



# NJ Positive Behavior Support in Schools

PBSIS is a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSEP) and The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center at UMDNJ. This project is funded through the New Jersey State Improvement Grant for Special Education: Partnerships for Access, Equity, and Outcomes (IDEA B Funds, Contract Grant Award: H323010006).

**Fall 2006  
Volume 1, No. 2**

## New PBSIS Schools

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The PBSIS project is pleased to welcome six new schools to the PBSIS network. The schools are part of the collaborative efforts between the NJ Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, the New Jersey Association of School Psychologists, and the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center of Disabilities at UMDNJ. The goal of the collaboration is to implement school wide positive behavior support to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities within general education settings.

Each new PBSIS school team attended two days of training during the summer and will receive two additional days of training during the 2006-2007 school year. Each PBSIS team has a team coach that leads the implementation process.

The PBSIS network offers a warm welcome to the following new PBSIS schools and the team coaches:

- Helen Fort Middle School, Pemberton – *Heather Ilconich and Andrea Porchiazzo*
- Collingswood Middle School/High School, Collingswood – *Terri Gaier*
- Rahway Middle School, Rahway - *Alice De Santo-Fontana*
- Johnson Park School, Princeton – *Susan DeLia*
- Ridgway Middle School, Edgewater Park – *John Lestino*
- Joyce Kilmer Elementary School, Cherry Hill – *Terry Molony*

Visit the NJ PBSIS website at:  
[www.njpbs.org](http://www.njpbs.org)

## Photos from PBSIS Summer 2006 Trainings



*Ridgway Middle School's PBSIS Team*



*Members of Joyce Kilmer Elementary School's PBSIS Team during a planning session*



*Members of Johnson Park School's PBSIS Team during a planning session*



*Rahway Middle School's PBSIS Team*

## The Universal Intervention is in Place: Now What?

For most PBSIS teams, the majority of time and effort during the first two years of project involvement is focused on planning and implementing the different components of the Universal Intervention. All students, including students with disabilities, benefit from the Universal Intervention, which includes well defined, explicitly taught, and consistently applied and recognized behavioral expectations. In addition, an important part of the Universal Intervention is engaging in data-based decision-making to reduce problem behavior and promote success in general education settings for all students.

As a school begins implementing the Universal Intervention, there may be a time when staff members ask, "What is next?" This is a good sign, as it means staff members are comfortable with the changes that are being made and are looking to continue improvements. It also serves as a great opportunity to tell staff about the future directions related to the PBSIS project. What follows are some suggestions about information that can be shared with staff.

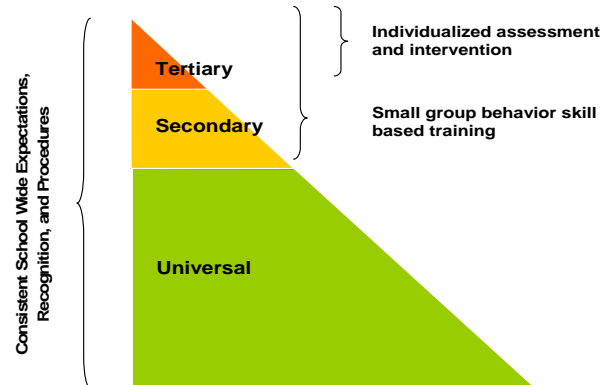
### ***The Universal Intervention keeps going, and going, and going***

It is important that staff members know that the Universal Intervention team is not finished after the intervention is implemented. The team is responsible for ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the intervention and continuing to engage in data-based decision-making. The team will utilize data to make decisions about where and when interventions need to be implemented to promote socially appropriate behavior and reduce discipline problems.

### ***Focus attention on those students who need extra support***

The Universal Intervention promotes socially appropriate behavior for all students, but there are some students that need additional support. It may be helpful to remind staff that the PBSIS project follows a three-tiered model of support, called School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), which provides a continuum

of intervention. The triangle below is a pictorial representation of the three-tiered model of support.



