

Acknowledgements

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I thank the number of wonderful educators for their willingness to share their ideas, data, resources and time during this sabbatical in New Zealand and stateside. Their commitment to their students who have learning difficulties and differences is exemplary. In particular a special thanks to the University of Oregon for opening your doors and turning me into a massive Ducks fan, The Tacoma Whole Child Team, Northwestern PBIS for supporting my journey and to my dot connector and great friend Ewa Campbell for sprinkling star and gold dust with every professional and personal learning conversation we had. The world is better because of people like you.

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Last but not least, thank you to my beautiful wife Kate and stunning offspring for supporting me to do this for my improvement as a leader. The extra time I got to spend with you have been treasured times.

Focus for Sabbatical

Investigate the implementation of tier 3 and post tier 3 Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS). To form partnerships with schools in United States who have successfully implemented Tier 3 of the PBIS anti-bullying programme in their schools. The New Zealand form of PBIS is Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L).

Context

As school principals we have a responsibility to our school community to provide a safe physical and emotional environment in which students can grow and learn. The purpose of the sabbatical was to further investigate and prepare for tier 3 of PB4L, not currently in existence in New Zealand, and investigate supplement programmes to support PB4L.

In 2014 I inherited a school that had the lowest achievement and poorest behaviour in Hastings (Education Counts, 2014). A significant aspect, identified in an early senior team evaluation, was bullying and the negative impact it had on learning and student well being. New Zealand has appalling statistics when it comes to bullying and what can happen when bullying is not addressed.

To assist with the change we implemented the Positive Behaviour for Learning Programme (PB4L) funded by the Ministry of Education. Bullying is an issue for all schools, it's a New Zealand problem and the PB4L programme is a part of the solution. Since 2015, PB4L has made a significant change to school wide behaviour and academic achievement. Our data improved from the 40% to 70% across the National Standards and behaviour of the students has increased dramatically. One of the reasons is because the ownership of PB4L lies with the classroom teachers and is supported by the community. The Education Review Office identified the success of PB4L as a significant factor for positive outcomes for our priority learners. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and, its New Zealand parallel, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) are proactive approaches to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture that are needed for all students in a school. Through its implementation they work to achieve social, emotional and academic success by teaching behaviour and having buy in at all school levels (students, Families, communities, teachers, leaders) (Chard, Harn, Sugai, & Horner, 2008; Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002). Attention is focused on creating and sustaining primary (School-wide - Tier 1), secondary (Classroom - Tier 2), and tertiary (Tier 3 - Individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all students by making targeted misbehavior less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional (McIntosh, Filter, Bennett, Ryan, & Sugai, 2010; McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008). PBIS and PB4L are not interventions but supports (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012).

Each external school evaluation (SET) we have had for PB4L has resulted in great success rates against each key performance indicator. We have moved from tier 1 to tier 2 and we are projected to enter tier 3 in 2019/20. School wide data using a specialised PB4L monitoring system (SWIS), in 2017, still indicates that our school has some bullying concerns and we need to continue to develop our PB4L supports. Information provided to us by the local Ministry office states that "at present Tier 3 does not exist in the New Zealand context. We are running the national pilot here in Hawkes Bay with two schools (Peterhead Primary and Flaxmere Primary) - this is likely to run into next year (2018)."

PB4L has been established in New Zealand for many years. At conferences and at PB4L sessions I have pondered many questions around the tiers as they seem, to the author, to be very clear, concise and integrated. I pondered the question of - If I am hearing schools proudly announce which tier of PB4L they were on, what actually constitutes being a “tier 3” school? This was more prevalent in 2018 with the Ministry of Education's launch of a “tier 3” pilot programme and schools who promote themselves as a “tier 3” school. Reflection of observed personal practice, at local schools we collaborate with in PB4L, would suggest that even in the late stages “tier 1” and “tier 2” key elements of “tier 3” are visible and developing but not measured. I also ponder why we have left it so late to begin a “tier 3” process of recognition.

According to Rob Horner at the 2017 PB4L Conference in Auckland, PBIS has been implemented, in “high fidelity”, in the United States since the 1980's. They have been on a significant journey and are well established in “tier 3”. The sabbatical allowed me to invest time into looking at what these schools have implemented to be successful at “tier 3”, what supporting programmes they have implemented and what roadblocks they may have faced.

