

# Installing a Universal Behavior Screening Tool: Questions to Consider

Systematic screening is one proactive way educators can identify students who might need additional support, even when Tier 1 practices are being implemented with fidelity. In the previous brief in this series, *Selecting a Universal Behavior Screening Tool: Questions to Consider*, we offered guiding questions for educational leaders to consider as they review and select a universal behavior screening tool as part of the district and/or school-wide screening process. Questions regarding selecting a screening tool related to five major topics: student groups, behaviors of interest, cost, time and expertise, and person providing information. After district and school leaders have made an informed decision as to which screening tool to select, the next step is to install the screening tool according to the guidelines specified in the selected screener training or technical manual. In this brief, we offer guiding questions for installing a universal behavior screening tool in your school or district centered around five topics: setting up structures, providing professional learning, before your screening window opens, during your screening window, and after your screening window closes.

## 1. Setting Up Screening Structures

### What structures need to be set up to install your selected screening tool?

One of the first steps is to learn about the available resources to support accurate installation. For most tools, there is a technical manual to support installation that often also offers the psychometric evidence for its use. These guides feature step-by-step procedures as well as important practical considerations. Commercially available tools often include detailed guidance on how to set up the screening structures and free screening tools may also provide such information on their websites (see table in this brief for links to screening tool manuals). Consider reviewing the technical manuals, installation guides, available coaching guides, and professional learning materials to ensure the screening structure is set up for use appropriately.

Best practices suggest that there be a systems-level plan defining roles and responsibilities at the district and school level, to both launch and sustain systematic screening efforts. Oftentimes, districts leaders will identify a district screening coordinator and each school will identify two site-level leaders. Clear organizational structures with well-defined leadership facilitate a smooth screening process. There is no standard way to set up the organizational structure. The size of the district, number of faculty and staff, and available resources all are considered to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of the structure (See [Screening Coordinator Training Manual](#) for example organizational charts).

In optimal conditions, the organizational structure includes leadership teams at the district and site level who are responsible for installing the screening procedures, reviewing screening data, and providing ongoing support for screening. Most often the school screening coordinators are members of this team and function as a linkage between the district and school. Coordinators also work in collaboration with a technology

specialist to manage school or district-wide data. The screening coordinators often take overall responsibility for coordinating the accurate collection and use of data. Other members of the leadership team also contribute unique expertise and take responsibilities such as scheduling, providing professional learning, managing data, and facilitating communication (see [Systematic Screening Protocol: Setting up to Screen in Your District or School](#) for information on roles of the team members). The leadership team also prepares a district-approved statement regarding screening and shares information with parents at the onset of each academic year.

Once a clear organizational structure is set up, consider data collection and management set up. Many commercially available screeners have these systems built into the purchase of the tool. For others, consider if you will build or purchase a data management system that can securely house information collected during screening. Data security is an important consideration. Consider how you will set up secure data access (e.g., password protected access to a data folder located in secured location; log-in credentials with appropriate access) to ensure only faculty or staff with a clearly-approved educational purpose can log in the system and access files assigned to them. Screening data are protected in the same ways as other student level educational data in accordance with state, local, and federal laws (e.g., stored on secured district servers, encrypted email, file sharing). Screening coordinators work alongside other staff (e.g., informational technology personnel) to ensure the screener data management system is successfully and securely installed.

## 2. Providing Professional Learning

### What professional learning opportunities will need to be provided?

Providing continued professional learning opportunities for faculty, staff, families, and community members can be an important way to increase their understanding of the purposes for systematic screening. The leadership team may consider a schedule of professional learning for teachers around each screening timepoint to support their continued knowledge and skills of conducting systematic screening. Professional learning opportunities may also help educators build fundamental understanding about the “whys” and “hows” of systematic screening, the responsibility of individuals during the screening process, and how screening data are used. To support accurate screener completion, leadership teams may conduct a walkthrough of the school’s procedures before each screening timepoint to ensure all faculty know their role and feel comfortable completing the screener. Initial training for new teachers and coordinators and a refresher training for current teachers and coordinators may be conducted regularly. Common concerns and misconceptions around screening can be highlighted to ensure educators understand screening is not intended to identify a student in a way that limits their educational opportunities (e.g., restriction on participation in school activities) nor is it used as a referral to special education. In fact, screening data are used with other school data to provide early and appropriate interventions as part of the general education program offered to all students (See [Systematic Screening for Behavior: Resources to Inform Decision-Making Efforts](#) for available professional learning resources).



### 3. Before your Screening Window Opens

#### What logistics need to be considered before each screening window?

After screening structures and professional learning offerings are in place, the district leadership team can establish and communicate dates for fall, winter, and spring screening windows. Typically, a screening window includes the following dates:

- Preview date: for principals to confirm screening structures were set up correctly
- Start date: first date teachers can begin completing screening tool for that timepoint (e.g., fall)
- Closing date: last date to complete screening tool before data are downloaded and aggregated

District or school leadership teams schedule all screening windows prior to the start of the school year and add the dates to the master assessment schedule to support long-range planning. Most screening tool manuals recommend conducting the screener three times per year (i.e., fall, winter, spring). Specifically, screening often takes place 4-6 weeks after the school year begins in fall, two weeks before winter break, and 6-8 weeks before the end of the year (Lane et al., 2013). Schools often set a two-week window for screeners to be completed at each timepoint. When placing the date on assessment schedules, ideally leadership teams would consider finding a time that overlaps with a regularly scheduled meeting (e.g., faculty or Professional Learning Community meetings) and making accommodation for teachers who might be absent from the meeting (e.g., directions and supports to complete their screening within the window). Screening coordinators share the assessment windows, procedures, and expectations regarding screening with individual school-sites and then principals communicate the date and time for the upcoming screening with faculty and staff. Often, district or school leadership teams select a specific class period for screening (e.g., after lunch when all students are in an assigned class) at the middle and high school levels (Lane et al., 2013) and keep the chosen period consistent over time for better comparisons (Oakes et al., 2017).

