

SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT: A PLAN FOR PENNSYLVANIA



**A REPORT BY THE EDUCATION LAW CENTER OF
PENNSYLVANIA AND THE DISABILITY RIGHTS
NETWORK OF PENNSYLVANIA**

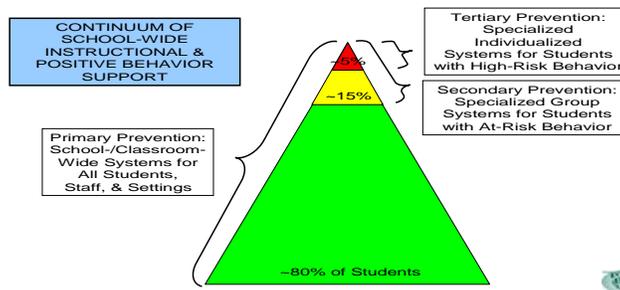
FALL 2008

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: Executive Summary

It is important for a young person to master math, reading, and many other academic subjects. But when schooling ends – and whether the next step is a job, more schooling, or a family – each individual must be able to interact in a group, function in a work environment, and be an engaged and effective member of the broader community. Schools have an important role in helping all children and young adults acquire these essential life skills. In short, schools are not just about academics. And it is not just students with emotional disabilities who need emotional learning.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a research-based, highly effective, approach to creating, teaching, and reinforcing students' social, emotional, and academic learning skills that improves and sustains academic achievement and mental and emotional wellbeing of all students. All school staff use PBS's uniform and positive approach in all school settings (classroom, hallways, cafeterias, even on the bus). The goal of PBS is to establish a predictable, consistent, and positive school culture for all students and staff. PBS schools focus on prevention, intercede to correct individual student behavioral "miscues," and consistently and frequently reward students who do the right thing. Family and student engagement is essential to PBS schools' success.

The following diagram illustrates how PBS benefits all students in a school.¹ Prevention and supports for all students meet the needs of roughly 80% of the school's students. The next group, the approximately 15% of the student population who evidences some behavioral/social skill needs, receives more intensive prevention and group interventions. At the top of the triangle is the remaining 5% of students with significant behavioral issues who receives specialized and individualized supports, often through targeted education and mental health care intervention. PBS helps all students and provides increasing levels of academic and behavioral supports and services to the children most in need.



Other states that have implemented PBS have reduced disciplinary referrals, increased students' academic achievement, and improved school climate and safety. Pennsylvania has already started to implement PBS through a small pilot project. Every school in Pennsylvania needs PBS. This will require state level commitment and leadership, and the resources to take PBS to scale throughout the Commonwealth.

¹ This diagram is taken, with permission from a PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Robert H. Horner given on March 25, 2008 at a forum sponsored by Public Citizens for Children and Youth. Dr. Horner, a professor at the University of Oregon, co-directs the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the OSEP Research and Demonstration Center on School-wide Behavior Support. We thank Dr. Horner for his permission to use this and other slides from his presentation below.

THE STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

In Pennsylvania, many public school students are achieving at high levels – but this is not the story for all students. Data from the 2005-2006 school year showed that:

- One-third of Pennsylvania’s students performed below the proficient level in math and reading on the latest statewide achievement tests.²
- 16,829 or 2% of all students, dropped out of school (a greater number who were chronically truant can be considered “near-drop-outs”).³
- 18,885 students were involved in school incidents involving local school enforcement and 12,106 arrests; 7,117 students were assigned to alternative education programs for disruptive youth.⁴
- There were 63,550 out-of-school suspensions and 1,923 expulsions (866 of those expulsions were for a year or longer).⁵
- 321,500 school aged children experience significant functional impairment during the course of the year.⁶
- Approximately 146,000 children can be considered to have a serious emotional disturbance, including depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, anxiety disorder, and conduct disorders.⁷



These problems are connected to other issues like bullying, absenteeism, youth suicide and youth violence. Extensive research links poor academic performance with poor student behavior. Students who lag behind academically become disengaged with school and are more likely to act out. Students who are prohibited from attending school because of suspension or expulsion are more likely to fall behind academically. When students fail and get into trouble, they drop out. Students who drop out or who do not do well in school are more likely to enter the School-to-Prison Pipeline.⁸

² See SchoolDataDirect, available at: <http://www.schooldatadirect.org/app/location/q/stid=39/llid=111/stllid=152/locid=39/stype=/catid=-1/secid=-1/compid=-1/site=pes>

³ See <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12statistics/lib/k12statistics/0506PDropinPAT1.pdf>; see also Philadelphia Youth Network’s *Unfulfilled Promise, The Dimensions and Characteristics of Philadelphia’s Dropout Crisis, 2000-2005*, available at http://download.pyninc.org/pdf/Unfulfilled_Promise_Project_U-turn.pdf.

