

# **SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT: A PLAN FOR PENNSYLVANIA**



**A REPORT BY THE EDUCATION LAW CENTER OF  
PENNSYLVANIA AND THE DISABILITY RIGHTS  
NETWORK OF PENNSYLVANIA**

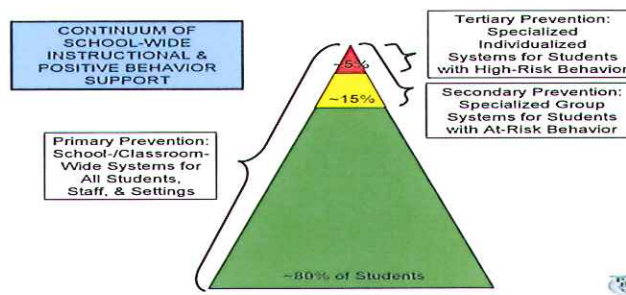
**FALL 2010**

## School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: Executive Summary

It is important for a young person to master math, reading, and many other academic subjects. But when schooling ends – and whether the next step is a job, more schooling, or a family – each individual must be able to interact in a group, function in a work environment, and be an engaged and effective member of the broader community. Schools have an important role in helping all children and young adults acquire these essential life skills. In short, schools are not just about academics. And it is not just students with emotional disabilities who need emotional learning.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a research-based, highly effective, approach to teaching and reinforcing students' social, emotional, and academic learning skills. It improves and sustains academic achievement and the mental and emotional wellbeing of all students. All school staff use SWPBS's uniform and positive approach in all school settings (classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, even on the bus). The goal of SWPBS is to establish a predictable, consistent, and positive school culture for all students and staff. SWPBS schools focus on prevention, intercede to correct individual student behavioral "miscues," and consistently and frequently reward students who do the right thing. Family and student engagement is essential to SWPBS schools' success.

The following diagram illustrates how SWPBS benefits all students in a school.<sup>1</sup> Prevention and supports for all students meet the needs of roughly 80% of the school's students. The next group, the approximately 15% of the student population who evidences some behavioral/social skill needs, receives more intensive prevention and group interventions. At the top of the triangle is the remaining 5% of students with significant behavioral issues who receive specialized and individualized supports, often through targeted education and mental health care intervention. SWPBS helps all students and provides increasing levels of academic and behavioral supports and services to the children most in need.



Other states that have implemented SWPBS have reduced disciplinary referrals, increased students' academic achievement, and improved school climate and safety. Pennsylvania has already started to implement SWPBS on a limited scale. But every school in Pennsylvania needs SWPBS. This will require state level commitment and leadership, and the resources to take SWPBS to scale throughout the Commonwealth.

<sup>1</sup> This diagram is taken, with permission from a PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Robert H. Horner given on March 28, 2010 at a forum sponsored by Public Citizens for Children and Youth. Dr. Horner, a professor at the University of Oregon, co-directs the OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the OSEP Research and Demonstration Center on School-wide Behavior Support. We thank Dr. Horner for his permission to use this and other slides from his presentation below.

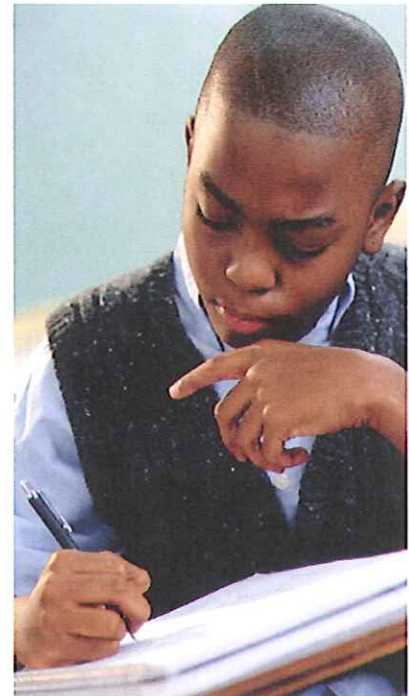




## THE STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

In Pennsylvania, many public school students are achieving at high levels – but this is not the story for all students. Data from the 2008-2009 school year showed that:

- Almost one-third of Pennsylvania’s students performed below the proficient level in math and reading on the latest statewide achievement tests.<sup>2</sup>
- 15,484, almost 2% of all students, dropped out of school (2007-2008 school year) (a greater number who were chronically truant can be considered “near-drop-outs”).<sup>3</sup>
- 19,545 students were involved in school incidents involving local law enforcement and 11,703 were arrested; 8,356 students were assigned to alternative education programs for disruptive youth.<sup>4</sup>
- There were 67,724 out-of-school suspensions and 1,747 expulsions (871 of those expulsions were for a year or longer).<sup>5</sup>
- 321,500 school aged children experienced significant functional impairment during the course of the year (2006).<sup>6</sup>
- Approximately 146,000 children can be considered to have a serious emotional disturbance, including depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity, anxiety disorder, and conduct disorders (2006).<sup>7</sup>



These problems are connected to other issues like bullying, absenteeism, youth suicide and youth violence. Extensive research links poor academic performance with poor student behavior. Students who lag behind academically become disengaged with school and are more likely to act out. Students who are prohibited from attending school because of suspension or expulsion are more likely to fall behind

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<sup>2</sup> See 2008-2009 PSSA and AYP Results, available at:

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/school\\_assessments/7442](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/school_assessments/7442).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/dropouts/7396>; see also Philadelphia Youth Network’s *Unfulfilled Promise, The Dimensions and Characteristics of Philadelphia’s Dropout Crisis, 2000-2005*, available at [http://download.pyninc.org/pdf/Unfulfilled\\_Promise\\_Project\\_U-turn.pdf](http://download.pyninc.org/pdf/Unfulfilled_Promise_Project_U-turn.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Education *School Safety Report 2008-2009 School Year* (December 2009) <<https://www.safeschools.state.pa.us/Main.aspx?App=6a935f44-7cbf-45e1-850b-e29b2f1ff17f&Menu=dbd39a1f-3319-4a75-8f69-d1166dba5d70&res=>>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, Report on Pennsylvania’s Mental Health System for Children and Youth, 2006, Act 2004-147. Available at: <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/>

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*



academically. When students fail and get into trouble, they drop out. Students who drop out or who do not do well in school are more likely to enter the School-to-Prison Pipeline.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly children and families are hurt by schools' failures. Research shows that, as a community, we pay a high price for failing to educate our children effectively. School dropouts are expensive: "[I]f the students who dropped out of the class of 2009 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$335 billion in income over their lifetimes."<sup>9</sup> Moreover, graduation rates are associated with better public safety outcomes. In 2006, it was reported that a "5 percent increase in male high school graduation rates would produce annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime related expenses. Coupled with annual earnings of those who graduated, the U.S. would receive \$7.7 billion in benefits."<sup>10</sup>

In Act 2004-147, the Pennsylvania General Assembly commissioned the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study various aspects of the Commonwealth's mental health system for children and youth. The report found a fragmented mental health system where both the Departments of Education and Public Welfare cite the need for improved mental health services in educational settings. The report recommended that the Commonwealth develop a strategic plan to improve mental health services to children and youth. Further, the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the *Gaskin* Settlement Agreement have underscored the Commonwealth's need to respond to underachievement, restrictive placement rates, and school dropout rates among at-risk youth, particularly those with emotional disturbances. SWPBS offers an evidence-based framework for collaboration between schools and community mental health providers to meet the complex needs of the most at-risk students. SWPBS targets all students—not just those already identified as students with mental health, emotional support, or social skills needs—and in the process improves the delivery of services to students with identified mental health needs. Moreover, SWPBS will improve students' academic achievement and mental health status, and will reduce drop-outs and school exclusions.

