



# **Data-Driven Social- Emotional Behavior (SEB) Interventions: Effective, Learner-Centered Supports at Each Tier**

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**Bolster your SEB intervention program with strong Tier 1 practices and data-driven Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions**

eBOOK

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# Section One

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## INTRODUCTION

A multi-tiered system of support, or MTSS, is a framework with a tiered infrastructure that uses data to help match academic and social-emotional behavior (SEB) assessment and instructional resources to each and every student's needs.

In adopting an MTSS, educators shift away from a singular focus on academics toward a “whole child” approach to supporting student success and well-being through many interconnected, data-informed lenses.

For many districts, this involves a significant focus on supporting students' SEB needs, which has been shown by research to drive positive student outcomes. Studies consistently show that increasing students' social and emotional competence has a positive impact on their ability to succeed. In fact, students who participate in SEL programs have on average an 11-point gain in academic achievement (Durlak, et al., 2011). Students with strong social and emotional competence have fewer behavior infractions in the classroom and are better able to manage stress and depression (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).

Yet addressing the SEB needs of students has left many teams grappling with a number of logistical and procedural challenges. Historically, many districts have primarily addressed SEB needs through Tier 2 and Tier 3 resources, often causing demand to exceed the availability of supports. Just as in academics, districts have a limited number of specialized SEB resources—including staff, dollars, time, and professional development—with which to provide targeted and intensive supports for students in need.

### Who is this eBook for?

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» **Administrators, behavior coaches, and PBIS team members:**

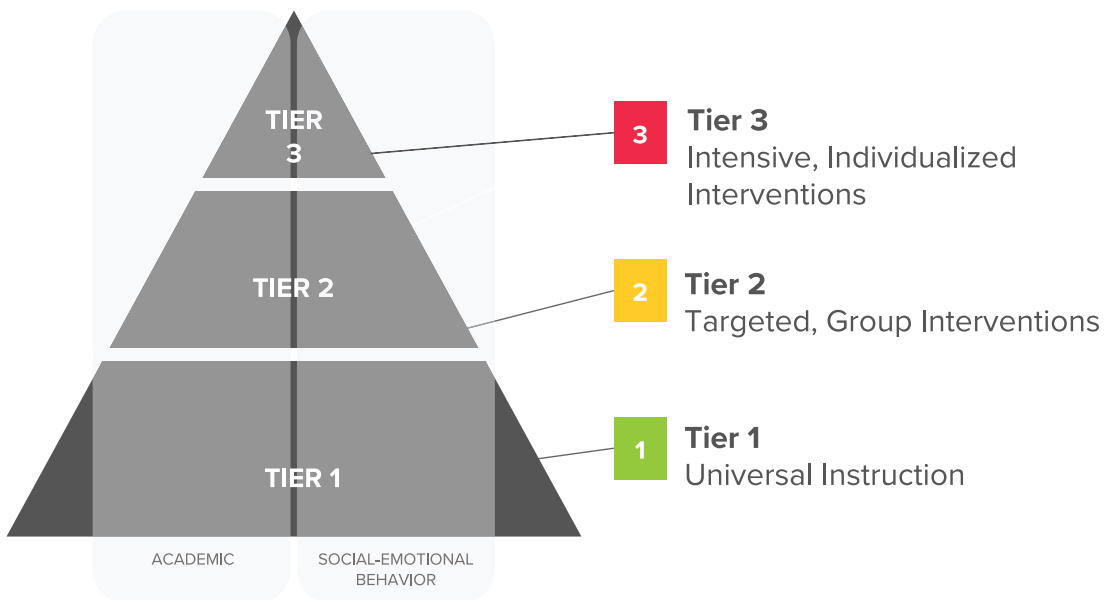
Set your teams up for success by identifying practices and procedures that may need to be examined or supported at the systems-level in each tier.

» **Classroom teachers:**

Learn strategies that can be implemented immediately in the classroom.

In order to realistically and sustainably meet all students' SEB needs—especially at a time when the prevalence, range, and depth of students' SEB needs are particularly great—schools should:

1. Start with a focus on preventing negative behavior and promoting positive behavior at Tier 1
2. Use data to target Tier 2 and Tier 3 SEB interventions for students most in need for additional supports



This eBook examines both elements, starting with strategies for strengthening Tier 1 SEB practices to ensure fewer students require SEB interventions in order to succeed.

