmental levels) that they need for self-control and independent learning, (b) school staff are taught the self-management skills that they need to run positive, effective classrooms that result in student learning and behavioral growth, and (c) school buildings or districts are taught the self-management skills that allow them to identify resources and build capacity such that they can independently sustain a successful building-wide system of prevention, strategic intervention, and intensive needs services for all students and, especially, those with behavioral and mental health concerns.

In total, there are five primary areas needed for any successful school-wide Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS; see Figure 2 below): (a) positive school and classroom climates, along with positive relationships across staff, students, and parents; (b) explicit classroom and common area behavioral expectations and social skills training—as recommended here, using the Stop and Think Social Skills Program; (c) the development of teacher, grade-level, and building-wide motivation and accountability processes that provide students meaningful incentives and consequences to motivate students' interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills, and to hold students accountable when they make "bad choices;" (d) consistency in the implementation and status of all three of the processes; and (e) the application of the four processes above relative to every setting in a school, and peer interactions—which including the prevention of teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, hazing, and fighting.
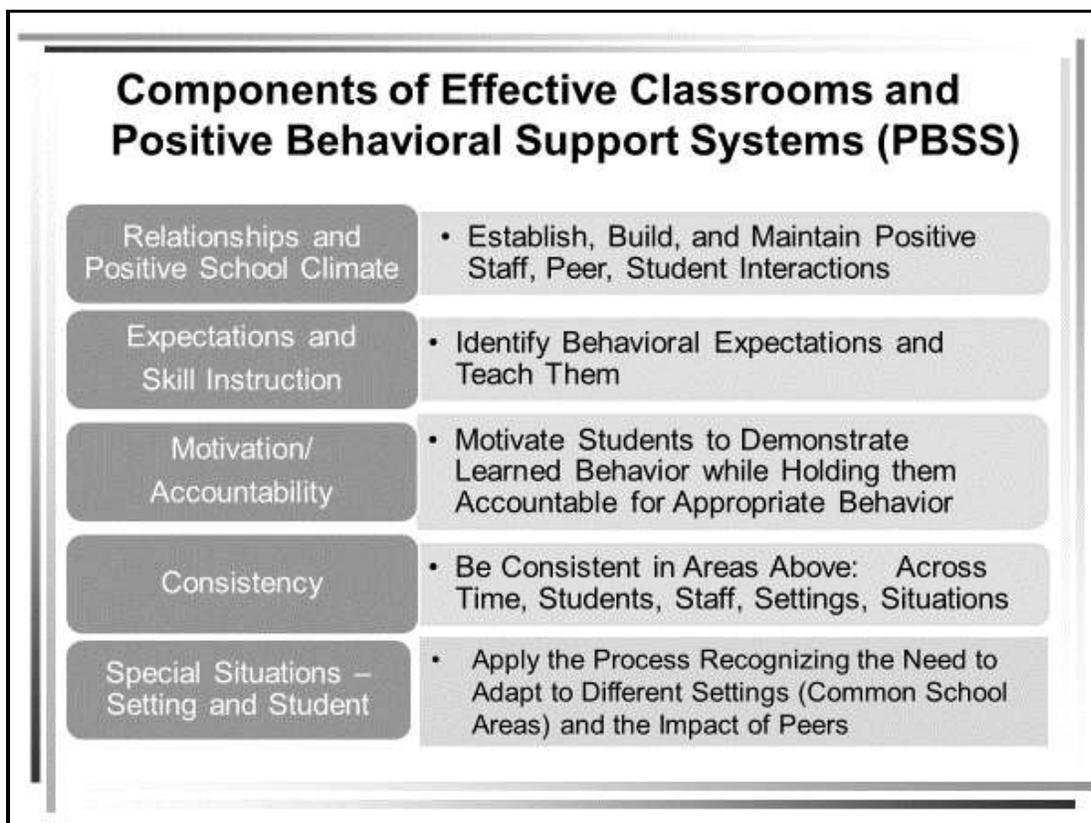
Components of Effective Classrooms and Positive Behavioral Support Systems (PBSS)