How has PBIS been implemented and at what age level is PBIS?

In the context of Washington, Oregon and California, the majority of PBIS has been implemented at Elementary level. Arriving at schools, school districts and universities in the United States I was pleasantly surprised to hear that many were familiar with New Zealand's PB4L system and resources. American educators acknowledged the hard work and dedication that the New Zealand Ministry of Education's PB4L team had completed and that in some cases the New Zealand resources were being used in America by American educators. This is of high praise to the coaches of MOE PB4L as enablers of PBIS.

It was a common response during my visit that in the United States Schools they do not label themselves as “Tier 1”, “Tier 2” or “Tier 3”. They identify only as being a PBIS School and look to identify what each tier looks, sounds and feels like in their district or local school. Each school always referred back to the essential elements of the PBIS' 3 tiered structure and no “Tiers” of stage that they were working at. I was stumped, particularly when I asked what a Tier 3 school looked like? and was responded to with the question, what is a Tier 3 School?

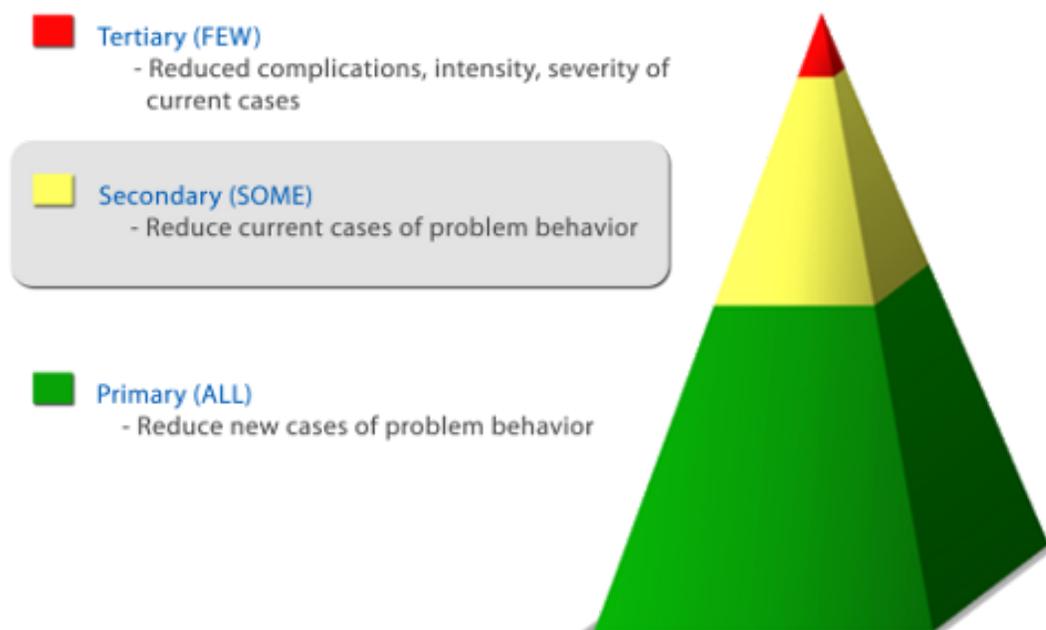
The question then became, what does a successful PBIS school look like?

It was generally agreed that the PBIS explanations were as follows:

Tier 1 - focuses on the culture of the school by cohesively uniting all the adults in using common language, common practices, and consistent application of positive and negative reinforcements.

Tier 2 - focuses on providing intensive or targeted interventions to support students who are not responding to Tier 1 Support efforts. Interventions within Tier 2 are more intensive since a smaller number of students requiring services from within the yellow part of the triangle are at risk for engaging in more serious problem behavior and need a little more support.

Tier 3 - focuses on the needs of individuals who exhibit patterns of intense problem behavior that disrupted the quality of life across multiple domains (school, home, community).



The common answer by schools about success of PBIS came in the reference to an amazing school culture that was built by the learning community, constant shared expectations of adults and no school suspensions. “If you get tier 1 supports right with teacher passion you are on the road to PBIS success.” (American Principal, 2018)

Has the PBIS programme needed any adaptation and if so has any fidelity been lost?