## Section Two

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# STARTING WITH A STRONG TIER 1

As noted in the Introduction, one of the most important elements of an effective intervention program is ensuring a strong universal tier that meets the needs of the majority of students.

Tier 1 SEB strategies should reinforce positive behaviors that promote successful outcomes and prevent problem behaviors from occurring in the first place. This section explores three areas to bolster Tier 1 practices:

1. Universal Screening for Tier 1 SEB Skills
2. Classroom Strategies for Preventing Problematic Behaviors
3. Building Strong Student Relationships

**Get the bigger picture.**

Take a deep dive into using universal screening data to support each tier.

[Download our Universal Screening Toolkit to learn more](#)

## Universal Screening for Tier 1 SEB Skills

Universal screening is the process of gathering academic and SEB data about all the students in a class, grade, school, or district. Screening data are gathered at the beginning of the year and then typically one or two additional times (e.g., fall, winter, and spring) using a valid, reliable, and standardized screening assessment, such as the Social, Academic, Emotional Behavior Risk Screener ([SAEBRS](#)).

Screening identifies which students are demonstrating risk on SEB and academic skills, reveals skill gaps within the universal tier, and helps determine Tier 1 effectiveness. The universal tier is usually considered “effective” when at least 80% of students are succeeding and on track while having only received core instruction (with no additional intervention supports). Districts use this 80% rule because they typically only have the resources (e.g., staff, programming, time, and dollars) to provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to approximately 20% of students.

If screening data show that more than 20% of students require SEB interventions to address missing skills, districts should address those widespread needs at the universal tier—not through Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions—to avoid depleting and debilitating their SEB intervention program. Focusing resources around practices and professional learning that improve Tier 1 enables districts to address the needs of all students and conserve specialized resources for students most in need.



By using screening data to better understand SEB skill gaps demonstrated by their unique students, educators can align Tier 1 interventions and intensifications to help students where that support is truly needed. For example, a universal assessment may show that a high number of students within a school are experiencing elevated levels of anxiety. Educators can use this information in a proactive, prevention-oriented way to start a Tier 1 intervention around teaching all students techniques for effectively managing stress (Kilgus, 2020).

Screening tools can also identify SEB concerns early on, before they become too severe and when they are more responsive to intervention. In the case of the student with high anxiety levels, a universal screener would identify his needs early on, and educators could use this insight to create an intervention plan that helps him manage his anxiety before he resorts to aggression or falls into depression. Schools are increasingly turning towards the universal screening approach to proactively address students' SEB needs, which in the long term is a much more effective use of valuable time and resources (Kilgus, 2020).

### Pinpoint Which Social-Emotional Skills Need Support in the Classroom

CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) has identified five areas of social-emotional competence that support student learning and development. Discover how our Social, Academic, Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS) helps you measure students' skill levels with each competency.

[LEARN MORE](#)



# Classroom Strategies for Preventing Problematic Behaviors

As the adage says: “The best intervention is prevention.” This is as true for SEB needs as it is for academic ones.

Comparatively speaking, preventing problem behavior does require more time than reacting to behaviors and providing consequences. However, focusing on prevention up-front ultimately creates more time and opportunity for students to be in the classroom learning and engaged with their peers.

Here are four key areas in which to focus Tier 1 prevention work in the classroom:

## 1. Know what to avoid

Though educators may develop strategies unique to individual students, there are common areas to avoid with all students to help prevent problem behaviors. These include: power struggles, long periods of work with little to no movement, and reprimands—especially when reprimanding students in front of their peers (Simonsen, 2015).

## 2. Understand the learning environment

Ensure seating arrangements in onsite learning environments promote positive peer interactions. Be aware of where potential distractions may be and keep students out of those areas during learning time. These include louder areas of the classroom, such as by a door or near the furnace or air conditioning unit. Be aware of students’ proximity to peers who may instigate problematic behaviors (Epstein, et. al, 2008).

## 3. Guarantee opportunities for more positive feedback than negative feedback

A 4:1 positive to negative feedback is often recommended (Parsonson, 2012). This also encourages a stronger teacher-student relationship, which is explored more below.