⁴ Pennsylvania Department of Education *School Safety Report 2005-2006 School Year* (August 2007) <https://www.safeschools.state.pa.us/Main.aspx?App=6a935f44-7cbf-45e1-850b-e29b2f1ff17f&Menu=dbd39a1f-3319-4a75-8f69-d1166dba5d70&res=868V1375>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, Report on Pennsylvania’s Mental Health System for Children and Youth, 2006, Act 2004-147. Available at: <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/>

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ For example, one study found a correlation between high school failure and three or more suspensions in ninth grade. This study also found a correlation between low grade point averages and misbehavior for

Clearly children and families are hurt by schools' failures. Research shows that, as a community, we pay a high price for failing to educate our children effectively. School dropouts are expensive: "[I]f the students who dropped out of the class of 2007 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$329 billion in income over their lifetimes."⁹ Moreover, graduation rates are associated with better public safety outcomes: "Researchers have found that a 5 percent increase in male high school graduation rates would produce an annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses."¹⁰

In Act 2004-147, the Pennsylvania General Assembly commissioned the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study various aspects of the Commonwealth's mental health system for children and youth. The report found a fragmented mental health system where both the Departments of Education and Public Welfare cite the need for improved mental health services in educational settings. The report recommended that the Commonwealth develop a strategic plan to improve mental health services to children and youth. Further, the requirements of NCLB, IDEA and the *Gaskin* Settlement Agreement have underscored the Commonwealth's need to respond to underachievement, restrictive placement rates, and school dropout rates among at-risk youth, particularly those with emotional disturbances. PBS offers an evidence-based framework for collaboration between schools and community mental health providers to meet the complex needs of the most at risk students. PBS targets all students—not just those already identified as students with mental health, emotional support, or social skills needs. But in the process it improves the delivery of services to students with identified mental health needs. Moreover, PBS will improve students' academic achievement, mental health status and will reduce drop-outs and school exclusions.

Students thrive academically and behaviorally in a positive school climate that promotes resiliency and social emotional learning. For the sake of the students and the Commonwealth as a whole we must change the negative culture of our schools to the positive approach embodied in PBS. We must create school cultures where students have a clear sense of what is expected of them and where they can receive needed supports.

sixth grade boys. Tobin, T., & Sugai, G. (1999). Predicting violence at school, chronic discipline problems, and high school outcomes from sixth graders' school records. *Journal of Emotional Disorders*, 7, 40-53, referenced in Putnam, R.F., Horner, R.H., & Algozzine, R. (2006) "Academic Achievement and the Implementation of School-wide Behavior Support", *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Newsletter*, vol. 3, issue 1, available at: <http://www.pbis.org/news/New/Newsletters/Newsletter1.aspx>.

⁹ Alliance for Excellent Education, *Issue Brief: The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools* 1 (Updated October, 2007).

¹⁰ Justice Policy Institute, *Education and Public Safety* 1 (August 30, 2007)

WHAT IS PBS?

PBS is an evidence-based, cost-effective, systems approach for establishing the social culture needed for schools to be effective learning environments for all students. PBS eliminates barriers to learning, creates and maintains a safe and effective learning environment in schools, and ensures that all students have the social and emotional skills needed to succeed in school and beyond. PBS helps schools teach students expected behaviors and social skills, creates student behavioral health and academic support systems, and applies data-based decision-making to discipline, academics, and social/emotional learning.¹¹



Schools that use PBS operate differently from schools that use traditional discipline methods. Here are some examples:

School using PBS	School using traditional disciplinary methods
<p>The school spends a significant amount of time each school year defining and teaching positive social expectations.</p> <p>Example: Smith Middle School adopts PBS and decides the core of its school PBS model will be respect, safety, and tolerance. The school posts this motto all over the school. Each teacher then spends two weeks in the beginning of the year teaching the model to his or her students through class lessons and homework. The school also holds an assembly for each grade where they role-play positive social behaviors. Parents are invited to an assembly to explain the model and expected behaviors. If and when a student acts in a negative fashion, the student is instructed on how the behavior fails to reflect the motto of respect, safety and tolerance.</p>	<p>The school gives each student a code of conduct with the rules for the school and consequences if they break the rules.</p> <p>Example: Hampton Junior High gives a 45- page code of conduct to each student at the beginning of the year. Each student and parent signs a form stating that they received the code. A list of prohibited behaviors is posted in the cafeteria and at the entrance of the school. Teachers make up their own rules and post them in their classrooms. If a student breaks one of the rules, he or she receives a referral, and possibly a detention or suspension depending on the offense.</p>

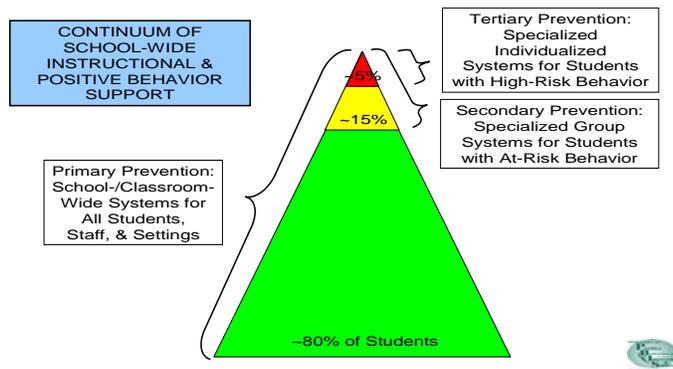
¹¹ See "What is PBIS?" at <http://www.pbisillinois.org/>

<p>The school acknowledges and rewards positive behavior.</p> <p>Example: Yardley Elementary adopts a PBS model for the school. Students are taught positive social behaviors in the beginning of the year. The school also introduces a school wide program called “Star Notes.” A “Star Note” is given to a student when he or she exhibits a positive behavior such as helping a classmate or even avoiding misbehavior. Any member of the school staff can give a “Star Note.”</p> <p>Kevin often gets in trouble for misbehavior such as throwing paper airplanes or being late to class. One day after school, Kevin notices an older boy picking on a younger student he knows. He tells the older boy to stop and walks the younger student out of the school. A school janitor sees this and gives Kevin a “Star Note.”</p>	<p>Problem behavior is addressed but positive behavior is rarely acknowledged.</p> <p>Example: Shannon begins yelling at Ms. Jackson, her teacher, when Ms. Jackson refuses to let her put her head down instead of completing her work. Ms. Jackson struggles to control Shannon’s behavior and eventually calls the school police officer.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the rest of class is working quietly on an assignment. One student, Jake, even collects the assignments and puts them on Ms. Jackson’s desk. Ms. Jackson returns to class after dealing with Shannon. She continues her lesson and does not address the incident.</p>
<p>The school regularly collects data and uses the data to inform their school systems and to determine appropriate responses to student behavior.</p> <p>Example: Lunch time at Frederick Junior High is a chaotic and stressful time for both teachers and students. Numerous fights have occurred in the lunchroom and the staff finds that they are unable to manage the students. Mr. Wilson, the assistant principal, reviews his monthly office referrals and finds that more than half are the result of a lunchtime offense. He also finds that the majority of the offenses involve a group of eighth grade boys, led by one student, Mark. Mark has been suspended five times in the school year.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson decides to cut the lunch period</p>	<p>The school creates systems and consequences for student behavior without the use of data.</p> <p>Example: Lunch time at Frederick Junior High is a chaotic and stressful time for both teachers and students. Numerous fights have occurred in the lunchroom and the staff finds that they are unable to manage the students. Mr. Wilson, the assistant principal, reviews his monthly office referrals and finds that more than half are the result of a lunchtime offense. He also finds that the majority of the offenses involve a group of eighth grade boys, led by one student, Mark. Mark has been suspended five times in the school year.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson decides the school needs a new lunch policy. Any student who is involved</p>

