

# New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools

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For more information and products visit the PBSIS website: [www.njpbs.org](http://www.njpbs.org)

## Welcome New PBSIS Schools!

The PBSIS Initiative is pleased to welcome 22 new schools to the PBSIS network. The schools began their PBSIS training during the 2007-2008 school year, and will conduct their PBSIS “kick-off” at the start of the 2008-2009 school year.

Each school will receive training and technical assistance in universal, secondary and individualized positive behavior interventions. The new schools range from preschool to high school and represent different geographic regions across New Jersey.

- Beck Middle School, Cherry Hill
- Camden County Technical School
- Donald A Quarles Early Childhood Learning Center, Englewood
- James Madison Intermediate School, Edison
- John Adams Middle School, Edison
- John P. Stevens High School, Edison
- John Witherspoon Middle School, Princeton
- Joseph Soehl Middle School, Linden
- Langston Hughes School, East Orange
- Levitt Middle School, Willingboro
- Magowan Elementary School, Edgewater Park
- Martin Luther King School, Edison
- Myles McManus Middle School, Linden
- Pemberton High School, Pemberton
- Roosevelt Elementary School, Rahway
- Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Lodi
- Union Avenue Middle School, Irvington
- Watchung Elementary School, Montclair
- William B. Cruise Memorial # 11 School, Passaic
- William P. Tatem School, Collingswood
- Willingboro High School, Willingboro
- Woodbrook Elementary School, Edison

### Inside this issue:

Administrator Support of PBSIS	<b>2</b>
Using Data to Make Decisions about Behavior	<b>4</b>
PBSIS Coach Wins National Award	<b>4</b>
Training Opportunities	<b>6</b>

## New PBSIS Team Members

The PBSIS Initiative state team is growing! Bill Davis and Sunne-Ryse Smith joined the Boggs Center in Fall 2007. Bill and Sunne-Ryse are Training and Consultation Specialists who provide training and technical assistance to schools participating in the PBSIS initiative.

Bill Davis



Sunne-Ryse Smith



# Administrator Support of PBSIS

By Dianne Brethauer

The Eisenhower Middle School in Freehold Township joined the PBSIS network during the 2004-2005 school year. The PBSIS framework provides the staff and students with a school-wide system of behavioral support. A critical component in the successful implementation of this initiative is **administrative support**.

As principal of the Eisenhower school, one of the first tasks I assigned myself was to learn about the rationale behind the framework. With the help of the PBSIS building coach, Mr. Greg Durante, I quickly became versed in the research, the language, and the rationale behind the initiative. Our overall student expectations were clearly defined as Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Ready to Learn. It became apparent that my support of the framework needed to happen on several levels: staff interactions, student interactions, community outreach, and monetary support.



**Staff Interactions:** In my experience, I have found that staff members feel most comfortable with a new initiative when they are empowered with knowledge. In each of the last three years of this initiative, staff training has been embedded into the school year. Staff development workshops have been offered to all new and returning teachers before each school year began. In addition, monthly staff development sessions have been utilized to boost the staff’s implementation of the PBSIS framework in their classrooms. Additional trainings such as one on Active

Supervision helped promote a proactive approach for working with students.

In addition to training, the PBSIS Core Team promoted the use of positive recognition, the STAR slip. In the

beginning of year two, each staff member was encouraged to write one STAR slip per week. As the year progressed, we challenged staff members to write one STAR slip per day. Now, in the fourth year of implementation, we have somewhere between 1000-3000 STAR slips written each month. With an approximate staff of 95, this is a wonderful affirmation that recognizing students for meeting expectations has become part of a daily routine for most staff members. Incentives such as a bi-monthly raffle provide an opportunity for both students and staff members to be recognized publicly for receiving or writing a STAR.

*“A critical component in the successful implementation of this initiative is administrative support”*



STAR slip for recognizing students.

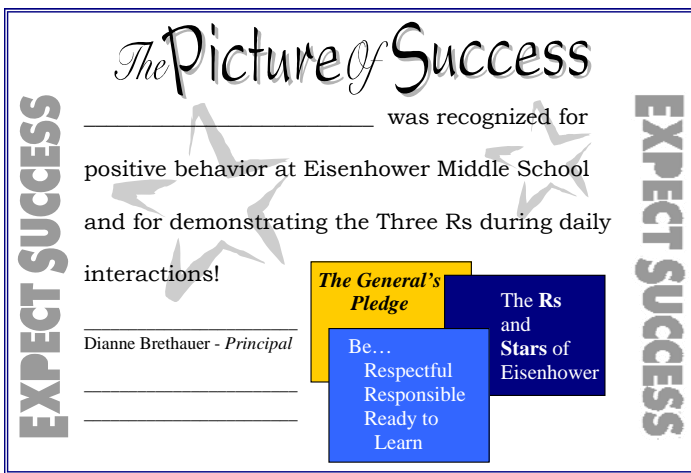
**Student Interactions:** Four years ago when students were asked what the school rules were, no two students could clearly identify the expectations of the school. That since has changed. Each year, an instructional “kickoff” event is held on one of the first

## Administrator Support of PBSIS

cont. from page 2

two days of school. Behavioral expectations are explicitly taught for different settings of the student day. Throughout the year, expectations are boosted at the beginning of each assembly, concert, or evening event. In addition, staff members use the same language consistently in their classrooms, on class trips, and when speaking with parents.