## 4. Address problem behaviors immediately

Establish a process for addressing problem behaviors immediately and in a supportive manner, preferably one-on-one, to help limit the occurrence of future behaviors. This provides students with immediate feedback and keeps the situation at the forefront. It also helps with having a restorative conversation with the student, identifying ways the student can improve in the future.



There are many resources available to help educators navigate how to implement these Tier 1 classroom practices, some of which are provided at the end of this eBook. Small adjustments to daily practices can have a big impact on the classroom environment and prevent problem behaviors from occurring.

## Building Strong Student Relationships

Research has found that relationships are critical to successful teaching and learning. Strong teacher-student relationships are associated with increases in engagement, attendance, and grades, as well as decreases in problematic behaviors, suspensions, and dropout rates (Sparks, 2019).

In addition to providing deliberate, positive feedback to students, as discussed above, there are a number of other ways to develop a positive relationship with students.

One example is the 2x10 intervention. This is an evidence-based practice in which the educator spends two minutes a day, 10 days in a row talking to a student who needs support. These conversations may be about the student's favorite book series, hobbies, or friends and family. Having one-on-one conversations, even brief ones, can help educators build stronger, more trusting relationships with students that mitigate behavior issues and increase positive outcomes.

Another way to approach positive relationship-building with students is to establish positive communication and feedback with the student's family or caregiver. Just as educators deliberately communicate positive feedback with students, educators can implement systems to promote positive feedback with families.

Learn more about strengthening the universal tier to support all students.

[Download the MTSS Interventions: Increasing Effectiveness at Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 eBook](#)

## Understanding a Student’s Homelife

No matter what prevention strategies are put in place in the classroom, students’ lives at home often impact their behavior in school.

Many aspects of homelife—from access to the internet to having a reliable source of meals to having support when completing homework—can impact their academic performance. Knowing more about students’ homelife environments can inform strategies to support learners during instructional time.

This information can be gathered through surveys with students and/or parents, families, and guardians. Surveys do offer the benefit of providing data that can be aggregated to drive system-level supports. If surveys are not being used, other methods such as writing prompts related to students’ home or family life can provide useful information about helping each learner succeed.

These strategies help create a solid foundation to ensure that Tier 1 resources and efforts are aligned around the needs of all students so that the vast majority of students are able to maintain positive SEB functioning without additional interventions.

The next section will explore how to maximize the impact of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions provided to those students who have the greatest levels of SEB need.



# Section Three

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## ALIGNING EFFECTIVE TIER 2 AND TIER 3 SEB INTERVENTIONS

With strong Tier 1 supports in place, educators are able to turn their attention to the students in need of targeted or individualized SEB support. But with limited time and resources, how can educators select interventions that are most likely to have a positive impact on students?

The answer is to use data. By examining different types of data, educators are able to align an intervention tied to a specific skill gap or to a specific motivation. This section explores these ideas further.

### Universal Screening

Just as SEB universal screening data can be used to identify Tier 1 SEB needs, they can also be used to group students for interventions to help them develop the SEB skills they need to succeed in learning.

If the behavior need is indeed rooted in an SEB skill gap, using valid and reliable SEB screening data helps ensure that a selected SEB intervention is aligned to the actual need—and therefore more likely to help students move forward.

However, it's also possible that a problematic behavior is not necessarily rooted in an SEB skill gap, and is instead serving a different purpose or is fueled by a motivation.