<p>in half and have two lunches. He then recruits non-instructional staff and volunteers to help manage the lunch periods. Mr. Wilson also receives permission from Mark's parents to conduct a parent conference and to do an assessment to determine why Mark is engaging in disruptive behavior. The assessment reveals that Mark is battling with the death of his older brother. Mr. Wilson arranges grief counseling for Mark twice a week. He also creates a student lunch monitoring program where students assist teachers in moving students through the cafeteria in an orderly fashion. Mr. Wilson recruits Mark for this program.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson reviews the next month's data and finds the new lunch schedule reduces the office referrals by 20 percent. Mark initially is reluctant to be a lunch monitor, but with support from his favorite teacher and his parents, eventually joins the program. He receives no referrals at lunch in the next month.</p>	<p>in an offense at lunch receives a referral and a detention. Three referrals lead to a three day suspension from school. Within the first week of the new policy, seventeen students are suspended, including Mark.</p> <p>Mr. Wilson also decides to staff the cafeteria with school security guards. On his first day back from suspension, Mark gets into a fight and hits a security guard by accident. He is suspended again and is recommended for expulsion. He also receives a criminal charge of assault.</p>
<p>The school provides a continuum of intensive, individual interventions for students.</p> <p>Example: Elena has received five suspensions this school year. Her teachers recommend an assessment that reveals that she is disruptive in class because of her frustration with reading.</p> <p>Her English teacher creates a system where Elena can alert the teacher when she is feeling frustrated in class. The teacher responds by allowing Elena to complete a different task during class or pairing Elena with a higher level student for group task. Elena is then permitted to complete her class work with the teacher or a volunteer tutor after-school.</p>	<p>The school has no system for providing individual interventions.</p> <p>Example: Elena has received five suspensions this school year. Her grades are suffering because of her absences. Elena is most disruptive in English class where she completes almost no work. Elena's English teacher tells the principal that she refuses to have Elena in her class any longer. The principal agrees and sends Elena to the office with a packet of work during every English class. Elena does not complete the work and fails the grade.</p>

DOES PBS WORK?

The move from a traditional discipline model to PBS can dramatically change a school environment. The following diagram illustrates how PBS benefits all students in a school.¹² As the diagram shows, prevention and supports for all students meet the needs of roughly 80% of the school's students. The next group, the approximately 15% of the student population who evidences some behavioral needs, receives more intensive prevention and group interventions. At the top of the triangle is the remaining 5% of students with significant behavioral issues who receives coordinated specialized and individualized supports, often through education and mental health interventions.



Over time, if all of the components of PBS are consistently implemented in a school, data shows that academic and behavioral outcomes improve for all three groups of students and that the number of students needing the highest levels of support decreases. Schools, districts, and states nationwide have implemented PBS and have found that PBS: (1) improves the overall school and classroom climate; (2) reduces the number of office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions; and (3) increases the academic success of the students.¹³ Through providing a continuum of services for all students in the school, and creating a structure with predictable and positive expectations, schools create environments where children are engaged and can succeed. As the National Association of School Psychologists reports:

Research indicates that schools employing system-wide interventions for problem behavior prevention have reduced office discipline referrals by 20-60%, and have increased student academic engagement and achievement.¹⁴

According to Barry McCurdy of the Devereux Center for Effective Schools, randomized clinical trials (RCT) on PBS have just been completed. The findings were presented at a recent meeting of the International Association on Positive Behavior

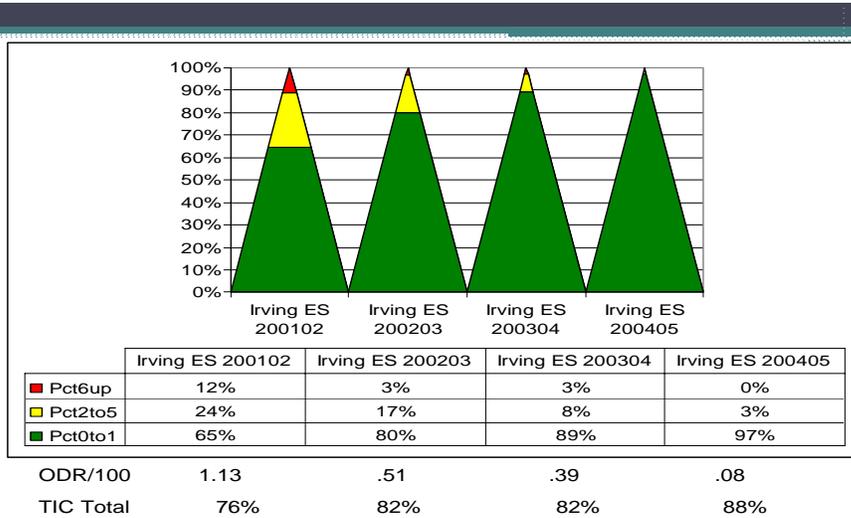
¹² PBS presentation by Dr. Robert Horner, March 25, 2008.