A word that was often used was “Fidelity” and I was often getting confused with the word and begun asking what was meant by it. I came to the conclusion that “Fidelity” often meant the same or something different to educators when talking about PBIS.

PBIS implemented with fidelity could mean:

- 1 - the number of schools implementing PBIS
- 2 - the number of schools actively implementing PBIS
- 3 - the number of schools successfully implementing PBIS

In a New Zealand context we would use the later statement. Therefore I could not come to a significant conclusion to this answer. The data looked over and discussed were highly positive about the impact of PBIS in learning communities and the schools implementing it had a very different feel to those just starting their journey.

At the centre of behaviour success from observations and conversations were that schools operating at a high PBIS level had a very clear and strong culture and every adult involved in the learning community was delivering the same message and level of education. Each school had a leader who was leading the change and modelling behaviour to other adults in the community. At these schools there were community people working within the school and these people operated their own room for parents and families and offered external support or help from community groups. Everyone belonged. The culture established from PBIS Tier 1 was completed thoroughly and with the community. Not by a district, principal or teachers. Many educators had said that they needed to adapt and that came in the form of changing something to fit within the context of each school instead of a significant change due to parameters set by higher authorities each school or district had to answer to. Those that made bigger changes either expertly hid the change or had full support.

Have you linked PBIS with any other behaviour programmes?

It was clear from observation and conversations that PBIS is at a real crossroads and in order for it to survive there needs to be adaption of the programme in the USA. This is not a negative for PBIS but an analysis of where schools and researchers are at.

The findings from the sabbatical reinforces the voice of New Zealand schools who were PB4L schools, but have moved on to another model or melded PB4L into their own or

another behaviour model. One interesting point is that nearly all schools identified that in order to have any successful behaviour programme, PBIS needed to be the beginning of the journey. Most American educationalists confirmed that PBIS had established a positive behaviour culture in their schools, but after a certain time they needed to adapt the programme for their own community or district context so that the program did not become stagnated. Some have done so in secret as to not upset the “powers that be”. With any programme you have the hardcore and the relaxed group of leaders in a wider community.

There were discrepancies in the amount of time that each school decided they needed to hybrid the PBIS supports or not. As examples, one school became more involved with community groups and did not use another behaviour programme for 10 years and a change of leader, another had continued with the PBIS for 17 years with minimal change, One district had ownership over PBIS and had established one goal and the 18 schools came up with their own 3 in their own community context and one community has used PBIS as part of its behaviour programmes district wide. This had me wonder what the significant roadblock to PBIS was? Each school and district had the same answer. The teachers within the behaviour interaction and a lack of common expected practice. I had to agree in our own school context.

I was able to have 5 conversations with researchers from the University of Oregon, The University of Washington and Portland University. The one thing that really stuck out was that while there was solid foundations in Tier 1 and Tier 2 of PBIS, Tier 3 was a little murky. There was agreement that there hasn't been enough research into Tier 3 and this is the point they were at as researchers. Each had identified a “hole” in the research and were working really hard with the schools connected to each university to add peer reviewed work to strengthen or adapt PBIS. It was amazing to hear the work being compiled.

Many of the answers for my sabbatical came with a meeting with the Tacoma Whole Child Initiative Team in Tacoma, Washington. PBIS had originally been the foundation of the Tacoma School Districts behaviour approach but they realised, with researchers and based on evidence, that they needed to adapt. Rather than looking at just PBIS for educational success, they posed the question, what else needs to be included for behavioural supports for our children? This question and their philosophy spoke to my inklings and hunches about positive student learning success lying with and out of PB4L. This whole child initiative was brave enough to add and develop on from PBIS. The whole child initiative uses a multi column approach in which PBIS was one pillar with 7 others: Social Emotional Learning, Physical and Mental Wellness, Trauma

Sensitive Practices, Signature Whole Child Practices, Restorative Practices, Advanced Tiers and Continuous Improvement. The premise of the Whole Child approach was that sometimes there are other concerns that may cause behaviour other than those in PBIS and how as educators we can identify the foundation of behaviour outside of a normal behaviour assessment, such as a function based assessment.

