



PBISAZ Newsletter

A collaborative effort between the Arizona Department of Education, Universities, Schools, Students and Families.

www.pbisaz.org

December 2006

Statewide PBIS Conference

On December 1st, over 300 educators and administrators from throughout Arizona gathered at the Black Canyon Conference Center in Phoenix for the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports State Conference. The event allowed attendees to learn about school-wide PBIS, interventions for at-risk and individual students, national research and initiatives, and successful Arizona programs.

The keynote speakers included Dr. Terrance Scott of the University of Oregon, Dr. Leanne Hawken of the University of Utah, and Dr. Kathleen L. Lane of Vanderbilt University. Dr. Scott kicked off the conference with an overview of school-wide positive behavior support. Dr. Hawken provided valuable information about secondary, or group, interventions available to educators and the research she has conducted in her work with schools in Utah. Dr. Lane presented on individualized interventions, highlighting the utility of individualized intervention plans and functional behavior assessment. During the break-out sessions, these experts shared their experiences working with schools and answered questions from conference attendees about systems change, evidence-based interventions, funding, implementation in alternative settings, and a range of other issues.

Attendees also attended sessions featuring speakers from schools throughout the state that have already implemented school-wide PBIS at their sites. Speakers described their strategies, obstacles, and successes at each phase of implementation and provided advice on implementation in a variety of contexts. Speakers offered examples of school-wide programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, and discussed involving parents, students, and the community in systems change efforts.

Model District: Dysart Unified School District

Dysart Unified School District has implemented school-wide PBIS since 1999 in order to create positive campus climates that are conducive to the education of all students and maintain a safe learning environments, first at Dysart High School, then at Willow Canyon High School, and now at all nineteen campuses in the district. The district makes supporting appropriate student behavior and responsibility a top priority. Dysart's approach is based in the notion that the prevention of problem behavior and teaching desired behavior is much more effective than punishment. The district utilizes a systemic, data-based approach, as well as individualized strategies and interventions, to increase student success. School psychologists Joe Dellamarggio and Katie Sprouls currently head the Behavior Support Team (BST) process utilized by the district that is used to support students with academic, behavioral, and mental health issues.

School-wide PBIS has helped to improve school culture, academic achievement, social skills, and relationships with peers and adults throughout the

Current PBISAZ Participants

2005-2007 Cohort

Juniper Tree Academy
Carpe Diem Academy
Desert View Academy

Paradise Valley Unified District
Liberty Elementary

Payson Unified School District
Frontier Elementary School
Julia Randall Elementary School
Payson Elementary School
Rim Country Middle School

2006-2008 Cohort

Success School District
Arizona Charter Academy

Gilbert Unified District
Playa del Rey Elementary
Harris Elementary School

Scottsdale Unified School District
Sierra Vista Academy

Paradise Valley Unified District
Hidden Hills Elementary
North Ranch Elementary

Bisbee Unified School District
Bisbee High School
Greenway Primary School
Lowell School
Bisbee Middle School

Harvest Power Community Development, Inc.
Harvest Preparatory Academy

Marana Unified School District
Mountain View High School
Marana Middle School
Tortolita Middle School

Pima Unified District
Pima Elementary School
Pima Junior High
Pima High School

Pearce Elementary School District
Pearce Elementary School

district. The climate in the schools has improved due to the emphasis on the reinforcement for appropriate behaviors in all environments. There is an emphasis on family awareness and participation. The implementation of school-wide PBIS has also aided in establishing a common language, which has enhanced communication. Active administrative involvement that strongly supports a preventive approach to addressing problem behavior by teaching, monitoring, and reinforcing school-wide social skills, academic skills and appropriate behavior has been essential to making this effort successful. The initiative is based in a systemic change, which has produced long-term and sustainable effects documented by a reduced dropout rate, increased test scores, and significantly reduced behavioral referrals.

Developing Behavioral Competence

Schools need staff who can address the full range of behavioral challenges – conduct functional behavioral assessments (FBAs), develop effective interventions, write appropriate Behavior Intervention Plans, and help improve school discipline and climate. Personnel preparation programs rarely teach these skills, leaving schools dependent on outside experts – until recently. The Behavior Support Specialist (BSS) Certificate program at the University of Arizona is a unique, online professional development program that helps school personnel develop these skills. The program includes 3 graduate-level courses that cover 18 competency areas and 104 competencies.

Participants who complete all three courses earn a Certificate as a Behavior Support Specialist. The Certificate identifies the individual as one who has demonstrated competence in developing FBAs, function-based interventions, and appropriate BIPs. Employees in several schools and districts throughout Arizona have already earned the Certificate. Because the program is unique, school employees from other States and other countries have also completed the program. For more information, please check <http://www.ed.arizona.edu/bss>.

PBIS Survey

The PBIS Statewide Planning Committee commissioned a survey to determine the status of PBIS in Arizona's schools. ADE funded the project in which researchers from NAU conducted phone interviews with stratified samples that included 50 elementary schools, 30 middle schools, and 30 high schools. The goal was to determine common discipline problems, current discipline practices, outcomes that are most meaningful, and interest in developing PBIS systems.

The results provided information used to organize the recent December 1st Statewide PBIS Conference. They also will pro-

vide a baseline against which to measure future progress in PBIS in Arizona. Further analysis of these data is underway and will be reported in future editions of the PBISAz Newsletter.

Status Report

In 2006, 17 school districts participated in the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports of Arizona (PBISAz) Project. These districts included 35 schools, three of which were charter school districts. More than 100 team members participated in training, however, all school constituents (including parents and students) are included in the process through surveys, assessment, and training provided by school staff who attended the state training meetings.

Since its inception, 123 schools in 53 districts have participated in training.

Remaining 2006-2007 PBISAz Training Dates

1st Year Trainings

February 2 & 3, 2007

April 27 & 28, 2007

2nd Year Training

February 16 & 17, 2007

For information on how your school district can participate please contact:

Jolene Ferro - University of Arizona
Project Coordinator, Southern Arizona Schools.
PH: 520.626.2960 FAX: 520.621.3821
jbferro@email.arizona.edu

Yadira Flores - Arizona State University
Project Coordinator, Phoenix Metro and Central Arizona Schools
PH: 480.965.4063 FAX :480.965.4128
Yadira.Flores@asu.edu

Joan Oakes - Northern Arizona University
Project Coordinator, Northern Arizona Schools
PH : 928.523.7030 FAX : 928.523.9127
joan.oakes@nau.edu