

Lake Placid Elementary School

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Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Initiative 2010 – 2013

What Is Positive Behavior Intervention and Support?

PBIS focuses on creating a school-level team that leads school personnel in identifying specific desirable student behaviors and then explicitly teaching – and rewarding – such behaviors throughout the school. The approach includes these basic components:

- **Prevention:** Clarifying positive behavioral expectations and explicitly teaching them schoolwide.
- **Consistent Support:** Fostering responsible student behavior by modeling, acknowledging, and rewarding appropriate behaviors.
- **Data-based decision making:** Regularly evaluating data to gauge the program's effectiveness and changing program elements as needed.

Steps in the Process:

Forming a Team and Clarifying Expectations

Modeling and Supporting Behaviors

Keeping Close to the Data

Doing What It Takes To Make It Work

Making School the Place to Be

***** See the following sheets for a detailed explanation of the process.**

Forming a Team and Clarifying Expectations

A team of teachers, administrators, and a special educator lead the school in learning about PBIS and applying it. The PBIS team, usually nominated by a school's administrator, is a key part of implementing PBIS and may include teachers, the school psychologist, counselor, or other specialists. After this team receives training, the school provides professional development focused on PBIS for all teachers and staff. Specialists from the FEH BOCES will be providing workshops, coaching, mentoring, and team facilitation

Using Behavioral Data

School personnel pore over data on the most frequently occurring misbehaviors. They identify a number of overall conduct expectations that, if followed, should lessen recurring behavior struggles: be respectful, be responsible, be safe, and be a problem solver. They define specific behaviors aligned to these broad expectations that would be appropriate in various school locations and situations. For example, walking rather than running in the hallways is part of being safe; following adult directions is part of being respectful. At the start of the school year, we might consider hanging signs listing these expectations throughout the school and post specific behaviors prominently in appropriate locales.

Modeling and Supporting Behaviors

Throughout the year, faculty, administrators, and staff directly teach behavioral expectations to students. Adults in the school model actions like asking respectfully to borrow learning supplies and give students feedback on their performance. They reinforce target behaviors, frequently with videos and other creative media. Administrators require any student who receives a discipline referral to identify the general expectation he or she has violated, suggest what conditions might have led to the off-track behavior, and plan how he or she might respond more positively in the future.

Teachers begin randomly awarding tickets (redeemable for such items as school supplies, recreational equipment, snacks, or small toys) when they recognize behavior matching the school's expectations. They accompany each reward with specific words of encouragement ("You waited your turn quietly – that really helped"). Teachers at each grade level plan a quarterly event, such as a party of some sort or talent show, to reward students who receive few or no discipline referrals. Students who don't earn a place at these events attend positively charged "booster sessions" to review and practice appropriate behaviors.

Keeping Close to the Data

Once school personnel begin explicitly teaching students to conduct themselves more appropriately – and acknowledging praiseworthy conduct teachers should see tremendous changes. Two years into the program, school officials have reported a 30 percent drop in the number of discipline referrals. Administrators and the PBIS leadership team continue to regularly analyze data on student behavior and make adjustments to school practices with an eye to what the data reveal – a key principle of PBIS.

For example, the team introduces an individualized support measure for any student who receives two or more office referrals in a specified period. These youth are assigned teacher mentors to give them extra support and guidance.

What Makes It Work?

Success of this schoolwide behavior initiative can be attributed to two factors:

- Shared leadership and responsibility. Members of the PBIS team are able to convince their colleagues to actively participate in planning and implementing the program over time. This shared leadership, workload, and accountability helps prevent the burnout that brings down so many innovations undertaken by a few overworked individuals.
- Public, proactive administrative support. Throughout the first two years of a school's adoption of the PBIS approach, administrators repeatedly must demonstrate that teachers and staff members could count on them to meet needs that arise in switching to the new discipline model. Administrators set aside time at faculty meetings to discuss the model, for example, and problem solve with individual faculty members. They consciously model positive behavioral support for their staff members, which encourages teachers to do the same for students. Administrators and PBIS team members also recognize staff members who implement the program effectively with "shout-outs" – public commendations for their efforts. An attitude of openness and continuous improvement pervades the school.

Making School the Place to Be

Classrooms aren't the only locations to consider when creating positive school environments. Conflicts or angry feelings that flare up in the cafeteria, hallways, or playground frequently spill over into the school day, affecting the overall school climate and the quality of the educational program.

When schools focus on punishing "bad" behaviors, they may control these behaviors, yet make little long-term progress toward student growth. A punitive approach also exacts a price in terms of discouraged students (and teachers), reduced instructional time, and an uncomfortable school climate. As demonstrated at many schools across the U.S., a system of positive behavioral supports holds far more promise for making schools the kind of places that we and our students want to be.

References

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