Students have developed an understanding that meeting expectations is the norm. Students receive STAR slips for meeting, not exceeding the expectations. Students are also recognized for earning 5, 25, 50, and 75 STARS with a postcard that gets mailed to their homes throughout the entire school year.



Postcard sent home recognizing student behavior.

**Community Outreach:** Each month, I write a newsletter to the parents. I have embedded in each of these newsletters a message regarding the PBSIS initiative. In fact, over the last four years, we have renamed it the Rs and STARS. (Rs for the expectations and STARS for the recognition slips). This newsletter may include an update on the number of STARS written to date, or it may highlight a particular Rs and STARS incentive or celebration.

I have received comments from parents who feel more connected to what's going on in their child's day by reading this monthly newsletter. In fact, I encourage each parent to engage in a dialogue with his/her child about how he/she exhibited respectful, responsible, or ready to learn behaviors at school each day. By encouraging this dialogue, I hope to enhance communication between home and school, as well as between parents and their children.

Additionally, our PBSIS Core Team has done a wonderful job of promoting the expectations with signs, posters, and banners. Three nine-foot banners with the expectations adorn the entrance to our middle school. Every parent, student, and community member who drives past our school is reminded of the building expectations for our school community. Similar banners are displayed in each of our two gymnasiums and the school cafeteria. This language is in concert with the language used during our instructional kickoff day and in the booster lessons. Brochures have also been produced for distribution at parent events such as Back to School Night, parent conferences, and incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade parent orientation.

Finally, our PBSIS Core Team has made presentations to the Board of Education and to the Eisenhower PTO. These presentations have focused on the research, language, and rationale behind the PBSIS initiative. Due to the positive feedback and support of the good work that is happening at our school, there is an excitement about spreading the message to other district schools. In fact, one of the district elementary schools is presently in the first year of implementation. We hope to continue to spread the PBSIS initia-

## Using Data to Make Decisions about Behavior Interventions

A key component of PBSIS is engaging in **data-based decision making** to plan behavioral interventions and monitor their effectiveness. Examining data allows a PBSIS team to better understand the behavioral needs of their school (e.g., what specific problems are happening, when and where), so that the team can develop an intervention to **prevent behavior problems**.

A team can use data to anticipate behavior problems and then plan efficient and effective interventions. For example, if a school's data indicate that the majority of



behavior problems consist of seventh grade students being disrespectful to each other in the hallway when transitioning back from lunch, the team can plan a targeted intervention to prevent those specific behaviors from occurring during that time. Further, once an intervention is in place, continuing to examine data facilitates the ability to monitor the effectiveness of an intervention. Monitoring an intervention is crucial, as many will need to be fine-tuned over time to ad-

dress changing needs.

There are different types of data that can be examined by the PBSIS team. **Office discipline referrals (ODRs)** are data that PBSIS schools review most frequently because ODRs may be readily obtained and can provide a wealth of information about different patterns of problem behavior occurring in a school. Additional school data that can be helpful for intervention planning include suspensions, student and staff absences, student and staff surveys, building walkthrough and observations, and referrals to guidance or I&RS.

PBSIS teams should be reviewing their data on a monthly basis. The best way to look at ODR information is in aggregate form, so one can easily see patterns in the data. Putting data in a graph will also help trends stand out more clearly. The PBSIS team should examine ODR data by month, location, behavior offense and time. Additionally, the team should determine if a small or large percentage of students are receiving the majority of referrals. If needed, teams can collect additional information about a spe-

Cont. on page 5

## PBSIS Coach Wins National Award

John Lestino, a PBSIS coach at Edgewater Park school district, was honored in February 2008 by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) at the NASP Annual Convention held in New Orleans. John received the

2007 NASP School Psychologist of the Year Award, which recognizes excellence in the provision of school psychological services by a field-based practitioner. John previously received the New Jersey School Psychologist of the Year

Award from the New Jersey Association of School Psychologists in May 2007.

*Congratulations John!*



Above: John Lestino with his award.  
Right: John celebrating with friends at the NASP Annual Convention.