*SWPBS triangle. Adapted from material in Walker et al. (1996), Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders.*

Staff members should be aware that students who receive multiple office discipline referrals after the Universal Intervention is in place are in need of a Secondary Intervention. The focus of this level of intervention is to provide additional support to students who are at-risk of having more severe behavior problems. Secondary Interventions can take different forms, but it is important that students are learning skills in areas where they have deficits. Examples of secondary interventions include *The Behavior Education Program* by Crone, Horner, and Hawken (2004), and the *Behavior Skills Support Program*, which was designed for the PBSIS project. (Please see page 6 for more information about the *Behavior Skills Support Program*). The Secondary Intervention is typically delivered by a pre-referral team, such as the Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS) team. While the Universal Intervention team may not be directly involved in the delivery of the Secondary Intervention, they may play a role in coordinating data with the I&RS team and/or referring students to the team.

### ***Remember that some students will need individual support***

Beyond Secondary Interventions, there are students who will need individualized support due to a history of high frequency, high intensity problem behavior. Often, students who exhibit chronic behavior problems are, or are at-risk of being, excluded from general education settings. Our goal at this level of

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## The Universal Intervention is in Place: Now What?

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intervention, called Tertiary Intervention, is to provide an individualized assessment and intervention plan that reduces problem behavior to promote inclusion within general education settings.

The individualized assessment, called a functional behavioral assessment (FBA), is a process that determines the variables that contribute to problem behavior. Both indirect (e.g., interviews) and direct (e.g., observations) information are gathered and the FBA process results in a set of hypotheses about the function of the behavior, i.e. *why* the problem behavior occurs. After completing an FBA, a behavior intervention plan (BIP) is then developed for the student. A BIP utilizes the information about the function of behavior from the FBA to determine strategies to prevent problem behavior, consistent ways to respond to problem behavior, and replacement skills to teach the student (*these skills serve the same function as the problem behavior but are socially appropriate, i.e. asking for a break from frustrating work instead of being disruptive to avoid doing the work*). The goal of the FBA and BIP is to determine the most effective way to meet the individual needs of students with challenging behaviors so they are educated within the least restrictive environment.

In New Jersey, individualized interventions are determined for students with disabilities through the IEP team collaborative planning process that includes conducting an FBA and design of a BIP. Therefore, to help promote the inclusion of students with disabilities with challenging behaviors, each Child Study Team at PBSIS schools is trained on conducting FBAs and BIPs.

### **Keep the communication going**

Be proactive with staff. Plan regular opportunities to share information about the results of the PBSIS initiative with staff, provide information about “what’s next” and solicit their feedback and suggestions. This should occur, at a minimum, quarterly. Involving staff in discussions about the PBSIS project is essential to keep staff motivation high and to promote consistency across the building.

## Hats off to Local Leaders



At each PBSIS school, there is a leader of the PBSIS team, otherwise known as the team “Coach.” This person has many responsibilities, including coordinating meeting logistics, facilitating team meetings, following up on team tasks, and most importantly acting as a PBSIS leader and model to fellow team members and the entire school staff. As a team leader, Coaches are also responsible for keeping the morale of the PBSIS team high, even in the face of obstacles.

All of the coaches who have been on the PBSIS project have done a wonderful job of leading and supporting their team. We want to give a big **THANK YOU** to all of the PBSIS coaches for their continued hard work and commitment to make their school a better place. Below are the names of people who have served as PBSIS coaches over the past several years:

- **Diana Ambeyi & Rob O’Conner**, Alexander Sullivan Elementary School
- **Doris Angel-McRae**, Medical Arts Annex, Trenton High School
- **Mary Bonanno**, Little Egg Harbor Intermediate School
- **Gregory Durante**, Eisenhower Middle School
- **Iris Koonin & Mark Johnson**, Hackensack High School
- **Lourdes McCain**, Hackensack Five-Six School
- **Mike Perruso**, Warren Hills Middle School
- **Jennifer Pietrangelo & Lynda McGowan**, Hackensack Middle School
- **Arleen Rios**, McGinnis Middle School
- **Dean Smith**, Washington Elementary School
- **Toby Steinhouse**, MacFarland Junior School

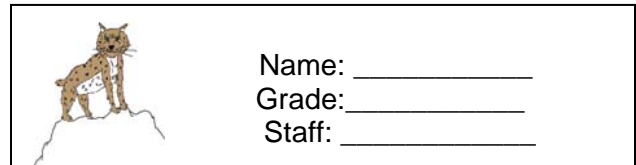
## School Spotlight: Little Egg Harbor Intermediate School

By Dr. Vicki Landolf  
Behavior Specialist & PBSIS Team Member

In the summer of 2004, a small group of people were asked to sit on a committee to participate in the PBSIS project through a grant that was awarded to the Little Egg Harbor Intermediate School. During the 2004-2005 school year, this widely diverse group of people worked together to create a new office discipline referral (ODR) form, create surveys to be distributed among staff, parents, and students, and formulate a plan of action to improve the overall behavior of the school district. Though the task seemed intimidating at first, with steady progress and determination the team examined data, planned, and made district wide decisions that would greatly impact the school. Just by creating new discipline referral procedures during that year, we saw a decrease in the number of ODRs as compared to the previous school year (see graph on next page).