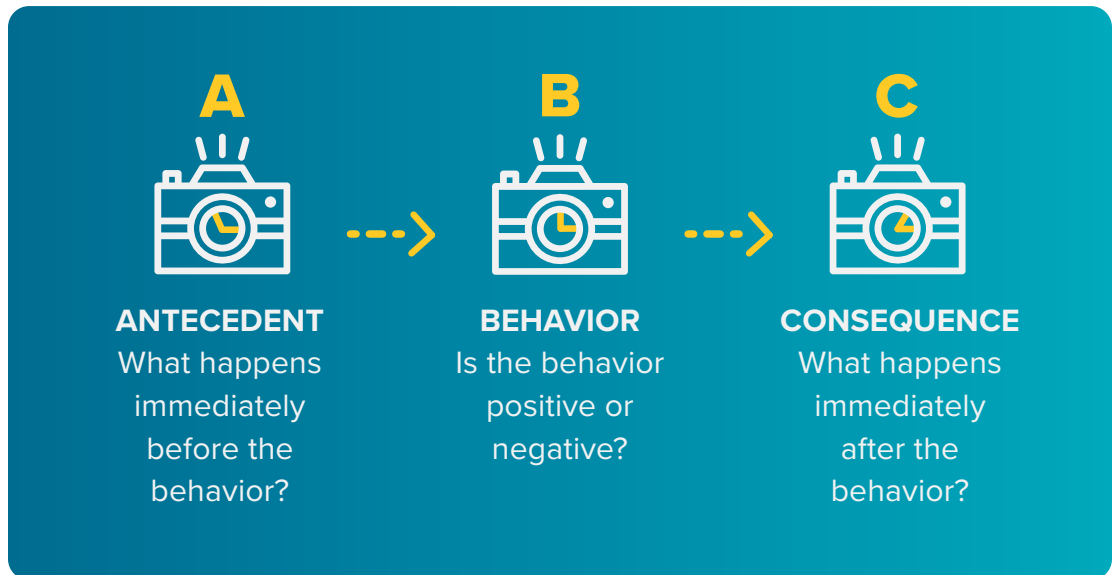
What other data can be gathered or used to guide SEB interventions?

How can SEB screening data improve student outcomes?

[Read the case study](#)

## Analyze for Antecedents

An antecedent is an event or trigger that happens immediately before a specific behavior occurs. Antecedents are part of the ABCs of behavior: Antecedent, Behavior, and Consequence (National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII)).

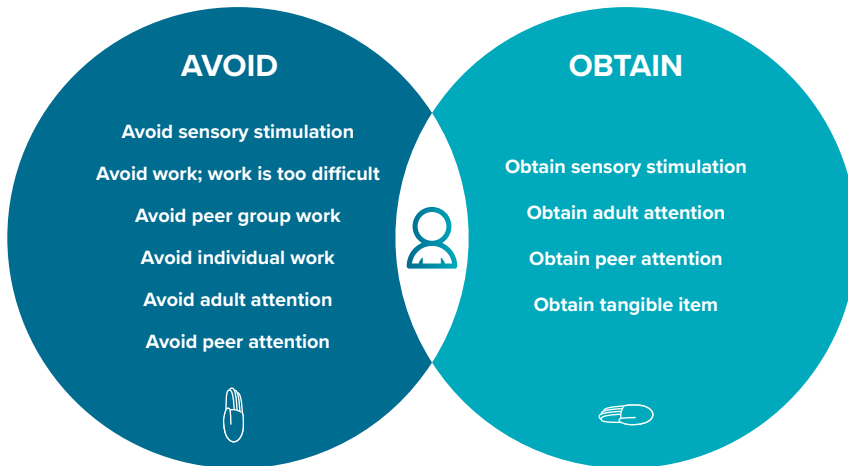


An example: a student who struggles with reading is asked to read in front of their peers but refuses, and the educator writes the student up. Here, the antecedent is that the student was asked to read aloud, the negative behavior is his refusal to read, and the consequence is the write-up. Ultimately, the student avoids the task, which was the student's goal or motivation.

If we know where students' strengths lie and where they need support, educators can better predict the antecedents and alter the learning environment to promote positive outcomes. For example, if the student demonstrates positive behavior during peer interactions, an educator can incorporate more group activities within instruction and be strategic in the peer groupings.

## Analyze the Function of the Behavior

When a problem behavior is not related to an SEB skill gap, it is often because a student is trying to accomplish one of two things: avoid something or obtain something.



In this case, knowing the function of the behavior or the motivation should drive the SEB intervention selection. Just as a math intervention would not help improve a student's reading skills, an SEB intervention that is mismatched to the motivation is not likely to significantly support the student.

For example, one of the most common SEB interventions is Check-In/Check-Out (CICO). However, it is not always the most effective selection because it doesn't always address the function or motivation behind a student's need (unless modified appropriately).