Relationships and Positive School Climate	• Establish, Build, and Maintain Positive Staff, Peer, Student Interactions
Expectations and Skill Instruction	• Identify Behavioral Expectations and Teach Them
Motivation/ Accountability	• Motivate Students to Demonstrate Learned Behavior while Holding them Accountable for Appropriate Behavior
Consistency	• Be Consistent in Areas Above: Across Time, Students, Staff, Settings, Situations
Special Situations – Setting and Student	• Apply the Process Recognizing the Need to Adapt to Different Settings (Common School Areas) and the Impact of Peers

Figure 2

Beyond these preventative areas, an effective PBSS extends along a multi-tiered continuum that includes strategic and intensive social, emotional, and/or behavioral interventions, respectively, when students demonstrate either serious or persistent challenges. Anchored by a data-based functional assessment problem-solving process that determines the underlying reasons for the students' challenges, this continuum includes classroom-based interventions, as well as school-based mental health services, supports, strategies, and programs when necessary.

Critically, these five PBSS areas are interdependent. Thus, the presence of a well-implemented social skills program will not typically result in students' social, emotional, and behavioral self-management. Indeed, in the absence of a consistent positive school and classroom climate; consistently positive staff, student, and parent relationships; consistent student motivation and accountability; and the consistent application of these areas across all school settings and the various peer groups—it is unlikely that the social skills that are taught will actually be consistently demonstrated.

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Characteristic 7. Social skills programs teach specific behaviorally-oriented skills (not constructs of behavior) in explicit and developmentally appropriate ways, and they are able to flexibly adapt to student differences in language, culture, socioeconomic level, and behavioral need (Cartledge & Milburn, 1996).

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program has been successfully implemented in rural, urban, and suburban schools elementary through high schools across the country. It has been implemented in schools with diverse, multi-cultural and multi-national groups of students; in a range of communities with students from severe levels of poverty to high levels of affluence; and in schools with significant numbers of students who do not have English as their primary language. In addition, the Program has been used in schools with students who come from largely Native American backgrounds (e.g., Navajo, Shoshoni, Arapaho, Alaskan native); and in schools with students with African-American, African, Asian, and Hispanic backgrounds.

In contrast with character education programs (Knoff, 2005), social skills programs directly teach interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution behaviors using a social learning theory approach. As social skills are taught, they are developmentally and cognitively matched to the age and maturity level of the student. And, they are taught within the context of a PBSS approach that is school wide and continually evaluated. Most character education programs, in contrast, talk about (rather than teach and practice) skills, they discuss constructs of behavior (e.g., respect, responsibility, cooperation) at times (e.g., preschool and at the elementary school level) when students do not have the higher order thinking skills to understand either the constructs or their associated behaviors, and they are not able to vary their "instruction" for diverse learners or learners from diverse backgrounds.

Summary

All school-based programs need to be evidence- or research-based. This technical assistance paper has described the primary self-management outcomes of a social skills and Positive Behavioral Support System program, the research-based principles that make social skills programs work, and the Stop & Think Social Skills Program—demonstrating how these principles and programs can be result in meaningful outcomes for children and adolescents. In the end, it is critical to begin the journey with an evidence-based program.

But, it is more important to demonstrate, with evidence, that the journey was successful, reaching its intended destination.

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National Evidence-based Designations for the Stop & Think Social Skills Program

- The Stop & Think Social Skills Program was designated an evidence-based and national model prevention program by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2000.

- It was designated a "Promising Program" relative to its research efficacy and clinical implementation by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in 2003.

- It was designated a "Select" program by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel.org) in 2002.

- The Stop & Think Social Skills Program, as an embedded component to Project ACHIEVE, is now included in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

Stop & Think Social Skills Materials Available

All of the materials below can be found on the Project ACHIEVE website: www.projectachieve.info. Most of the materials are available directly on the website for sale; a few are available from other publishers.

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The Stop & Think Social Skills Program for Schools (PreK through Middle/High School)

Four Separate Levels:
Pre-K through Grade 1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, Grades 6-12

Classroom Kits and Individual Support Materials Available

Recognized as an Evidence-Based Prevention Program by:
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (SAMHSA)
U.S. Department of Justice (OJJDP)
Collaborative for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (CASEL)

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The nationally-acclaimed, evidence-based Stop and Think Social Skills Program is one of the top social skill/SEL programs in the country! It has been implemented in thousands of schools nationwide (and internationally) since 1990—primarily by classroom teachers (Tier I), and by counselors, psychologists, and other mental health professionals (Tiers II and III).