¹³ See generally <http://www.pbis.org/main.htm>; see also Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Todd, A.W., & Lewis-Palmer, T. (2005). School-wide positive behavior support: An alternative approach to discipline in schools. In L. Bambara & L. Kern (Eds.), *Individualized supports for students with problem behaviors: Designing positive behavior plans* (pp. 359-390). New York: Guilford.

¹⁴ See NASP letter to Chairman Kennedy at <http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/nclb/naspcomments.pdf>

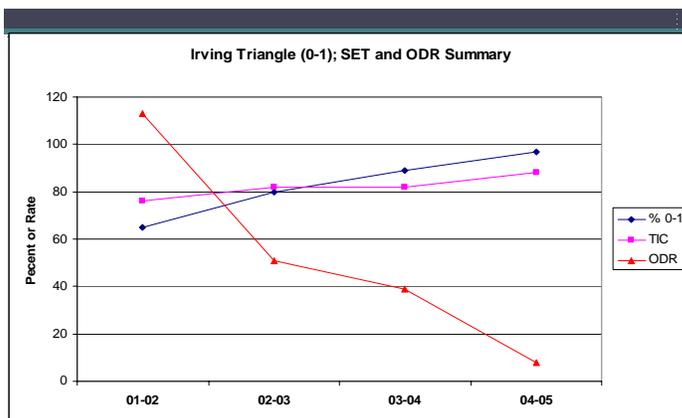
Support (www.APBS.org) held in March 2008. Schools that implemented PBS showed (a) low levels of office discipline referrals, (b) an increased perception of safety, and (c) an increase in the proportion of students meeting state reading standards compared to control sites that used traditional school discipline and behavior management approaches. In total, 60 schools from Illinois and Hawaii were involved in the RCT. A second RCT has been conducted by Johns Hopkins with schools from Maryland. The results are similar – PBS works!

Over time, the number of students in need of individualized supports is significantly decreased.¹⁵



In the graph above, the number of students in need of individualized support is represented by the red triangle.

PBS prevents discipline problems¹⁶:



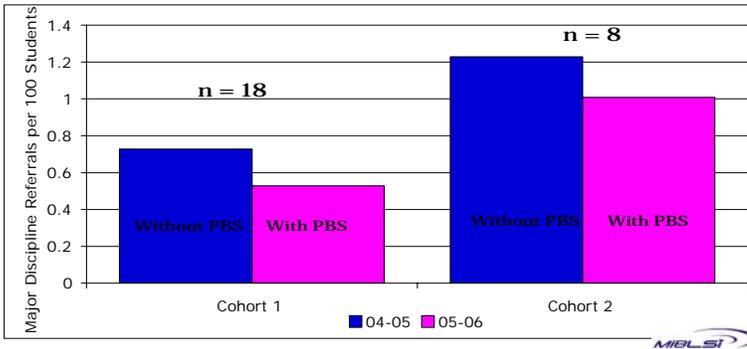
In the graph above, office discipline referrals (ODR) from one elementary school in Chicago decreased with each year of PBS implementation.

¹⁵ March 25, 2008, Horner Presentation, Slide # 23

¹⁶ March 25, 2008 Horner Presentation, Slide #24

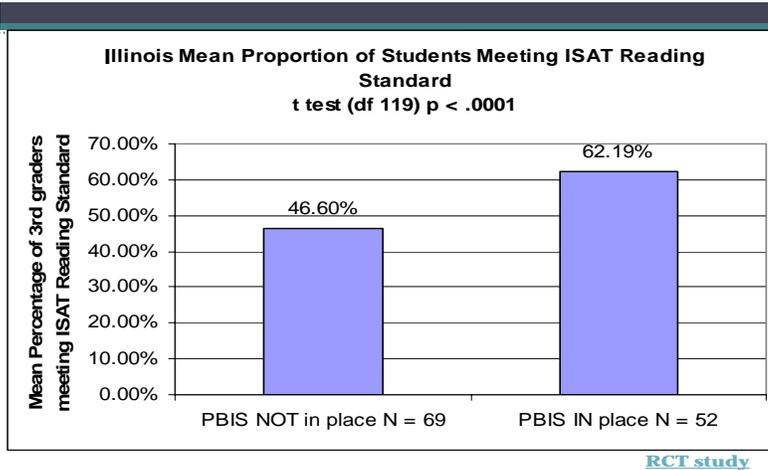
PBS schools have fewer discipline problems.¹⁷

Major Discipline Referrals per 100 Students by Cohort



This chart shows a reduction in discipline referrals in PBS schools in Michigan.¹⁸

PBS schools have better academic outcomes.¹⁹



Illinois schools with PBS have more students meeting state academic standards.