About 30 days prior to the screening timepoint, screening coordinators collaborate with informational technology personnel to conduct a screening tool system “test” to ensure accurate data collection. Conducting this step 30 days prior to the start of the window ensures all students enrolled during that period will be included, allows for an accuracy check of the management systems, and for verifying the screener is functioning accurately.

### 4. During your Screening Window

#### What support needs to be provided during the screening window?

On the day of screening, it is helpful for school-site screening coordinators to be present and available to offer ongoing support for teachers. To be able to provide this support efficiently, schools often have all staff in one common area such as a computer lab if accessing online screeners or screeners located on secured servers. Teachers can ask clarifying questions and seek guidance regarding the tool in a shared space. Sharing screening protocols or tip sheets with teachers as a reminder (or precorrection) of critical steps to conduct screening can also facilitate the screening process. Such reminders may include information

regarding the location of screening files, reminders to how to securely access and save the screening files, and other reminders specific to the data management system (see [Systematic Screening: Site-Level Preparation Protocol](#) as example). By hosting a regularly scheduled screening meeting at fall, winter, and spring timepoints, school screening coordinators can monitor the procedural integrity of the screening process; meaning, they can make certain the step-by-step process is followed as planned (e.g., teachers independently rate each student listed on the pre-populated screening tools, all items are completed, information is not copied from the last screening timepoint).

Prior to closing the screening window, screening coordinators check the screening data to ensure all students enrolled for the prior 30 days are screened and that all screeners are complete. Sometimes technical issues or challenges with teachers being out for various reasons (e.g., illness, and maternity or paternity leave) can lead to students not being screened. It is important for all students to be screened as these data, along with other school data, are important to informing instruction. Conducting a final check prior to closing the screening window can prevent the loss of data. If a class or even a few students have been overlooked, screening coordinators can follow up with teachers who have yet to complete the screening and let them know there is still time to complete before the screening window closes.

## 5. After your Screening Window Closes

### What will need to be prepared for following the screening window closing?

Following the close of each screening window, leadership teams collaborate with information technology services personnel to access screening data and prepare for a review of the data. First, review the data to determine what percentage of students enrolled for the previous 30 days were screened. The intent here is to make certain all eligible students were indeed screened. If there were challenges, district leaders can refine systems at the next screening window. Second, collected screening data are typically shared with district- and school-level administrators in aggregated forms along with student-level data according to FERPA laws and district policies. Leadership teams typically decide in advance who will prepare district-, school-, and grade-level reports using prepared templates (if you are not using a management system with auto-generated reports, see [SRSS-IE Screening Report Template](#) for an illustrative PowerPoint) in a timely manner. In addition to screening data, leadership teams examine other school data (e.g., ODRs, attendance, academic screening, and course grades) to support data-informed decision making. As data are extracted, summarized, and shared, again be certain each step is conducted according to local, state, and federal laws. Once data are ready for review, leadership teams are prepared to engage others in interpreting screening data (e.g., teachers, grade level teams, and intervention teams)– the focus of the next brief.

## Concluding Thoughts

Universal behavior screening tools, when installed appropriately, can provide educators with valuable data to support decision making regarding student supports. Such information, when used with other school data, can inform educators in selecting and implementing early and appropriate interventions for all students and, thus, promote an overall proactive and responsive academic, behavioral, and social-emotional school culture.



Multiple structures (e.g., organizational structure, data management system) and logistic preparation (e.g., scheduling, professional learning opportunities) facilitate successful installment of the screening tool and accurate collection of screening data. In this brief, we offered information related to five commonly asked questions related to installing a universal behavior screening tool in your school or district as part of schools' or districts' overall screening process: setting up structures, providing professional learning, suggestions for before your screening window opens, during your screening window, and after your screening window closes.

### Additional Information and Technical Manuals

Behavior Assessment System for Children 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (BASC-3) Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS)  
BESS Manual available from [Pearson Assessments](#) under *Support Materials*

Emotional and Behavioral Screener (EBS)  
EBS Examiner's Manual available from [Hawthorne](#)

Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS)  
Information available from [ebi.missouri.edu](#) and [FastBridge](#)

Social Skills Improvement System—Performance Screening Guide (SSIS-PSG)  
SSIS Rating Scale Manual information available from [Pearson Assessments](#) under *Support Materials*

Social Skills Improvement System— Social-Emotional Learning (SSIS-SEL)  
SSIS SEL Edition Manual available from [Pearson Assessments](#) under *Support Materials*

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)  
Information available from [SDQ](#)

Student Risk Screening Scale – Internalizing and Externalizing (SRSS-IE)  
Manual available from Ci3T

Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders -2nd Edition (SSBD)  
SSBD Administrator's Guide available from [Ancora Publishing](#)

This document was supported from funds provided by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports cooperative grant supported by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U.S. Department of Education (H326S180001). Dr. Renee Bradley serves as the project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, or enterprise mentioned in this document is intended or should be inferred.

#### **Suggested Citation for this Publication**

Oakes, W. P., Lane, K. L., Ma, Z., Sherod, R., & Perez-Clark, P. (December 2021). Installing a Universal Behavior Screening Tool: Questions to Consider. Center on PBIS, University of Oregon. [www.pbis.org](#).