Focused on teaching students interpersonal, social problem-solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional control and coping skills, the four Stop & Think levels (preK through Middle/High School) ensure that all skills are taught in appropriate, developmentally-sensitive ways.

Each level concentrates on 10 Core and 10 Advanced Skills. These are practical skills that help students to manage their own behavior and to successfully interact with others: Listening, Following Directions, Asking for Help, Ignoring Distractions, Accepting Consequences, Apologizing, Dealing with Teasing, Handling Peer Pressure, How to Set Goals.

The Stop & Think Social Skills kit comes with everything that teachers and support staff need to implement the program—Manual, Reproducible Forms, Posters, Cue Cards, and Stop & Think signs that remind students to use their social skills. An essential part of every teacher's classroom management program, the Stop & Think Program has consistently demonstrated its ability to decrease discipline referrals to the Office, increase positive classroom interactions, and help students and teachers to be more productive and successful.

Training available.

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The Stop & Think Parenting Book and DVD: A Guide to Children's Good Behavior

This book is based on the nationally-acclaimed and evidence-based Stop & Think Social Skills Program. Accompanied by its 75-minute demonstration DVD, this program teaches parents how to teach their children the interpersonal, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills that will help them succeed in all settings.

Focusing on the preschool to late elementary school age span, this step-by-step book teaches children over 20 important behavioral skills—Listening, Following Directions, How to Interrupt, Accepting Consequences and Apologizing, Dealing with Teasing, How to Handle Peer Pressure—and how to use them in real life.

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Teaching Students Classroom and School Routines: From Preschool to High School

There are literally hundreds of social skills that can be taught in a classroom, across a school, or even at home. Many of these are taught in The Stop & Think Social Skills Program (purchased separately) at the preschool through secondary levels. For classroom or school building routines, however, different skills and skill scripts are needed.

Given this, this E-book focuses on: (a) an overview of Project ACHIEVE's Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS), (b) an overview of the Stop & Think Social Skills process; and (c) the specific skill scripts needed to teach over 25 Classroom and Building Routines at the prekindergarten to Grade 1, Grades 2 and 3, Grades 4 and 5, and Middle/High School levels.

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The Stop & Think Early Childhood Songbook: Teaching Social Skills through Music

This fun-filled CD has FIFTEEN lively and engaging original songs that help teach your child the most important Stop & Think social skills at the preschool through Grade 1 levels. Designed to reinforce the Stop & Think approach, these memorable songs help children to learn the steps to each social skill in a fun and exciting way. Complete with a children's chorus and talented assortment of musicians, this CD is the perfect way to begin your "Circle Time" at school or to put your children to bed at night.

The Stop & Think Songbook can be used with EITHER the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (for school) or the Stop & Think Parenting Book (for home). Your children will love this CD! (The fact that they are also learning social skills will be "our little secret!")
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The Stop & Think Early Childhood Social Skills Posters

These FOURTEEN FULL COLOR posters show pictures of children modeling the fourteen different Stop & Think social skills at the preschool through Grade 1 levels. Complete with the specific steps needed to teach each skill, these posters are printed on durable, coated card stock for years of use in your classroom or home.

As an added BONUS: The back of each poster has the lyrics to the corresponding song on the **The Stop & Think Songbook CD**. This way, both teachers and parents can teach children their Stop & Think social skills while singing along with the CD.

The Core Knowledge Social Skill Posters can be used with EITHER the Stop & Think Social Skills Program (for school) or the Stop & Think Parenting Book (for home). Your children will really "connect" with these pictures ! ! ! This will help them to learn their Stop & Think social skills just that much faster!
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The Stop & Think Social Skills Program: Exploring its Research Base and Rationale

The Stop & Think Social Skills Program (published by Voyager/Sopris Learning)   is one of the top prekindergarten through middle/high school social skills curricula in the country today. Designated an evidence-based program by the federal government in 2000, this Document describes the underlying scientific principles that explain why it works, and provides specific examples from the curriculum for each principle. The Document concludes by discussing how school districts should review, evaluate, and select their social skills programs.
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