	Social Emotional Learning	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports	Physical and Mental Wellness	Trauma Sensitive Practices	Signature Whole Child Practices	Restorative Practices	Advanced Tiers (under development)	Continuous Improvement
Objective	Social and emotional learning (SEL) will create a process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. – CASEL.org	PBIS will create safe, civil schools by giving a common purpose & approach to discipline, in hopes of creating an environment where students can grow socially & academically. We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define appropriate behaviors • teach appropriate behaviors • model positive social behaviors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reinforce those behaviors – PBIS.org 	Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle. - ASCD	Using a trauma-informed approach our staff: Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization." – SAMHSA.org	Aligning and implementing Signature Whole Child Practices during the school day and in the ELO space will create a process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. – CASEL.org	Restorative practices will use proactive informal and formal processes that build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict, reduce bullying, strengthen civil society, provide effective leadership, restore relationships and repair harm. - IIRP	Tier 2 (targeted group support for SOME students), and Tier 3 (individual support for a FEW students) systems of support will improve student skills and overall well-being socially, emotionally and academically.	Continuous Improvement will create an ongoing cycle of positive change and employee involvement using data to inform a small step-by-step incremental improvement strategy.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit Instruction of SEL Lessons • Integration and Infusion • Climate and Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations posted and taught • Teaching Matrix • Acknowledgement System • Proactive Discipline System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness • Brain Breaks for Movement • Healthy Breakfast, Lunch and Snack Choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding ACEs • Safe and Consistent • Building Relationships and Connectedness • Supporting and Teaching Emotion Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Greetings • 5:1 Positive Interactions • Zones of Regulation • Opportunities to Respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Building Circles • Repairing Harm Questions • Affective Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in, Check-Out • SS GRIN • Check and Connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Comprehensive Data to Inform Decisions • Representative Team with Active Administrator • Effective and Efficient Team Meetings • Always Evolving

(Tacomaschools.org, 2018)

The heart of the Tacoma approach lies in 4 key areas with explicit benchmarks:

- Academic Excellence - All students will perform at or above grade level and we will eliminate disparities among all groups.
- Partnerships - We will fully engage our parents, community and staff in the education of our children.
- Early Learning - We will focus on early assessment and intervention at the Pre-K through 3rd grade levels to ensure early academic success.
- Safety - All schools will create and maintain safe learning environments that promote excellent academic achievement. (Tacomaschools.org, 2018)

The approach gives the community a clear vision of outcomes, a common language to describe work, and a through-line for supporting the whole child at the classroom,

school, and community levels. It also allows for flexibility. This approach really resonated what a “Tier 3” could look like.

I had the chance to look at Greg Benner’s, University of Alabama, work while he was at the University of Washington. In particular his work on Closing the Achievement Gap of Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Behavior Intervention for Students With Externalizing Behavior Problems: Primary- Level Standard Protocol. From here came a conversation with Greg and then came an post PB4L epiphany. PB4L could be the base of a multi tiered approach in New Zealand but instead of having a programme which needed to meet each “tier” it could be melded into an educational flowchart for whole child success or in a PBIS context “Tier 3”. I also felt that if teachers were a “roadblock” why couldn’t it be any adult in the learning community and how would they fit into a behaviour learning flowchart approach. Greg’s new research connected with my thoughts about a flowchart system. It was here that I began sketching out a Mayfair Whole Child Approach to learning.