The bottom line is that PBS works.

¹⁵ March 25, 2008 Horner Presentation, Slide # 29

¹⁸ As reported by Dr. Steve Goodman (APBS Conference, Chicago, 2007).

¹⁹ March 25, 2008 Horner Presentation, Slide #31

IS PBS UNDERWAY IN PENNSYLVANIA?

Yes! In 2007, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provided \$900,000 in grants to sixteen schools to enhance and develop effective school-based mental health programs in Pennsylvania schools. Six of the sixteen projects then implemented school-wide positive behavior support. A PBS State Leadership Team (SLT) was created to administer the PBS portion of the program, choose schools to launch an initial PBS cohort training, and provide infrastructure and support to the Pennsylvania PBS program. The PBS state leadership team is comprised of representatives from the Department of Education, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Programs, the Mental Health Association of Pennsylvania, the Disability Rights Network, local Intermediate Units, community behavioral health providers, and universities. The first cohort of schools implementing PBS in Pennsylvania included the six grant recipients as well as 19 other schools interested in PBS. Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) has provided technical assistance to the 25 schools in the first cohort. Additional resources are needed to expand PBS and launch it statewide.



Dr. Lucille Eber, the State Director of PBS in Illinois, has been a consultant to the SLT on PBS and, using the Illinois PBS model, has trained the initial group of leaders implementing PBS in Pennsylvania. The Illinois model has also been endorsed by the federal government and is incorporated in legislation amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 currently pending in the United States House and Senate.²⁰ The team currently works with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Program on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on the implementation of PBS in 31 schools in Pennsylvania. The state leadership team convened a summit on PBS in December 2008 to disseminate information on PBS to policy makers and stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth. Several schools from Pocono Mountain School District and the School District of Philadelphia presented on their schools' great success since implementing PBS. They welcome you to visit and see PBS in action!²¹

In Philadelphia, PCCY and other organizations are working with a leadership group to develop support for a three-year plan for PBS to be in 16 schools in the School District of Philadelphia. PBS trainers from Devereux's Center for Effective Schools and Arcadia University's B²EST program will work with school district coaches and school-based teams to develop a PBS system. United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania has offered a \$200,000 matching grant this year with a chance of renewal for two additional years to help the School District of Philadelphia expand PBS.

²⁰ The Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act, H.R. 3407, S. 2111

²¹ Please contact Deborah Gordon Klehr for additional information. dklehr@elc-pa.org.

Given the success of PBS in other states, and the current state of Pennsylvania's schools, this is the time to take Pennsylvania's limited PBS effort to scale. At least in the beginning, it will take additional resources to build the skills and capacity of schools and school districts that are trying to implement PBS. PBS trainers must go to schools across the state to teach school staff to use PBS, to collect needed data, and to monitor implementation over time. The Departments of Education and Public Welfare may be able to reassign staff to begin the process, but additional funding will soon be needed to meet the existing and growing demand from school districts for this help. Our estimate is that \$3 million dollars per year for the next few years will be needed to take PBS statewide. We hope that the Legislature will make the first annual commitment in the 2009-2010 budget. That would allow us to create the infrastructure to begin expanding PBS.

WHY WILL LEGISLATION BE NEEDED IN THE FUTURE?

In addition to a commitment to fund PBS expansion, we are seeking legislation to create an "Institute" – a public agency not part of the Department of Education – that will ensure that school districts get the help they need to initiate, expand, and sustain quality PBS programs. The Institute would also be charged with collecting data on student progress, lessons learned, and reporting to the Legislature on the state of PBS in Pennsylvania. The Institute concept is derived from Illinois, which has experienced huge success in implementing PBS.

The research is clear that PBS helps students and schools. School districts throughout the Commonwealth want to implement PBS. The need is clear, and the time is now.



HAVE OTHER STATES SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED PBS?

As of September 2007, PBS (sometimes referred to as PBIS) was already underway in 7300 schools nationally, and has emerged as the leading strategy for establishing a welcoming, positive learning environment and improving student behavior. Either statewide or in specific school districts, PBS is underway to some extent in every state and Washington, D.C. Illinois leads the nation in PBS implementation with 700 schools in 179 districts. Large school districts such as Los Angeles Unified, Chicago, and Detroit have also implemented PBS district-wide. Many states such as Maryland, Colorado, New Jersey, and Oregon have committed to PBS as a state-wide initiative.

