

# Keys to Successful Schoolwide Implementation of The **Zones** of Regulation™

There is not one way to roll out The Zones of Regulation as a schoolwide SEL curriculum. Every school site is unique; therefore implementation of The Zones will look different depending on your students, staff and resources. This document is meant to be a helpful guide that can be adapted to fit your implementation process.

## **Suggested Phases of Implementation**

(These phases are based on The Active Implementation Stages, developed by [The Active Implementation Research Network](#).)

### **Phase 1: Exploration**

- Assess students' needs: What data do we have? What specific needs are we seeing?
- Start communication process with stakeholders: Administrators, teacher leaders, counselors, care-givers and school support staff, etc...
- Book review of *The Zones of Regulation*™ curriculum and accompanying [Zones Implementation & Fidelity Checklist](#)
- Review the "Schoolwide Zones Cheat Sheet"
- Assess feasibility and fit of implementation

### **Phase 2: Development**

- Establish buy-in: WHY are we using The Zones of Regulation?
- Build/Identify a leadership team to champion Zones implementation (could be PBIS or MTSS/RTI team, etc.), including behaviorists and administrators
- Budget for and Obtain Resources: [The Zones of Regulation curriculum books](#), color copies, sensory supports/regulation tools.  
*\*We recommend one book for 2 teachers to share, or a minimum of one book per grade level/instructional team. (Ideas include going through school budget, grants, PTA/PTO funding, gofundme.com fundraiser, etc.)*
- Develop a Written Implementation Plan that takes the following into account:
  - Who is going to be directly teaching lessons?
  - Which lessons/objectives will be taught, and to which grade levels?
  - What time of day, and how often will lessons be taught?
  - How will we integrate The Zones into specialist classes (art, music, PE, etc...)
  - How are we going to support implementation and provide accountability?
  - How are we going to connect with families/caregivers about The Zones?

### **Phase 3: Installation**

- Training/Professional Development for whole staff-including support staff:
  - a. School climate around social/emotional/behavioral skill development ([Ross Greene's](#) work is valuable for establishing this as a foundation)
  - b. Understanding The Zones framework
  - c. Establishing “buy-in”- WHY is Zones a good fit?
  - c. Overview of core lessons/concepts to be taught
  - d. Common language and visuals supporting Zones. *May include: 4 Color Zones with related emotions, Zones check-in routines, Tool ideas for each colored Zone and regulation spaces (sometimes called “calming corners/regulation stations etc.”).*
- Some schools have piloted the lessons in 3-5 classrooms with support from the “Champions”, before they take it schoolwide. In this case, do an overview in partnership with the “champions” with the small group of teachers piloting. When the school moves to schoolwide roll-out, this group of teachers may present to the rest of the staff and serve as model classrooms.

### **Phase 4: Initial Implementation**

- Connect with families/caregivers about The Zones of Regulation (website, newsletters, assemblies, conferences, curriculum nights, social media, etc...) See [Introductory handouts in English, Spanish, French](#)
- Roll-out Implementation Plan, begin instruction
- Some schools do an Assembly to introduce Zones, see [link](#) for video and script examples
- Provide coaching to support expected practices
- Leadership team meet to identify needs and adjustments
- Use common language and visuals across school, including common areas

### **Phase 5: Full Implementation**

- All teachers and support staff using The Zones
- Monitor implementation: do walk-throughs, teacher surveys, student surveys, etc
- Gather data, review, make adjustments
- Create an expected practice profile for using The Zones at your school
- Leadership team pushes into team/department meetings to provide ongoing support
- Open discussions and support at staff meetings
- Maintain staff capacity through ongoing training opportunities

### **Data Collection**

Data collection may happen at a few different levels:

- Schoolwide behavior data: Some schools identify items on the “Out of Classroom” referrals that may be related to self-regulation. They may track these items to see if there is a reduction in referrals.

- Screeners: Some schools/districts use schoolwide SEL screeners to identify students who may need support and get general data on the needs of their student population.
- Self-report: Some teachers ask students to fill out a [pre/post survey](#) about their own perception of their self-regulation skills before the lessons, after the lessons and then later on in the year.
- Check-ins/Tallies: Some teachers have students do a daily check-in using Zones (they have a visual of the zones and students can add their names to it.) In some buildings they tally as students use their toolbox.
- Check-in/Check-out: Schools that have a room where students go to refocus have their students check-in to the room by identifying their zone and then identify their zone when they check-out.

## **Tiered Supports and The Zones of Regulation**

For use in conjunction with **PBIS** or **MTSS/RTI**

**Tier 1** - School-Wide Zones of Regulation is considered Tier 1 Instruction in many schools/districts, with universal instruction for all students. It gives teachers a common language and visual reference to use to identify feelings with students, discuss how they are showing their feelings, and tools they can use to get to where they need to be in order to learn. The teachings around expected and unexpected behavior and related social competencies created by Michelle Garcia Winner, ([Social Thinking](#)) complements the establishment of classroom and schoolwide expectations.

**Tier 2** - In schools using Zones schoolwide, staff (often the classroom teacher) work with social workers and counselors to develop an intervention based on The Zones of Regulation for small groups of students. This could look like increased practice with Zones concepts and self-regulation tools/strategies, tracking Zones across the day, daily check-ins, scheduled breaks, increased positive reinforcement for using tools, etc. Special Education staff also use Zones with small groups of students.

**Tier 3**- School staff work together to develop individualized plans for students who continue to struggle with regulation given Tier 1 Instruction and Tier 2 Interventions using The Zones of Regulation. In a Tier 3 Intervention, students have more “wrap-around” support to practice skills and may include increased access to Zones tools/strategies, structured Zones check-ins and self-monitoring throughout the day, sensory supports, increased access to supportive staff, and may also include mental health supports. This intervention also includes students receiving special education services.

#### **4 “Take-Aways” for Success:**

The Implementation Process is approached differently at each school. There is no “right” way to roll out the curriculum, however, schools reporting high success with implementation of The Zones schoolwide have **4 Common Factors**<sup>1</sup>:

1. **Administrator support:** The administrators are involved in planning the implementation of Zones schoolwide. They are at the planning meetings, trainings, use The Zones language and have visuals and regulation supports in their office.
2. **Zones Champions who take leadership:** This effort is brought forward and supported by staff who have experience using Zones with their students. Some of the staff have been Counselors, Social Workers, Special Education Teachers, and Occupational Therapists.
3. **Staff Buy-In:** Consider providing a short 10-15 minute presentation to the staff as a preview to gain enthusiasm and build momentum.
4. **A Written Implementation Plan:** Create an Implementation plan that identifies how schoolwide Zones will complement other school initiatives. Identify the implementation process in detail including the who, what, when and how of training staff, teaching the lessons and if they are collecting data.

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<sup>1</sup> \*\*Information and Reflection compiled in partnership with St. Paul Public Schools