## Administrator Support of PBSIS

cont. from page 3

tive to the other schools in the district.

**Monetary Support:** Each year I build PBSIS into my building budget. This money covers the cost of printing STAR slips, making banners and signs, purchasing incentives for students and teachers, and any other unanticipated expenses. This year, I was even able to purchase staff shirts to promote the instructional kickoff day

and follow-up boosters. The shirts read: Got Respect? In addition to building-level support, we are very fortunate to have district support of the PBSIS initiative. Core team members receive substitute teachers in order for them to be able to participate in monthly meetings.

In summary, as the building principal of a PBSIS school, I am an active member of the PBSIS Core Team. I use consistent language

with the students, staff, and parents, promoting our school expectations. I recognize students for their Respectful, Responsible, and Ready to Learn behaviors. In addition, I support our teachers as they strive to be proactive in working with the students in their classes. Someone once said to me, “If you believe it, they will, too.” I am happy to say that I reap the reward of working in a successful PBSIS school each day.

## Using Data to Make Decisions about Behavior Interventions

cont. from page 4

cific problem behavior by conducting observations and interviewing staff and students. All of this information will collectively help the team design and implement interventions to address the current needs of the school.

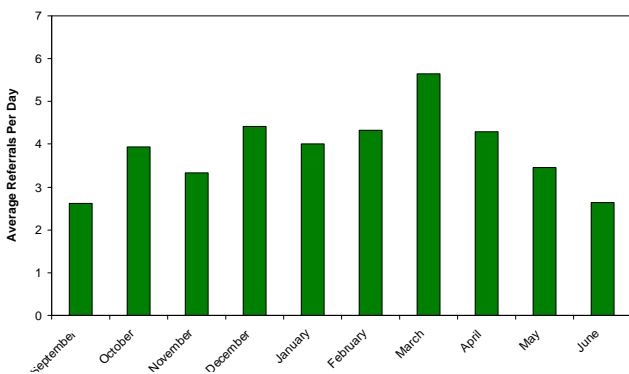
When developing an intervention, the PBSIS team should be thinking about how to prevent problem behaviors from occurring in the future. What the intervention will look like depends on the needs of the school. Sometimes a review of

staff behavior may also be helpful, such as more active supervision occurring during lunch or more adults supervising hallway transitions.

Schools have successfully prevented problem behaviors by having students and staff focus on a specific expectation during a certain time period. For example, if arriving to class late is a prevalent problem, the team can hold an “on time to class contest” for a month. During this month, information can be given to staff reminding them to prompt students to get to their next class on time and recog-

behavioral expectations for a setting/activity is sufficient, while other times changing the environment is needed (e.g., modifying the way students line up in the cafeteria, creating “up” and “down” hallways). A change in

Average Referrals Per Day Per Month



Example graph of average office referrals per day per month.

## Using Data to Make Decisions about Behavior Interventions

cont. from page 5

nize students who arrive on time. Special recognition tickets for a pizza party raffle can be given out to those students who follow the expectation. Additionally, it is important to remember that getting feedback from staff and students about the team's ideas for interventions helps promote buy-in and increases successful implementation.

PBSIS teams also need to deter-

mine who the target audience is for each intervention. For instance, while the data may indicate that one grade level accounts for 60% of the referrals, it may only be 20 students in that grade who have actually received a referral. Thus, a grade level intervention is not necessary, but a more targeted intervention focused on skill instruction would be beneficial for those 20 students. Looking at data and

asking additional questions will help PBSIS teams determine what specific intervention will benefit the school.

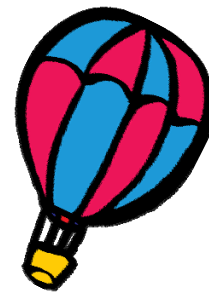
Remember, to design effective interventions that meet your school's specific needs and prevent behavior problems, it is important to regularly examine your school's data.

### Training Opportunities

The NJ Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Learning Resource Centers (LRCs) offer different training opportunities related to instruction and behavior support.

Please call your local LRC to find out more about workshops offered.

- Northern Region (East Orange): 973-414-4491
- Northern Satellite (Morris Plains): 973-631-6345
- Central Region (Dayton): 732-274-5570
- Southern Region (Sewell): 856-582-7000



### Check out the PBSIS Website

The [www.njpbs.org](http://www.njpbs.org) website provides information about school wide positive behavior support for educators and families. In addition, the website is frequently updated with resources, such as new PBSIS tools, examples of PBSIS school products and information about upcoming events.

Check out the PBSIS website to see what resources are available!

### Stay in Touch

Please share your success stories, questions and comments via email: [stacy.martin@umdnj.edu](mailto:stacy.martin@umdnj.edu)

*Best wishes for a wonderful summer!*