PBS usually begins in a few targeted schools where commitment to the program is high. Successful school programs can then be duplicated in other schools with the state or district providing support and training to school personnel. Data collection is extremely important to PBS. Many districts have adopted a variety of tools to evaluate implementation status and needs. There are multiple options to evaluate PBS including: the School Wide Information System (SWIS – an on-going collection of school office discipline referrals), the Self Assessment Survey and the Benchmarks of Quality (both used to determine the extent and quality of implementation of PBS in each school), the Team Implementation Checklist (each school implementation team’s assessment of program fidelity), and/or the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (“SET”) data tool to aid in this effort. SET is used to evaluate PBS programs across schools in each school year. The results are used to assess PBS features, determine annual goals, and compare PBS efforts from year to year.²²



Examples of State and District PBS systems

* Illinois began its statewide PBS program nearly 10 years ago. The program functions through an Illinois State Board of Education funded initiative, the Illinois PBS Network. School districts that are interested in PBS must first prepare at the district level by committing to PBS for five years and creating a leadership team. Then the district is assisted by a Network Coordinator in selecting schools for initial implementation. PBS has been implemented in 16% of Illinois schools and 20% of Illinois districts. The state plans on expanding to 1,200 or 30% of Illinois schools by 2011. The Network stresses full implementation and works to support schools in moving to school-wide commitment to PBS. The Network also hosts an on-line information sharing system and several statewide professional development activities and conferences. Recent studies show that Illinois schools with fully implemented PBS programs have significantly fewer office discipline referrals (ODR) and have a greater number of students meeting or exceeding

²² See Horner, R. *et al.*, “The School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET): A Research Instrument for Assessing School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support,” *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 6, 3-12 (2004). See also Horner, Sugai, & Lewis-Palmer “School-wide Positive Behavior Support Evaluation Template,” October 2005. See also www.pbssurveys.org for additional information.

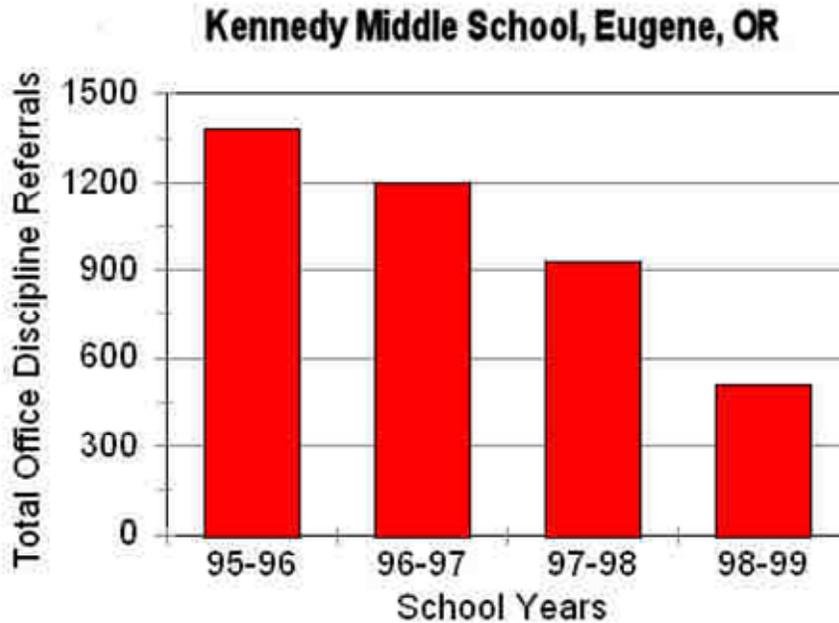
state reading levels. Schools with fully implemented PBS also met AYP (the NCLB requirement of “annual yearly progress” toward mastery) at a significantly higher level than other schools. *See* Illinois PBIS Network, “End of Year Report- FY07,” *available at* www.pbisillinois.org.

