

Positive Outlook

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Our Mission

Increasing the capacity of Florida's school districts to address problem behaviors using Positive Behavior Support within a Response to Intervention framework.

Maintaining Initial SWPBS Efforts

Congratulations to the 320 new schools for completing Tier 1 training this past school year! You have taken a positive step toward improving the learning environment of your students. Now that the Tier 1 training is completed, the question becomes: How do we maintain our initial school-wide PBS efforts? The following are suggestions for your team leaders to consider:

- Reinforce what was learned from the Tier 1 training by explaining to all staff that PBS is a proactive, preventative process, and not a program.
- Emphasize PBS as a process focused on teaching all students how to meet school-wide learning and behavioral expectations.
- Highlight the fact that the process stems from research-validated approaches to resolving significant behavior problems at the school-wide,

classroom and/or individual student levels; hence, the mission of PBS.

- Keep in mind that PBS does not replace negative consequences, especially in relation to major offenses.
- PBS does not promote authoritarian control, which usually involves myths or beliefs that sabotage successful outcomes. Become aware of these sabotaging beliefs; for instance:
 - ✘ "I can stop my student's repetitive disruptive behaviors by giving more negative consequences," or
 - ✘ "I can make my classroom a better place to learn by referring those students to the office who are in the habit of acting out of control," or
 - ✘ "Our school can become more effective by adopting the latest innovative program in addition to our initial PBS efforts."

Be aware that this last belief influences one to work harder, not smarter. Focus on working smarter.

- Monitor the efficacy of newly developed Tier 1 activities by conducting bi-weekly or monthly reviews and discussions of student data.
- Keep in mind that student data, which is central to the PBS process, informs what behavioral expectations and rules need to be taught to all students.
- Facilitate the school-wide discipline process by explaining the discipline flow charts.
- Facilitate teacher support by providing ongoing professional development opportunities that help staff develop a clearer understanding of their active roles in building school-wide capacity.

**For articles to share with your team members, go to http://flpbs.fmbi.usf.edu/resources_research.asp*

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Prevent-Teach-Reinforce: A Tier 3 Empirically Supported Intervention

Although there has been extensive literature supporting the effectiveness of Tier 3/individual positive behavior support, most of the studies have been single subject case examples. The Prevent-Teach-Reinforce Model (PTR) is one of the first randomized control trials conducted to compare whether a standardized function-based intervention implemented by typical school personnel is more effective than the usual behavioral interventions (e.g., “business as usual”) provided to students with serious problem behaviors. The research study was conducted in five school districts, three in Central Florida and two in Colorado. The study, funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, has completed preliminary data analysis on 226 students in grades K-8. Students were nominated to the study by their teachers using Gates 1 and 2 of the Systematic Screening of Behavior Disorders (SSBD; Walker & Serverson, 1992). Students recruited in the study were diverse and included students with, and at risk for, disabilities. Student outcome

measures included the Social Skills and Problem Behavior subscales of the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham & Elliott, 1990) and observations of each student’s academic engaged time (AET). Student measures were collected at three time intervals; pre-intervention, post-intervention, and follow-up. The assessments were given to students in both treatment and comparison groups. Teachers whose students were randomly assigned to treatment received fidelity assessments throughout the intervention phase and completed social validity evaluations at post-intervention.

Preliminary outcome data show that students who received the PTR intervention had **significantly larger increases in social skills and academic engaged time and significantly larger decreases in problem behavior** when compared to the students who received “business as usual.” Further analyses were conducted comparing pre- to post-performance change related to child characteristics including gender, severity of behavior, and special education status. Results indicated that boys receiving the PTR intervention **had significantly improved performance in all three outcomes** than did boys who did not receive the PTR intervention. Both students having **non-special education status (i.e., without an IEP) or special education status showed significantly greater improvement in both social skills and problem behaviors** than did similar students in the comparison group. Finally, students with the **most intensive problem behaviors** as indicated by their maladaptive behavior score on the SSBD had **significantly greater change in all areas** when compared to their counterparts in the “business as usual” group. However, students with lower severity levels of problem behaviors did not differ significantly from the comparison group in pre- to post-test measurements. This suggests that while function-based support plans are essential for students with the most serious problem behaviors, students with less intense behaviors do not need full blown tertiary processes and may respond more positively to universal or secondary interventions thus preventing the need for the additional resources of tertiary supports.

Teacher outcomes showed that almost all were able to reach a minimum of **80% fidelity**. Teacher social validity ratings of the intervention were high with most finding the intervention to **be highly acceptable to implement and highly effective in addressing problem**

behaviors and teaching new skills.

PTR is a systematic five-step process that is team-driven, rather than expert-driven, and is implemented through a series of meetings scheduled at the team’s preferred time and place. Teams participating in the process are assigned a project consultant and a reader-friendly manual that includes background content related to each step, clear directions for activities to be completed in each meeting, and assignments to be completed by each team member prior to the next meeting. The goal of the PTR model is to develop an individualized behavior intervention plan that includes, at a minimum, strategies from each of the three categories (i.e., Prevent, Teach, Reinforce).