Students thrive academically and behaviorally in a positive school climate that promotes resiliency and social emotional learning. For the sake of the students and the Commonwealth as a whole we must change the negative culture of our schools to the

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<sup>8</sup> For example, one study found a correlation between high school failure and three or more suspensions in ninth grade. This study also found a correlation between low grade point averages and misbehavior for sixth grade boys. Tobin, T., & Sugai, G. (1999). Predicting violence at school, chronic discipline problems, and high school outcomes from sixth graders' school records. *Journal of Emotional Disorders*. 7, 40-53, referenced in Putnam, R.F., Horner, R.H., & Algozzine, R. (2006) "Academic Achievement and the Implementation of School-wide Behavior Support", *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Newsletter*, vol. 3, issue 1, available at: [www.pbis.org/pbis\\_newsletter/volume\\_3/issue1.aspx](http://www.pbis.org/pbis_newsletter/volume_3/issue1.aspx).

<sup>9</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education, *Issue Brief: The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools* 1 (Updated Sept. 1, 2009), available at [http://www.all4ed.org/publication\\_material/issue\\_policy\\_briefs](http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/issue_policy_briefs).

<sup>10</sup> Justice Policy Institute, *The Cost of Confinement: Why Good Juvenile Justice Policies Make Good Fiscal Sense* 15 (May 2009), available at <http://www.justicepolicy.org/content-hmID=1811&smID=1581&ssmID=83.htm>.

positive approaches embodied in SWPBS. We must create school cultures where students have a clear sense of what is expected of them and where they can receive needed supports. SWPBS can help.



## WHAT IS SWPBS?

SWPBS is an evidence-based, cost-effective, systems approach for establishing the social culture needed for schools to be effective learning environments for all students. SWPBS eliminates barriers to learning, creates and maintains a safe and effective learning environment in schools, and ensures that all students have the social and emotional skills needed to succeed in school and beyond. SWPBS helps schools teach students expected behaviors and social skills, creates student behavioral health and academic support systems, and applies data-based decision-making to discipline, academics, and social/emotional learning.<sup>11</sup>



**Schools that use SWPBS operate differently from schools that use traditional discipline methods. Here are some examples:**

School using traditional disciplinary methods	School using SWPBS
<p><b>The school gives each student a code of conduct with the rules for the school and consequences if they break the rules.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Hampton Junior High gives a 45-page code of conduct to each student at the beginning of the year. Each student and parent signs a form stating that they received the code. A list of prohibited behaviors is posted in the cafeteria and at the entrance of the school. Teachers make up their own rules and post them in their classrooms. If a student breaks one of the rules, he or she receives a referral, and possibly a detention or suspension depending on the offense.</p>	<p><b>The school spends a significant amount of time each school year defining and teaching positive social expectations.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Smith Middle School adopts SWPBS and decides the core of its school SWPBS model will be respect, safety, and tolerance. The school posts this motto all over the school. Each teacher then invests considerable time during the initial two weeks of the school-year teaching these expectations to his or her students through class lessons and homework. The school also holds an assembly for each grade where they role-play positive social behaviors. Parents are invited to an assembly to explain the model and expected behaviors. If and when a student acts in a negative fashion, the student is instructed on how the behavior fails to reflect the motto of respect, safety and</p>

<sup>11</sup> See "What is PBIS?" available at <http://www.pbisillinois.org>.

