Systemic Alignment of Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)

Introduction

Creating supportive, student-centered schools is a shared priority across educational frameworks in Iowa. The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program is a peer-led leadership and violence prevention model designed to equip students with the skills and confidence to intervene in harmful situations, build inclusive peer relationships, and lead through empathy and integrity. MVP is a proven initiative that also provides students with an ethical framework to recognize and prevent harm. When implemented with fidelity and supported at all levels, from district leaders to advisors, to student mentors, MVP fosters a safer, more respectful school climate where all students feel valued, connected, and empowered.

This guide provides a rationale for district and building-level adoption of MVP by demonstrating its strong alignment with statewide educational goals, including the Iowa Department of Education priorities, the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, Social, Emotional skills development, and Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL). It also supplements the MVP Alignment Guide by integrating evidence-based implementation strategies and policy-aligned frameworks from the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention and the Spectrum of Prevention model. The goal is to support schools in embedding MVP as a strategic, sustainable approach to improving school climate, advancing student success, and meeting state education priorities.

MVP in School and Building Improvement Plans (SIP/BIP)

MVP provides clear benefits when included in School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and Building Improvement Plans (BIPs). As schools work to meet state priorities related to school climate, inclusion, behavior supports, and student leadership, MVP serves as a strategic and measurable intervention that supports these efforts.

Key Benefits of Including MVP in SIPs/BIPs:

- Improved Climate and Culture**:** MVP fosters safe, respectful, and inclusive school environments through peer-led mentoring and scenario-based discussions.
- Aligned Goals**:** Schools can align MVP with behavior, social, emotional behavioral skills, leadership, and student voice goals outlined in SIPs/BIPs.
- Data-Informed Strategy**:** MVP's reflection tools, mentor surveys, and student voice feedback contribute to ongoing progress monitoring and climate improvement metrics.
- Leadership Development: The program cultivates student leaders who contribute to schoolwide initiatives and cultural change.
- Capacity Building**:** MVP provides opportunities for advisors, counselors, and building leaders to collaborate on supporting Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavioral supports.

Including MVP in SIPs/BIPs ensures that the program is not seen as an add-on, but as an integral part of the school's plan to improve student outcomes and foster a supportive learning environment.

MVP and Iowa Department of Education Priorities

The Iowa Department of Education prioritizes safe learning environments, student mental health, and academic engagement. MVP supports these goals by proactively addressing harmful behaviors, empowering student voices, and developing social, emotional behavioral skills.

Iowa DOE Focus Area	How MVP Supports This
Safe & Supportive Learning Environments	MVP empowers students to recognize and address harm, creating a safer, more respectful school culture.
Mental Health & Well-Being	MVP fosters empathy, advocacy, and healthy relationships, all contributing to student well-being.
Student Engagement	MVP trains students as mentors who facilitate real conversations with peers about social issues.
Academic Engagement & Belonging	Safe and inclusive climates reduce behavioral barriers to learning and promote classroom engagement.

MVP and Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL)

The ISSL standards guide school leaders to foster equitable, inclusive, and academically rich environments. MVP supports leaders in fulfilling these standards through schoolwide culture-building and leadership development.

ISSL Standard	MVP Program Connection
1. Mission, Vision, Core Values	MVP reinforces core values of respect, safety, and student leadership, supporting shared school-wide goals.
2. Ethics and Professional Norms	MVP teaches ethical decision-making, integrity, and advocacy through student-led engagement.
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	MVP promotes fairness, connection, and personal accountability by equipping students to engage across differences and respond to harmful behaviors.
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	MVP offers structured, skill-building curriculum aligned with social, emotional behavioral skills and leadership competencies.
5. Community of Care and Support for Students	MVP fosters caring, peer-connected school climates that build student confidence and psychological safety.
6. Professional Capacity of Personnel	Advisors and staff who coach MVP mentors build capacity in facilitation, authentic partnering with students, and student engagement practices.
7. Professional Community for Staff	The model promotes shared responsibility between students and staff to improve school culture.
8. Family and Community Engagement	MVP connects with community violence prevention partners and encourages student advocacy beyond school walls.
9. Operations and Management	MVP contributes to proactive behavior management and climate strategy implementation.
10. School Improvement	Evidence-informed and scalable, MVP supports continuous improvement of culture, behavior, and leadership outcomes.