Step 1, Teaming, establishes the membership on the school-based team and an agreement on how the team will function including methods of gaining consensus and assignment of responsibilities. Current team functioning is evaluated and discussed so that upcoming meetings will be both effective and efficient.

Step 2, Goal Setting, identifies and defines behavioral, social, and academic targets. Goals include, at a minimum, one problem behavior to be reduced and one pro-social and or pro-academic behavior to be taught. An efficient, yet effective, data gathering tool, the Behavior Rating Scale, is developed for the purpose informing the team about the daily occurrence of student problem and pro-social behaviors. The data tool is used throughout the PTR process and provides data related to the student’s response to intervention and promotes data-based decision-making.

Step 3, PTR Assessment, includes a functional behavior assessment that uses an indirect checklist format to gather information related to antecedent variables (Prevent), function and teach variables (Teach) and consequence variables (Reinforce). Each team member completes one assessment for each problem behavior identified in Step 2. The information is synthesized and discussed with team consensus obtained on function-based hypotheses.

Step 4, PTR Intervention, assists the team in selecting strategies that are matched with the agreed upon hypothesis and include at least one intervention in each category (P-T-R). Consensus is reached on the interventions that will be implemented in the classroom by the teacher. A detailed behavior intervention plan is

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PBS Across Florida

At present, Florida has 720 of the 11,000 schools throughout the United States that are implementing School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports. Among the 720 Florida schools, 6 of them are at Pre-K level; 375 are Elementary; 156 are Middle, 72 are High School; 55 are Alternate/Centers, and 56 are others (e.g., K-8). 60 Florida School Districts are currently collaborating with FLPBS:RtIB Project, involving active district leadership teams, district coordinators, & superintendent participation. This national and state-wide progress may be attributed to the fact that PBS is:

1. aligned with RtI
2. easily adaptable to fit a school’s unique situation
3. can co-exist with most other school-wide programs, for example, Reading First, Character Education
4. consistent with research-based principles of behavior

The 2008-2009 Annual Outcome Data will be made available in our Winter Issue.

Prevent-Teach-Reinforce... (Continued)

written that incorporates precise descriptions of the selected interventions and a task analysis of the steps to be performed in each strategy. This step also includes a plan for training the teacher (and any other relevant interventionists) to implement the interventions in the way intended. Follow-up support is provided to the teacher to ensure that the interventions are (a) being implemented with fidelity, (b) effective for the student, and (c) a contextual fit with the classroom and teacher. Any necessary modifications to the plan are made with teacher input and agreement.

Step 5, Evaluation, makes data-based decisions on the effectiveness of the intervention and the next steps the team wishes to take. The Behavior Rating Scale (developed in Step 2) is used to compare the magnitude and rate

of behavior change. At this stage, interventions can be expanded to other settings and/or people or systematic fading can be initiated.

In conclusion, the PTR intervention provides initial data that can begin to inform policies and procedures regarding the implementation of Tier 3 interventions in schools. The intervention represents an effort to address the considerable needs of schools for behavioral interventions that are (a) standardized, so that steps of processes are explicitly described and can be used with a wide range of students; (b) individualized with interventions developed based upon the student's functional behavior assessment and the context and preferences of the teacher, and (c) effective, so that the intervention will benefit students and teachers. In the future, the

intervention process will continue to be refined so that the model can be made more efficient and practical for typical school personnel to implement; however, the current version is one that deserves consideration by schools in their efforts to find behavioral intervention programs that can be used in their settings to address the problem behaviors of the students who need the most intensive level of supports.

**For detailed information on the above study please refer to Iovannone, R., Greenbaum, P., Wei, W., Kincaid, D., Dunlap, G., & Strain, P. (in press). Randomized controlled trial of a tertiary behavior intervention for students with problem behaviors: Preliminary outcomes. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. Dunlap, G., Iovannone, R., Wilson, K., Strain, P., & Kincaid, D. (in press). Prevent-Teach-Reinforce: A standardized model of school-based behavioral intervention. Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions.*

Funding Rewards: Strategies from Martin County

Designing on a dime: Martin County High School attended the Tier 1 Training this June, and already developed a way to support PBS throughout their district! Home to a marketing department, MCHS used their resources to develop a brochure about PBS and their school-wide expectations. Recognizing how powerful the printed word can be, the school offered to design brochures for the other active PBS schools in the county – and will give extra credit to one of their marketing students for designing it! Not only do the other PBS schools benefit, but this strategy allows a student to spend time thinking about appropriate behavior...and how to make it attractive to other people!

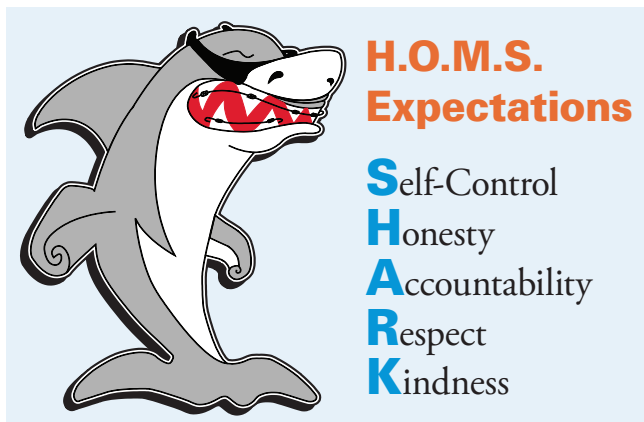
Taking a Bite out of Printing Budgets: Hidden Oaks Middle School in Martin County straightened out the cost of printing posters and banners by looking to a

unique community partner: a local orthodontist. Lively Orthodontics in Stuart, Florida showed their commitment to the community by paying for the banners that showcase HOMS' school-wide expectations. In return, HOMS showcased the good doctor's work – by adding braces to their mascot!