The instructional kick-off began in the summer of 2005. The team formed lesson plan workgroups that consisted of teachers and aides. These workgroups created grade level lessons to teach the behavioral expectations in each of the following areas: classroom, hallways, cafeteria, recess, and buses. These lessons were then taught in each targeted area to every child in grades three through six during the first week of school. Every adult was also taught how to use the new Office Discipline Referral Form, techniques to diffuse tough situations, and how to use active supervision.

During the school year, if a student was seen being respectful, responsible, safe, or prepared they were given a Bobcat Ticket. The tickets came in three different colors: yellow for the bus, white for the teachers, and blue for the support staff. After receiving a ticket, students placed them in a grade level bin and every morning five names from each grade were called down to the main office. These twenty students then wrote their name on a neon ticket



*Bobcat recognition ticket*

and were placed on the "Wall of Fame." Each child was also given a Positive Behavior Postcard to bring home to their parents. The team, with various funds donated by local businesses, also bought incentives to give to the students and staff members to recognize them for their positive behavior and participation in the program. Every Friday morning, two student names were called from each grade level and they received one of the prizes. In addition, once a month three staff members received a \$5 Wawa card as a thank you for participating in the program.

The school was heavily decorated with large banners and posters with the Bobcat rules and expectations throughout the school. Large posters, demonstrating the same message, also adorned the walls and classrooms. Midway through the school year the teachers re-taught the behavioral expectations for each area. To further reinforce the behavioral expectations, the students participated in a poster contest. Each student was asked to select a rule to illustrate. Each class had a 1st, 2nd, and a 3rd place winner that received a prize. Finally, at the end of May, each student was asked to color a picture of Bob the Bobcat and write what they liked or disliked about the program, and what could be done next year to improve it. If each class had 100% participation, they received an ice cream treat. These pictures were then hung in the school to thank all the staff and students for a great job following the rules and expectations of the school.

The PBSIS team met once a month to discuss the high risk students and situations that impacted the behavior of the school. We also discussed ways to keep the momentum going for the future and other resources and trainings to help the district continue to move forward. The school district and community were kept up to date on various PBSIS activities

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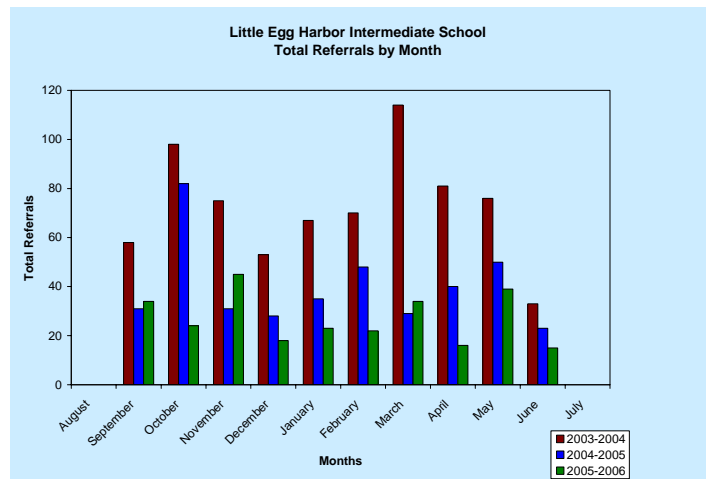
# Little Egg Harbor Intermediate School

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through newsletters (*Bobcat Buzz* and *Bobcat Behavior Update*) that were published monthly.

As can be seen in the graph to the right, our office discipline referrals have gone down tremendously. It was down a total of 33% from our numbers last year. This is a remarkable improvement.

The future of the PBSIS program will continue with the addition of new team members and new committees. With the new additions to our core team, fresh and innovative ideas will continue to move the PBSIS program forward.