MVP within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

MVP can be embedded into a school's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to proactively address behavior, social, emotional skills, and student leadership development across all tiers.

Tier 1 – Universal Supports (For All Students)

MVP's Role:

- Provides proactive lessons on respect, boundaries, and safe intervention.

- Strengthens school-wide culture through peer-led social, emotional behavioral skill-building.
- Promotes empathy, student voice, and positive peer relationships.

Examples:

- First-year student MVP lessons led by upperclass students.
- School-wide respect and safety campaigns.

Tier 2 – Targeted Supports (For Some Students)

MVP's Role:

- Offers mentoring opportunities to students who need more guidance.
- Small group interventions tied to social, emotional behavioral skills growth.

Examples:

- Select students co-facilitating sessions to develop leadership.
- MVP advisors collaborating with counselors for targeted support.

Tier 3 – Intensive Supports (For Few Students)

MVP's Role:

- Offers individualized peer mentorship for students with behavioral needs.
- Helps reinforce trauma-informed practices and re-entry plans.

Examples:

- One-on-one mentoring connections.
- Integration into restorative practice strategies.

Summary Table:

MTSS Tier	MVP Contribution
Tier 1	Universal social, emotional behavioral skills lessons, peer mentoring, bystander training, culture-building
Tier 2	Targeted leadership roles, small group support, skill-building for at-risk students

Tier 3   Individualized mentorship, peer support as part of behavior intervention plans

Implementation Best Practices from PATCVP

The University of Northern Iowa's Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention identifies several key practices for effective MVP implementation:

Training

- MVP Train-the-Trainer (TTT): A two-day training for school personnel across roles: faculty, administrators, board members, community partners to establish internal MVP capacity.
- Student Mentor Training: A one-day onboarding for student mentors focusing on facilitation, relationship building, and bystander strategies.
- Student Leadership Summits: Regional events for student mentors and advisors to strengthen leadership skills and reinforce key MVP themes.

Implementation Structure

- Weekly or Bi-Monthly Planning Meetings: For mentors and advisors to prep lessons, reflect on impact, and scaffold learning.
- Targeted Mentee Lessons: Delivered during advisory or designated class times, with structured use of MVP scenarios, discussion prompts, and engagement tools.
- Pre-Orientation and Rapport Building: Suggested contact with mentees before lessons begin to build trust and provide early guidance on school expectations and student life.

Lesson Components

- Icebreakers and community-building activities
- MVP scenario exploration and group discussion
- Facilitator questions from MVP card series
- Post-session mentor reflection worksheet

Evaluation Strategies

PATCVP recommends using various surveys and tools to monitor fidelity, impact, and perceptions:

- Mentee Pre/Post and Retrospective Surveys
- Mentor Learning Surveys and Session Reflections
- Teacher and Supervisor Feedback Forms

- Parent and Community Perception Surveys

These tools offer insight into social, emotional skill development, program reach, and culture change from multiple perspectives.

Strategic Integration: Spectrum of Prevention

The Spectrum of Prevention framework by the Prevention Institute complements MVP by guiding schools to implement multi-layered strategies that extend beyond student lessons:

1. Strengthening Individual Knowledge & Skills – Through student mentoring and scenario-based discussions.
2. Promoting Community Education – Via student-led campaigns, events, or summits.
3. Educating Providers – Training teachers, advisors, and mentors in facilitation and bystander practices.
4. Fostering Coalitions and Networks – Collaborating with local violence prevention groups, civic leaders, and families.
5. Changing Organizational Practices – Embedding MVP into SIPs, MTSS structures, and advisory programs.
6. Influencing Policy and Legislation – Aligning MVP with Title IX, school climate mandates, and inclusion standards.

Schools that engage multiple levels of the spectrum institutionalize MVP as a proactive, whole-school strategy.

Implementation Recommendations

1. Include MVP in School/Building Improvement Plans (SIPs/BIPs) – Align MVP to inclusion, social, emotional behavioral skills, or leadership goals
2. Integrate with MTSS/PBIS: Position MVP as Tier 1 prevention programming
3. Train a Diverse Mentor Team: Reflect student demographics and interests
4. Measure Impact: Collect student surveys, behavior data, and feedback from mentors
5. Align with Other Frameworks: MVP complements social, emotional behavioral skills, restorative practices, and leadership development programs

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Recommended practices: MVP training, implementation, and evaluation. https://cvp.uni.edu/