

**Management Factors  
for Successful Program  
Implementation**

## Research-related Management Factors

The S3 Evaluation Team worked to identify research proven factors that influence program success. These factors have proven to be highly correlated with successful program implementation. They are listed here as an aid to anyone wishing to implement a successful program.

### Day-to-Day Project Management

Research shows that a program manager has two critical roles. The first is providing management support for the project. This includes providing integration of the project with other organizational activities and involves tasks such as...

- Coordinating training/coaching
- Assuring that implementers are implementing correctly (quality, frequency, intensity)
- Developing and managing systems of record keeping (service data, implementation levels, state reporting, etc.)
- Cooperating with evaluators and other parties
- Assuring the correct number and type of individuals are being served

The second critical role of the Manager is to be the **idea champion** for the project. An idea champion does all of the following through regular contact with key individuals implementing the program:

- Is the primary advocate for the importance of the project
- Works with individuals to overcome resistance
- Works to solve problems that arise
- Strives to infect others with enthusiasm for the project

### Administrative Level Support

In schools, this refers primarily to the principal. Project support from the principal is critical in a school setting, largely because this is the person who has the authority to direct individuals to act, but also has the ability to encourage and nurture the program. Program coordinators rarely have this authority; they need the direct or delegated authority of the principal. Principals are also often program Idea Champions as described above. Some of the administrative factors shown to be critical for program success are:

- Detailed knowledge of the program and his/her role in it
- Publicly articulated enthusiasm and support for the program
- Clear, written, specific behavioral expectations for program implementers

- Behavioral expectations communicated regularly to staff
- Making clear how staff can make time for the new expected behaviors, and resolving any problems related to this
- Communicated support for the program regularly, in many ways
- Resources made available (space, materials, equipment, etc.)
- Supports new data systems to institutionalize the program

### **Training (including Coaching)**

*Newly-learned behavior is fragile and needs to be supported in real-world application.*

Fundamentally, a change in school climate requires that individuals change their behaviors. Staff will modify how they interact with students, students will modify how they act with each other, at-risk students will receive services such as counseling and participation in activities, and staff, students, and parents will participate in new activities. These new behaviors are instilled through a process of training and coaching. Effective implementation research shows that these behavioral skills are most successfully adopted when individuals are engaged in interactive training and coaching programs that:

- Create interest
- Provide background and rationale
- Impart knowledge of new skills
- Include demonstrations of the new skills
- Include new skills practice in the training setting
- Provide guidance on acceptable deviation from skills models
- Provides coaches to observe and evaluate real-world practice of skills
- Ensure monitoring to assess whether new skills are used with the correct frequency, intensity, and in appropriate settings
- Provide ongoing encouragement and reminders of the commitment to engage in the new skills

Several studies suggested that the failure rate for training programs that do not have most of these attributes (especially coaching, monitoring, and ongoing reminders) have failure rates approaching 90 percent.

### At-Risk Student Referral System

Systems designed to build school climate need a referral-intervention approach through which the needs of at-risk students will be (a) identified, (b) met, and (c) monitored. Research describing effective referral-intervention systems confirm the importance of these three elements, but add the following detail:

- Is systematic (based on standardized criteria)
- Is easily understood by appropriate staff
- Is systematically implemented by staff
- Includes consistent parent notification (if required by policy)
- Regularly reminds appropriate staff of their referral commitment
- Consistently monitors student progress and ongoing needs