* PBS is used to some extent in all 24 school districts in Maryland. The core of the Maryland PBS program is the state leadership team which includes staff from the Maryland Department of Education, Johns Hopkins University, and local behavioral support coaches. The Team meets monthly to plan and coordinate the training and support for the school teams and behavior support coaches. The Leadership Team also provides training for School-Wide Evaluation Tool Assessors and trains school personnel in the use of the School Wide Information System (SWIS). Maryland has also trained approximately 100 Behavior Support Coaches. The majority of Coaches are school psychologists, and, within the scope of PBS, they work with 3-5 PBS schools. Coaches attend PBS school team meetings and provide ongoing support for the implementation and maintenance of PBS. Additionally, coaches meet at the state level five times each year to share ideas, and challenges. *See* Johns Hopkins CTE, “The Maryland Model,” *available at* http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/pbis/ses1_act2_pag1.shtml. Over 95% of PBS elementary schools in Maryland using PBS have 80% or more of their students with fewer than one office discipline referral per year. In Baltimore County, eighth grade math scores showed a 69% increase in PBS schools from 2003-2006. *See* PBIS Maryland, “PBIS Supports Academic Achievement,” PBIS Maryland Spring Newsletter 2007.

* In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the District first adopted PBS through a change in the district-wide discipline policy in 2007. All schools in the district were asked to modify their discipline policies to reflect the LAUSD’s support for school wide positive behavioral support. The District then provided each school with a number of tools to help grow PBS, including guiding principles, school resource surveys, and alternatives to traditional disciplinary methods. Each local district also has a team leader and implementation team responsible for providing technical assistance to schools. LAUSD also offers continuous professional development to teachers and school coaches.

WHAT DOES PBS COST AND HOW WILL IT SAVE US MONEY?

Data shows that PBS reduces school discipline incidents.²³ :



And, when school incidents decrease, schools save time and money.²⁴

What does a reduction of 850 office referrals and 25 suspensions mean?

Kennedy Middle School

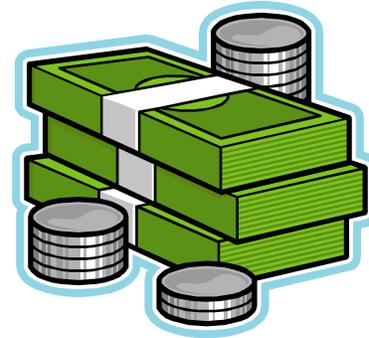
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Savings in Administrative time• ODR = 15 min• Suspension = 45 min
• 13,875 minutes• 231 hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Savings in Student Instructional time• ODR = 45 min• Suspension = 216 min
• 43,650 minutes• 728 hours |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 29, 8-hour days | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 121 6-hour school days |

²³ Horner 3/25/08 Presentation, Slide # 35

²⁴ *Id.*, Slide # 36

PBS has some front-end costs. At least until PBS is spread statewide and institutionalized in school districts, state support will be needed. This support will cover the expansion of PBS from a few schools towards statewide implementation with only the number of regional coordinators increasing.

Individual schools may also incur some costs in the initial implementation of PBS. Schools will need to establish a leadership team consisting of teachers, staff, and administrators. Schools will have to cover the costs of missed work time for participants to attend leadership meetings and trainings. There may be additional costs for schools associated with data management and PBIS materials. Statewide staff can work with schools to determine these costs during the first year of the proposed grant program. In the second year of the program, additional funding should be requested from the General Assembly to assist schools with these initial implementation costs.



As more districts adopt PBS, the state's costs decrease because local school districts can begin to employ their own district-wide coaches instead of relying on state coaches. External technical assistance to state staff also becomes less necessary. *See* Robert Horner, George Sugai and Claudia Vincent, "School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Investing in Student Success," *Impact: Feature Issue on Fostering Success in School and Beyond for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders* 18(2), 2005, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, available at <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/default.html>

Once the PBS infrastructure is set up at a school and school wide training has occurred, no additional dollars should be needed to maintain the program. In fact, past experience with PBS shows that, with fully implemented PBS, schools see a significant drop in the problem student behaviors and a commensurate reduction in staff time needed to respond to these behaviors. Since time is money, the result is a substantial savings. At one middle school that implemented PBS, the school had an annual reduction of 850 office discipline referrals and 25 student suspensions translating into a time savings of 30 administrator days and 121 student days. *See* Horner, Sugai, and Vincent, 2005. A reduction in problem behaviors will also lead to a reduction in the number of students referred to the juvenile justice and special education systems with further cost saving for schools and students.



For more information, please contact the Education Law Center of Pennsylvania at (215) 238-6970 or email us at dklehr@elc-pa.org