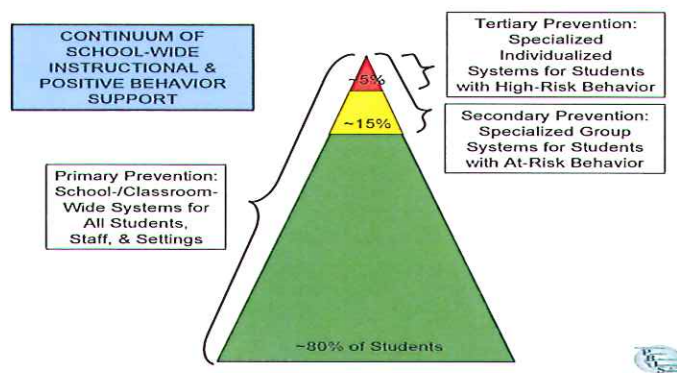
	tolerance.
<p><b>Problem behavior is addressed but positive behavior is rarely acknowledged.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Shannon begins yelling at Ms. Jackson, her teacher, when Ms. Jackson refuses to let her put her head down instead of completing her work. Ms. Jackson struggles to control Shannon's behavior and eventually calls the school police officer.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the rest of class is working quietly on an assignment. One student, Jake, even collects the assignments and puts them on Ms. Jackson's desk. Ms. Jackson returns to class after dealing with Shannon. She continues her lesson and does not address the incident.</p>	<p><b>The school acknowledges and rewards positive behavior.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Yardley Elementary adopts a SWPBS model for the school. Students are taught positive social behaviors in the beginning of the year. The school also introduces a school wide program called "Star Notes." A "Star Note" is given to a student when he or she exhibits a positive behavior such as helping a classmate or even avoiding misbehavior. Any member of the school staff can give a "Star Note."</p> <p>Kevin often gets in trouble for misbehavior such as throwing paper airplanes or being late to class. One day after school, Kevin notices an older boy picking on a younger student he knows. He tells the older boy to stop and walks the younger student out of the school. A school janitor sees this and gives Kevin a "Star Note."</p>
<p><b>The school creates systems and consequences for student behavior without the use of data.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Lunch time at Frederick Junior High is a chaotic and stressful time for both teachers and students. Numerous fights have occurred in the lunchroom and the staff finds that they are unable to manage the students. Mr. Wilson, the assistant principal, uses traditional technique to deal with lunchtime chaos at Frederick Junior High. Mr. Wilson adopts a new lunch policy that any student who is involved in an offense at lunch receives a referral and a detention. Three referrals lead to a three day suspension from school. Within the first week of the new policy, seventeen students are suspended, including Mark.</p>	<p><b>The school regularly collects data and uses the data to inform their school systems and to determine appropriate responses to student behavior.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> In this example at Frederick Junior High, Mr. Wilson, the assistant principal, together with the other members of the school's SWPBS team, review the monthly office referrals and find that more than half are the result of a lunchtime offense. They also find that the majority of the offenses involve a group of eighth grade boys, led by one student, Mark. Mark has been suspended five times in the school year.</p> <p>The team decides to cut the lunch period in half and have two lunches. They recruit non-instructional staff and volunteers to help manage the lunch periods. Mr. Wilson also receives permission from Mark's</p>



<p>Mr. Wilson also decides to staff the cafeteria with school security guards. On his first day back from suspension, Mark gets into a fight and hits a security guard by accident. He is suspended again and is recommended for expulsion. He also receives a criminal charge of assault.</p>	<p>parents to conduct a parent conference and to do an assessment to determine why Mark is engaging in disruptive behavior. The assessment reveals that Mark is battling with the death of his older brother. Mr. Wilson arranges grief counseling for Mark twice a week. The team also creates a student lunch monitoring program where students assist teachers in moving students through the cafeteria in an orderly fashion. Mr. Wilson recruits Mark for this program.</p> <p>The team reviews the next month's data and finds the new lunch schedule reduces the office referrals by 20 percent. Mark initially is reluctant to be a lunch monitor, but with support from his favorite teacher and his parents, eventually joins the program. He receives two star rewards for his exemplary leadership as a lunch monitor and no discipline referrals at lunch in the next month.</p>
<p><b>The school has no system for providing individual interventions.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Elena has received five suspensions this school year. Her grades are suffering because of her absences. Elena is most disruptive in English class where she completes almost no work. Elena's English teacher tells the principal that she refuses to have Elena in her class any longer. The principal agrees and sends Elena to the office with a packet of work during every English class. Elena does not complete the work and fails the English course and is retained in her current grade.</p>	<p><b>The school provides a continuum of intensive, individual interventions for students.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Elena has received five suspensions this school year. Her teachers recommend an assessment that reveals that she is disruptive in class because of her frustration with reading.</p> <p>Her English teacher creates a system where Elena can alert the teacher when she is feeling frustrated in class. The teacher responds by allowing Elena to complete a different task during class or pairing Elena with a higher performing student to create a partnered task. Elena is then permitted to complete her individual class work with the teacher or a volunteer tutor after school. The teacher also talks with Elena's parents and they request that the school evaluate Elena to see if she needs additional supports inclusive of special education.</p>