Making Expectations Stick: Hidden Oaks went a step further by putting their “dentally-enhanced mascot” on a sticker, along with the school-wide expectations. Emphasizing the expectation of “Accountability,” students who returned their emergency contact card by the first Friday of the school year earned the privilege of wearing a T-Shirt to school, along with the sticker. The sticker served the purpose of showcasing the school-wide expectations, recognizing a community partner, and identifying students who had earned the reward. The initiative was so successful, that

every student (except for one) returned their emergency cards on time! What's more, students were responsible for choosing T-Shirts that were in the school's colors, and that only contained appropriate messages. Given these high expectations – which the staff made sure to thoroughly teach - all of the students followed through, leaving the staff motivated and excited to implement more PBS strategies.

“Clips” of Good Behavior: In a great demonstration of effective district-level support, Martin County's District Coordinator met with a local business – Sports Clips – to develop a coupon system that benefitted the salon as well as the schools. Sports Clips provided stacks of coupons for \$2 off a haircut to each of the schools, for teachers to give to students who demonstrated a school-wide expectation. When the student cashed their coupon in at the salon, Sports Clips donated \$3 to a district fund that supports PBS initiatives in the county. Martin County went one step further by encouraging their teachers to give students a school-wide token if they brought in their receipt from their haircut. This multi-level system rewards students for following expectations, provides extra business to a community partner, and encourages participation in a fund-raising strategy for the district. Great job, Martin County!



**We would like to thank Robyn Vanover and Lisa Estevez for sharing these strategies! If you have an idea that you would like to share with other PBS schools, contact Michael Reyes: reyesm@fmbi.usf.edu, or your FLPBS:RtIB contact person.*

Scaling up the Triangle to Tier 3

In the 2008-2009 school year, several Florida school districts indicated that they were ready to address behavioral supports for students in Tier 3 and needed technical assistance from the Florida Positive Behavior Support Project: RtI for Behavior. Five school districts were selected to pilot a technical assistance process that would provide them with a systematic action plan to establish consistent Tier 3 processes that are aligned with evidence-based practices. The activities involved in Tier 3 technical assistance include the following:

1. Formation of a district leadership team responsible for coordinating Tier 3
2. Evaluation conducted by FLPBS-RTIB of the district's current Tier 3 processes and products
 - a. An interview process is conducted with the Tier 3 leadership team to evaluate the district's current Tier 3 process
 - b. The district agrees to submit five to ten recently completed FBA/BIPs to be assessed for technical adequacy
3. Meeting with FLPBS-RTIB and the Tier 3 district leadership team to share results of process and product evaluation
4. Facilitation of the development of a long-term action plan with goals and activities to address areas needing improvement.
5. Regularly scheduled follow-up meetings to evaluate progress on action plan and determine next steps

The five school districts participating in the first year of Tier 3 technical assistance are diverse in size (small-rural to very large-urban) and student demographics; however, their Tier 3 needs are strikingly similar. Each district's action plan addressed the following needs:

- Development of a consistent, cohesive Tier 3 process that is aligned with RtI and is used by both general and special education.
- Development and/or modification of Tier 3 products
- Establishment of a data-tracking system that provides essential information on all students receiving Tier 3 supports including who is receiving supports, dates of FBA/BIP, and data on targeted behaviors indicating degree of change.
- Methods of collecting implementation fidelity data

Currently, all five school districts are in Year 2 of their action plan and are continuing their activities to achieve their action plan goals. They have all found the process and technical assistance to be valuable and have made considerable progress. If your district is ready to address Tier 3 behavior supports, contact your PBS consultant for more information.

**For resources to assist you with Tier 3-related efforts, go to: http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/resources_indstudents.asp*

Announcements

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING! You are welcome to submit any articles or suggestions to be considered for the next Positive Outlook newsletter. Please submit ideas directly to reyesm@fmhi.usf.edu.

WELCOME! We want to welcome Michael Reyes, our new technical assistant specialist. We also want to welcome back Michelle White. Each provide training and support to schools and school districts through FLPBS:RTIB Project.

Important Dates

- October 8-9, 2009:** National PBIS Leadership Forum
- March 25-27, 2010:** 7th International APBS Conference, St. Louis
- March 10-12, 2011:** 8th International APBS Conference, Denver

DC's Corner

- November 1, 2009:** Mid Year Report I Deadline
- March 1, 2010:** Mid-Year Report II Deadline
- June 15, 2010:** End-Year Report Deadline
- June 15, 2010:** Model School Application Deadline



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