When a behavior is motivation-driven, a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) can also be used to determine the student’s motivation. An FBA is an “assessment that is used to determine the environmental functions of wanted and unwanted behaviors.” Research shows that interventions informed by an FBA are more effective than those that are not (Martella, Nelson, Marchand-Martella, & O’Reilly, 2012). Examples of FBAs include the Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff (FACTS), Intervention Selection Profile-Function (ISP-Function), Functional Analysis Screening Tool (FAST), and Motivation Assessment Scale (MAS) (Kilgus & von der Embse, 2021).

## TIER 2 & TIER 3 SEB INTERVENTION EXAMPLES

- Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)
- Academic Behavior CICO
- Internalizing CICO
- Social Skills Instruction
- Homework, Organization, and Planning Skills (HOPS)
- Resilience Education Product (REP)
- Breaks are Better
- Cognitive Behavior Intervention for Trauma in School (CBITS)
- Mentoring
- Behavior Contract
- Class Pass Intervention
- Positive Peer Reporting
- Self-Monitoring
- School-Home Note

## Consider Multiple Whole Child Data Points Before Placing a Student in an Intervention

Even when using screening data or FBA data, it's always important to consider multiple data points when selecting an intervention (whether for SEB or academics), particularly when aligning individual student supports.

Consider examining the following:

- SEB screening results
- Antecedents
- Behavior incident data, including the function of the behavior
- Attendance
- Academic performance in classes
- Areas of success, high performance, or positive behavior
- Strengths and interests
- Past academic and SEB interventions and their effectiveness
- Health office visits
- Qualitative data, such as teacher observations, parent phone call notes, and more

For districts using **eduCLIMBER**, these data are available on the Student Profile for both current and past years.

The screenshot displays the eduCLIMBER interface for a student named Marcus Shusta. The top navigation bar includes 'eduCLIMBER', 'District', 'School', and 'Grade'. The student's profile is for the 2020-2021 school year. Key data points are summarized in colored boxes: 78% Full Day Rate, 98.9% SIS Reported Rate, 24 Forms, 27 Comments, 4 tags, 2 Observations, and 4 Thresholds. The profile is divided into several sections: Student Information (Demographics, Incidents, Interventions, Emotional Management), Latest Assessment Scores (Literacy, Mathematics, Social-Emotional/Behavior), and Combined Performance (Student Engagement, Parent Engagement, Home WiFi/Internet, Participation). The student's status for 'Number Sense Intervention Math - 2020-2021' is 'Not on Track', while 'Emotional Management SEL - 2020-2021' is 'On Track'.

# Section Four

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## MAKING IT WORK: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

This eBook has already explored two important components for SEB intervention success:

1. Start with a focus on preventing negative behavior and promoting positive behavior at Tier 1
2. Use data to target Tier 2 and Tier 3 SEB interventions for students most in need of additional supports

This section explores a few additional recommendations for implementing for success.

### Create a Common Language

One of the most important steps for success is to create a common language around SEB and SEB data.

It can be eye-opening to see how different educators define different subjective behaviors and other key terms. What one teacher sees as an office referral for disrespectful behavior, another educator might see as a minor referral or not warranting a referral at all.

Without a common language, it's difficult to implement and sustain an effective district or school-wide SEB supports program. It is also almost impossible to ensure accuracy and consistency in behavior incident data reporting. For this reason, it's worthwhile to take a step back to establish a common language with your team.



## T-Charts

T-charts can be a useful resource for guiding these discussions and ultimately providing both a definition and specific example of each term for the team’s common reference. Work as a team to establish a common definition and specific example around terms such as:

- Tier 1 vs. Tier 2
- Minor vs. major incidents
- When multiple minors equal a major
- Consequence
- Punishment
- Acknowledgment
- Reward
- Function of behavior/motivation

**Figure 3: Example Behavior T-Chart**

Classroom Managed MINORS	Office Managed MAJORS
<p><b>Physical Contact:</b> Student violates another student’s personal space and physically touches him/her in a non-aggressive manner.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● playing with another student’s hair</li> <li>● untying/tying another student’s shoelaces</li> <li>● writing on each other’s belongings</li> <li>● poking another student</li> <li>● pushing/shoving in line</li> <li>● encroaching on another’s personal space</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Aggression:</b> Student engages in actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● hitting</li> <li>● kicking</li> <li>● biting</li> <li>● throwing an object</li> <li>● using a weapon</li> <li>● roughhousing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Misuse of Property:</b> Student uses materials inappropriately.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● poking holes in paper</li> <li>● sword fighting with pencils</li> <li>● standing on chairs/tables</li> <li>● destruction of supplies</li> <li>● swinging/tossing supplies</li> <li>● hanging on bathroom stall</li> <li>● sticking inappropriate objects into the pencil sharpener</li> </ul>	<p><b>Property Damage:</b> Student defaces or destroys property.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● writing on, scratching, and/or poking holes in tables or desks, etc...</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(Kettle Moraine School District, 2021)</p>