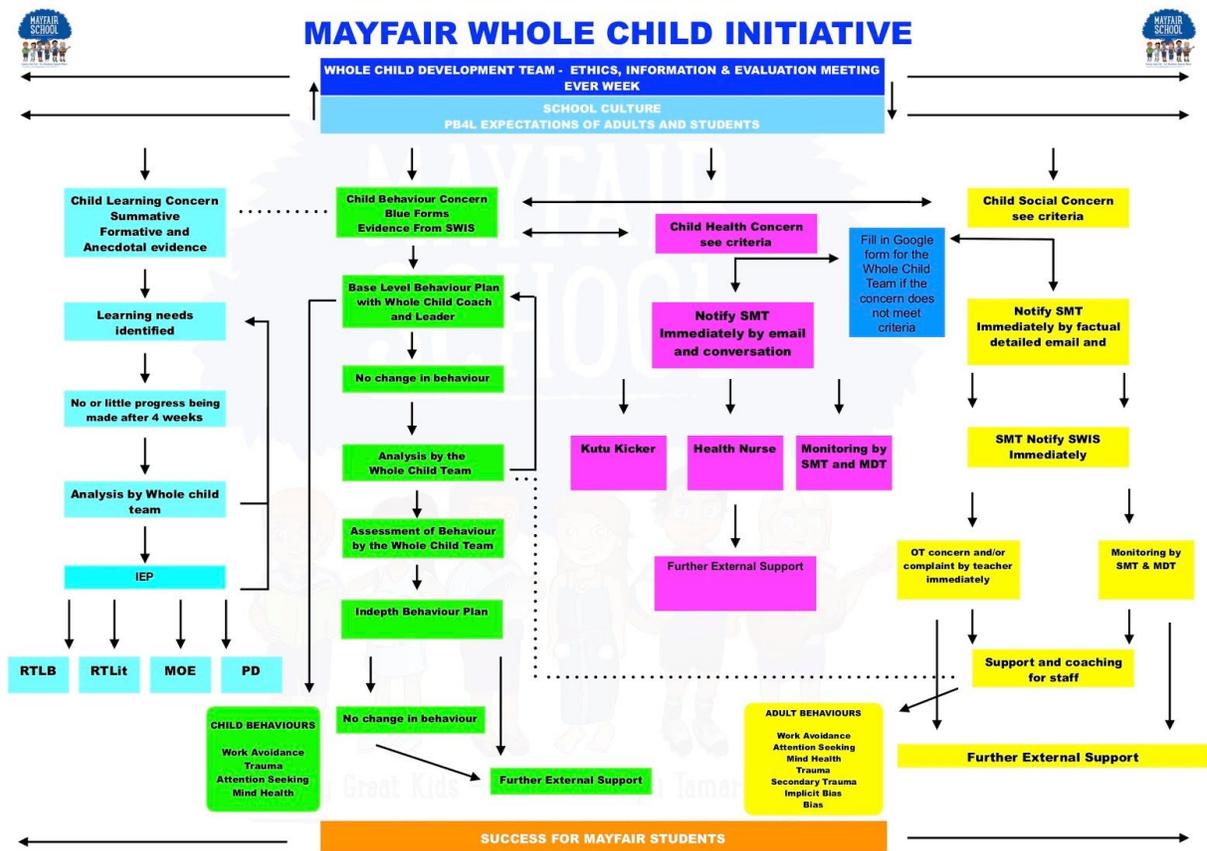
Conclusion

I firmly believe that the current system of PB4L is still lost at “Tier 3” and I believe that the answer lies somewhere in current research and trial and error in New Zealand Schools, not with the Ministry of Education. This being said there needs to be a partnership between PB4L Schools and the Ministry of Education to make this happen. Schools must be autonomous to trial and error. I also have a hunch that many more schools will leave PB4L unless there is a system change and that PB4L will follow the same path as PBIS. There needs to be adaptability and flexibility in its direction to suit each individual schools community context. I also believe that any public funds given to schools for PB4L needs to be accounted for in the schools annual report with evidence of the impact of such funds.

There is no denying that the foundation of PB4L and setting of culture and expectations in New Zealand Schools is second to none. Mayfair School is evidence of this and the funding that came with the support from the Ministry of Tier 1 and Tier 2 is world class and the reason for our communities success.

Over the past two terms the Mayfair School Team have been working on a whole child initiative with support from American experts. One glaring obstacle is that many New Zealand teachers and schools invent and implement outstanding cutting edge programmes and achieve success for students without ever having a research partner or the skills to self research. This means work often goes unpublished and never peered

reviewed for the benefit of children worldwide. The following is the model of the Mayfair Whole Child Initiative after 2 terms of facilitation.



The opportunity of this sabbatical has led to educational changes for the children of Mayfair School and improved my understanding of PB4L and its importance to the culture of New Zealand Schools.

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