## HOW DOES SWPBS WORK?

The move from a traditional discipline model to SWPBS can dramatically change a school environment. The following diagram illustrates how SWPBS benefits all students in a school.<sup>12</sup> As the diagram shows, there are three tiers or levels in the SWPBS model (called the universal, secondary, and tertiary levels). The universal level is for all students. It is designed to prevent behavior problems and to teach all students in the school expected behaviors. The universal level meets the needs of roughly 80% of the school's students. The secondary tier is directed at the segment of the student population, approximately 15%, that evidences some behavioral needs. These children receive more intensive prevention and group interventions. At the top of the triangle, the tertiary level, is the remaining 5% of students with significant behavioral issues who receive coordinated specialized and individualized supports, often through education and mental health interventions.



Over time, if all of the components of SWPBS are consistently implemented in a school, data shows that academic and behavioral outcomes improve for all three groups of students and that the number of students needing the highest levels of support decreases. Schools, districts, and states nationwide have implemented SWPBS and have found that SWPBS: (1) improves the overall school and classroom climate; (2) reduces the number of office discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions; and (3) increases the academic success of the students.<sup>13</sup> Through providing a continuum of services for all students in the school, and creating a structure with predictable and positive expectations, schools create environments where children are engaged and can succeed. As the National Association of School Psychologists reports:

Research indicates that schools employing system-wide interventions for problem behavior prevention have reduced office

<sup>12</sup> PBS presentation by Dr. Robert Horner, March 25, 2008.

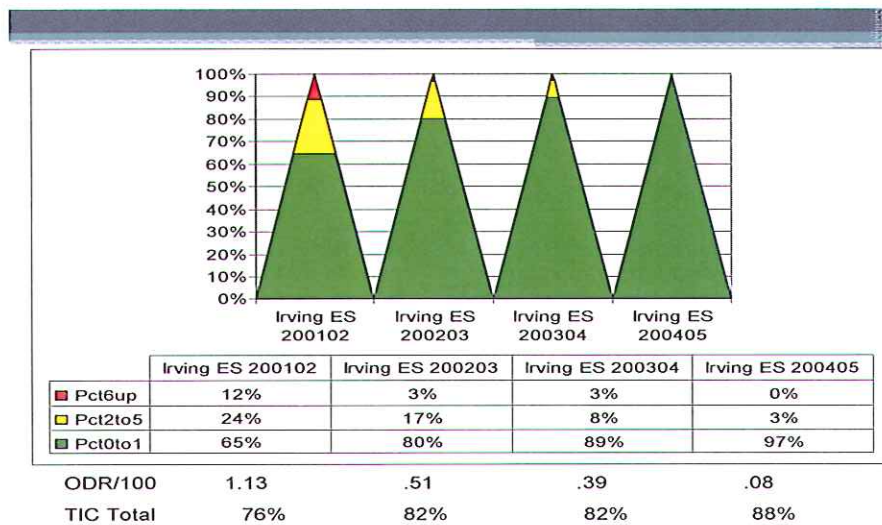
<sup>13</sup> See generally [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org); see also Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Todd, A.W., & Lewis-Palmer, T. (2005). School-wide positive behavior support: An alternative approach to discipline in schools. In L. Bambara & L. Kern (Eds.), *Individualized supports for students with problem behaviors: Designing positive behavior plans* (pp. 359-390). New York: Guilford.