## Creative School Ideas

### Hackensack Middle School's Giant Surprise

Hackensack Middle School's PBSIS team noticed that the school had a history of having a higher number of office discipline referrals during March. To help prevent problem behavior during March 2006, the PBSIS team developed a plan to increase spirit and morale and decrease office discipline referrals. One component of the plan was to have a surprise guest come to the school at the end of the month and the students who did not receive an office referral during the month would be eligible for a special privilege. The surprise guest was *NY Giants* football player Tiki Barber. In addition to giving a speech to the entire school, Tiki drew the winning ticket for the monthly PBSIS raffle, visited selected classrooms, and signed autographs for students who did not receive an office discipline referral that month.



Tiki announcing the winning ticket for the PBSIS raffle

### McGinnis Middle School's PBSIS Team Shows off Their Talent

The PBSIS team at McGinnis Middle School in Perth Amboy came up with a unique way to increase spirit and morale at the school, while at the same time generating funds for their PBSIS activities. The team decided to coordinate a talent show where students and staff could display their creative skills. The talent show was held after school and the money raised through admittance went towards PBSIS funds. One way that the PBSIS team decided to use the funds was to sponsor a student dance during a month that had a history of higher discipline problems. Students were able to attend the dance for free if they had received a recognition ticket and were recommended by a teacher. Both the talent show and dance were effective ways to increase the spirit and morale of the school and decrease problem behaviors.



## Behavior Skills Support Program

The *Behavior Skills Support Program* was launched in some PBSIS middle schools during the 2005-2006 school year. The purpose of the program is to provide additional support to at-risk students to prevent referral to special education or restrictive placements because of high rates of problem behaviors.

The program includes three components: identification and assessment, skill instruction and mentorship. Students who are exhibiting a higher rate of problem behavior (e.g., multiple office discipline referrals during one marking period) are eligible to participate in the program. After students are identified, they receive an assessment that consists of both the student and relevant staff completing questionnaires to identify the student's strengths, preferences, needs, problem behaviors, and environmental triggers. Information from the questionnaires helps identify the function of the student's behavior (i.e., why the problem behavior is occurring). Students then participate in a skills group, and although the group is conducted in a small-group format, it is guided by the individual student assessment information. The skills group is led by a Behavior Skills Support Coordinator and utilizes a curriculum to teach self-awareness of problematic situations and adaptable skills for making positive choices and engaging in appropriate behavior. During the skills group each student also completes a Personal Goal Plan, which helps them to apply the skills they are learning to their daily activities. After completing the skills group, each student is partnered with an adult mentor in the school. Mentors provide a positive relationship for the student, while also reviewing and modeling the skills the student was taught through the skills group. Mentors also help students monitor progress on their Personal Goal Plan each week, and identify areas where students require more instruction.

To learn more about the Behavior Skills Support Program, you can attend one of the Learning Resource Center Workshops in December 2006 that are featuring this program (see Training Opportunities section to the right for more information).

[www.njpbs.org](http://www.njpbs.org)

## PBSIS Schools in the News!

Congratulations to **Washington Elementary School** in Roselle for receiving the 2006 School Boards Association Award in recognition of the school's work in implementing the Positive Behavior Support in Schools project. The school was featured on WABC's Eyewitness News broadcast on June 16, 2006, highlighting their award and PBSIS program.

## Training Opportunities

The NJ OSEP Learning Resource Centers offer different training opportunities related to instruction and behavior support. Below are behavior support workshops offered:

- Defining and Teaching Behavioral Expectations School-Wide:
  - Oct 24 & Dec 5-LRC North Satellite
  - Jan 9 & Feb 13 – LRC Central
  - Jan 8 & Feb 27 – LRC South
- Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Planning:
  - Oct 30 & Dec 7 - LRC South
  - Oct 31 & Dec 4 – LRC Central
  - Oct 19 & Nov 28–LRC North Satellite
- Behavior Skills Support Program for Middle Schools
  - Dec 6 - LRC North
  - Dec 8 – LRC South
  - Dec 14 – LRC Central

Please call your local LRC regarding registration and fees for these workshops:

- Northern Region: (973) 414-4491
- Northern Satellite: (973) 631-6345
- Central Region: (732) 274-5570
- Southern Region: (856) 582-7000

## Stay in Touch

Please share your success stories, questions and comments via email:

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