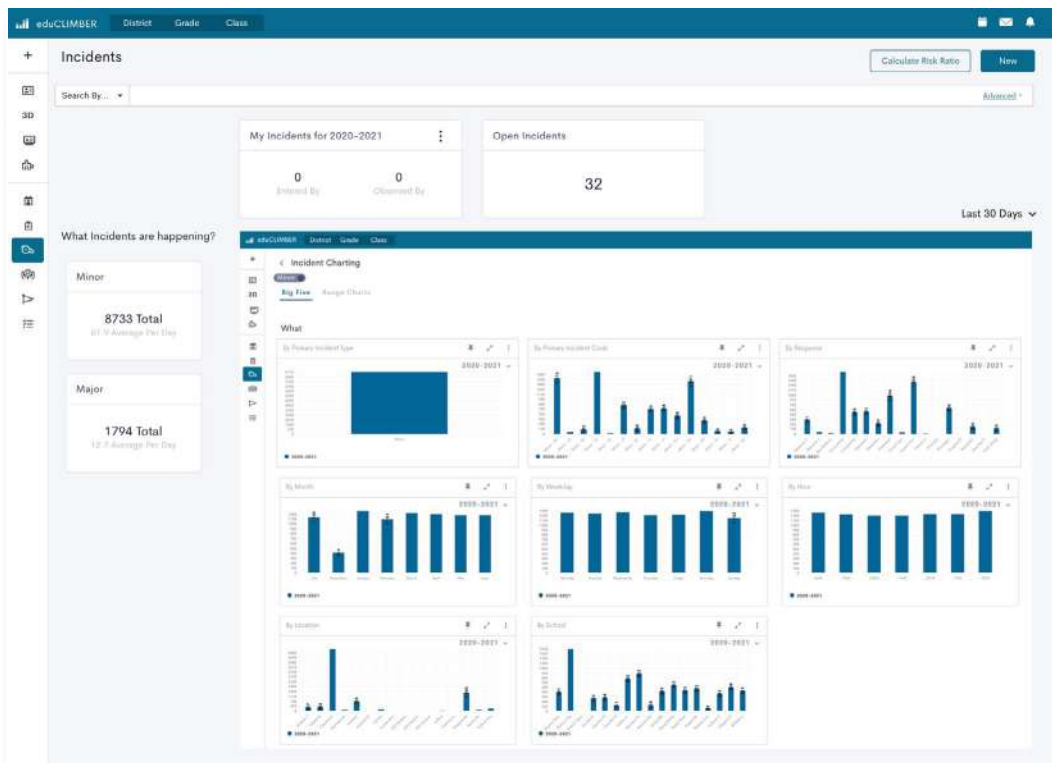
## Incident Data Tracking

Teachers must have a system in place for documenting behavior incidents—both major and minor, positive and negative. This can be done through a system such as [eduCLIMBER](#), as well as through other methods like paper-and-pencil, online forms, or your Student Information System.

When gathering this data, be sure to document a number of different areas, including:

- Specifics about the behaviors
- Antecedent
- Function of behavior/motivation
- Location
- Time of day

It is especially important to gather data around the function of behavior or motivation for negative behavior. As noted in the previous section, the function or motivation of the behavior is key to selecting an intervention that is appropriate to the student's needs and is a good use of time and resources.



## Start Small and Scaffold

For many teams starting with SEB interventions, some of the biggest barriers to successful implementation are around resources. Districts are strapped for dollars and instructional minutes, which can make the prospect of implementing SEB interventions feel unrealistic and overwhelming.

However, not all SEB interventions have to be elaborate or expensive, and small changes can yield big impacts on student success.

Below are examples of “simple” Tier 1 SEB interventions that can be implemented without any additional personnel, resources, or support.