discipline referrals by 20-60%, and have increased student academic engagement and achievement.<sup>14</sup>

A pair of 2008 Randomized Clinical Trials (RCT) of schools implementing SWPBS, one examining 60 schools from Illinois and Hawaii,<sup>15</sup> and the other examining 37 schools from Maryland,<sup>16</sup> showed (a) low levels of office discipline referrals, (b) an increased perception of safety, and (c) an increase in the proportion of students meeting state reading standards compared to control sites that used traditional school discipline and behavior management approaches.

**Over time, the proportion of students with discipline problems significantly decreases.**<sup>17</sup>



In the graph above, the percentage of students at an elementary school in Chicago with six or more disciplinary referrals is represented in red and the percentage of students with one or no disciplinary referrals is represented in green. The proportion of students with more than one referral decreased with each year of SWPBS implementation – after four years of SWPBS implementation, 97% of students received no more than one referral and no student received more than six referrals.

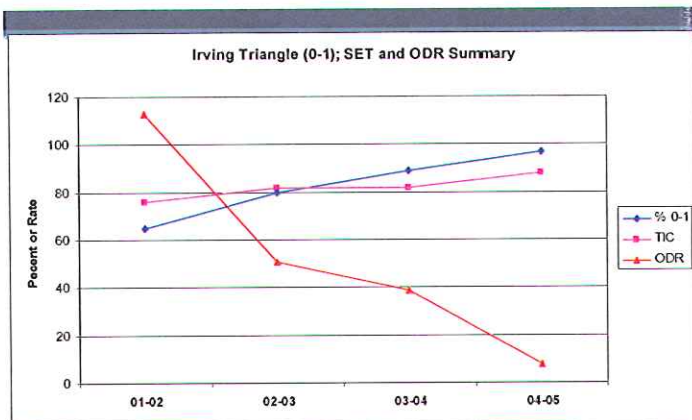
<sup>14</sup> See NASP letter to Chairman Kennedy, available at <http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/nclb/naspcomments.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> See Horner, R. *et al.* 2009. A Randomized, Wait-List Controlled Effectiveness Trial Assessing School-Wide Positive Behavior Support in Elementary Schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*. 11(3): 133-44.

<sup>16</sup> See Bradshaw, C. *et al.* 2008. Implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Elementary Schools: Observations from a Randomized Trial. 31(1): 1-26.

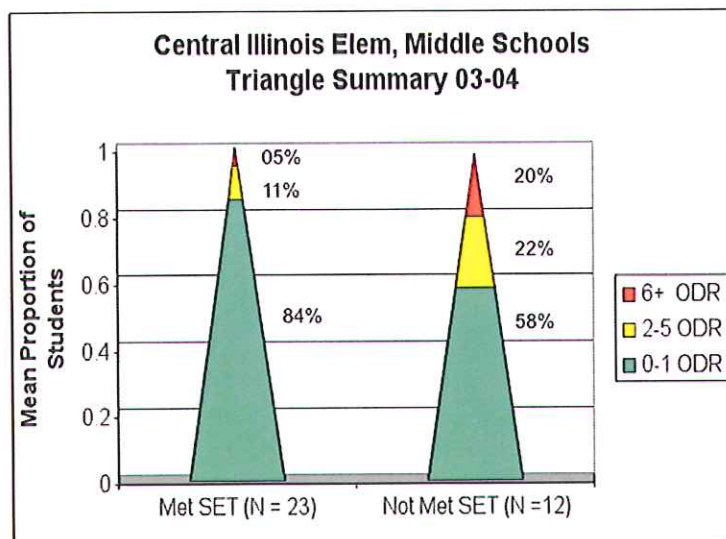
<sup>17</sup> March 25, 2008, Horner Presentation, Slide # 23.