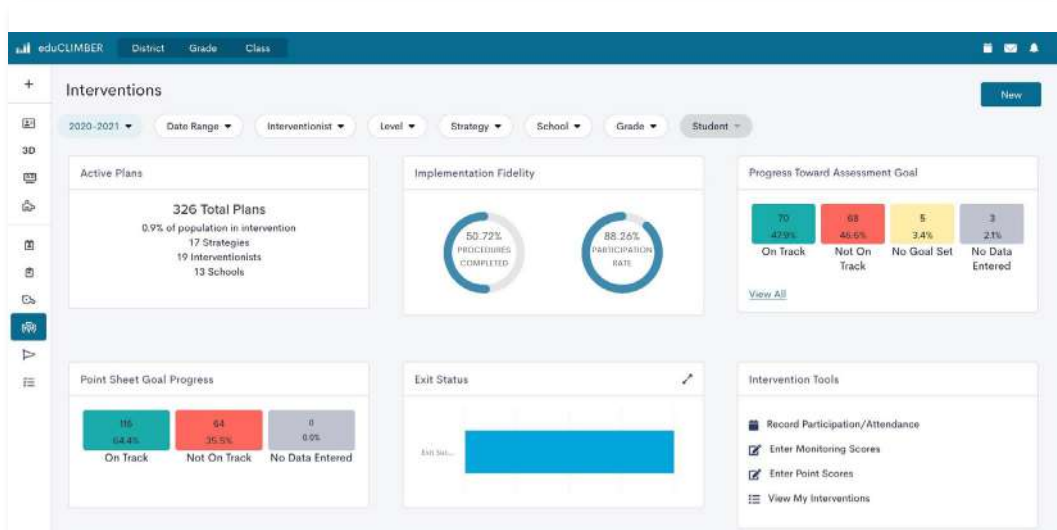
- Positive Behavior Reinforcement
- 2x10 Intervention
- Good Behavior Game
- Classroom Lottery
- Classwide Point System
- Providing Clear Structure, Rules, and Routines
- Peer Modeling
- Strategic Peer Partnering
- Write a Behavior Contract
- Frequent and Positive Communication with Parents or Guardians
- Focus on Relationship Building
- Non-Verbal Cues
- 4:1 Positive to Negative Feedback Processes
- Adjusting Classroom Environments



## Review Your Current Systems

It's good practice to review your current systems around SEB supports to ensure they're working for students and staff. This includes analyzing your overall referral practices and inventorying available SEB intervention strategies. Questions to ask include:

- What does our current system for SEB intervention referrals look like today?
  - Do we have data to support this work?
  - Does our process support a review of multiple data points?
  - Do we have a common language for defining SEB terms?
- What SEB interventions do we currently offer in our school or district?
- Do we consider the student's school life?
- Do we consider the student's homelife?
- Do we start with CICO by default?
- Do we have the supports/resources needed for other interventions?
- What aspects of our current systems may need further review?
- Do we invite all educators to have a voice in the process?



# Section Five

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## CONCLUSION

The importance of supporting SEB functioning has been affirmed by research and underscored by the experiences and challenges of the pandemic.

Incorporating SEB supports into an MTSS helps ensure that districts have the right data and the right practices to take a whole child approach to supporting student success. Moreover, it ensures that educators have a framework by which to start with a focus on Tier 1 SEB supports aligned to the needs of all students before analyzing data to drive impactful Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

### **Bolster SEB Success for All Students with Illuminate**

SEB data cannot inherently improve outcomes. The power lies in getting the right data into the hands of educators, combined with the right tools to make SEB data part of decision making, collaboration, and system-level strategy and improvement.

Illuminate's Social-Emotional Behavior (SEB) Solution combines a suite of SEB screening and progress monitoring assessments with whole child data visualizations and built-in tools for behavior incident tracking and reporting, SEB intervention management, and student plans.

For more information, visit our [website](#) or [request a demo](#).

# Section Six

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*Illuminate Education equips educators to take a data-driven approach to serving the whole child. Our solution combines comprehensive assessment, MTSS management and collaboration, and real-time dashboard tools, and puts them in the hands of educators. As a result, educators can monitor learning and growth, identify academic and social-emotional behavioral needs, and align targeted supports in order to accelerate learning for each student.*

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