**SWPBS schools have fewer discipline problems<sup>18</sup>:**



In the graph above, the rate of office discipline referrals (ODR) from one elementary school in Chicago decreased with each year of SWPBS implementation.

**SWPBS prevents discipline problems.**



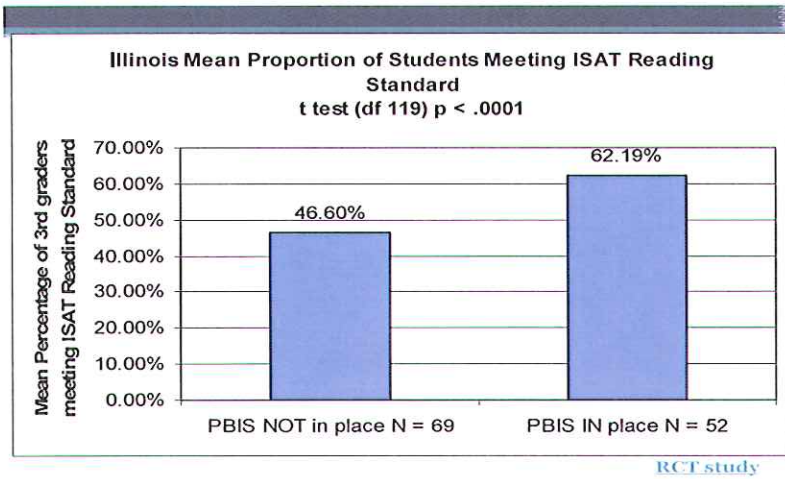
This chart shows that Central Illinois schools implementing SWPBS with fidelity have a much smaller percentage of students with more than one disciplinary incident than schools that are only partially implementing SWPBS.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> March 25, 2008 Horner Presentation, Slide #24.

<sup>19</sup> Andrea Napolitano-Romer & George Sugai, "Supporting Learning and Teaching through Effective Classroom Management," Slide #12, Augusta, Maine, May 11, 2010 (OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)).



**SWPBS schools have *better* academic outcomes:**<sup>20</sup>



Illinois schools with SWPBS have more students meeting state academic standards.

***The bottom line is that SWPBS works!!***

<sup>20</sup> March 25, 2008 Horner Presentation, Slide #31.

## IS SWPBS UNDERWAY IN PENNSYLVANIA?

Yes! In 2007 an initial cohort of 33 schools began implementing SWPBS. Those schools were supported by the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), an arm of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education, and the newly created State Leadership Team for School Based Behavioral Health (SLT) supported by an IDEA partnership grant. The SLT is comprised of representatives from the Departments of Education, Welfare, and Health, education and child advocacy organizations, behavioral health managed care organizations, community behavioral health providers, and universities. PaTTAN continues to provide foundational training and support on SWPBS to school districts.



In 2009, the SLT launched the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PaPBS) Network comprised of a subset of stakeholders from the SLT who have the capacity to blend resources to support and maintain a state-wide management structure, which includes oversight, training and technical assistance to schools implementing SWPBS.<sup>21</sup> The Network is managed by six co-directors and six statewide coordinators from PDE, the Department of Public Welfare, Community Care Behavioral Health, the Devereux Center for Effective Schools and the Governor's Commission on Children and Families. A key role of the Network is to train external facilitators to work with school districts.

Over the past few years, the Bureau of Special Education has awarded school-based behavioral health performance grants to local education agencies (LEAs) to help them build and advance SWPBS systems in their schools. Currently, 113 schools in 38 Pennsylvania school districts are implementing SWPBS to some extent, and approximately 15 schools are implementing it with fidelity at the universal level for all students.

Although it is still early in the Pennsylvania experience with SWPBS, many Pennsylvania schools are already seeing positive effects from their SWPBS systems. For example:

- **Eichhorn Middle School**

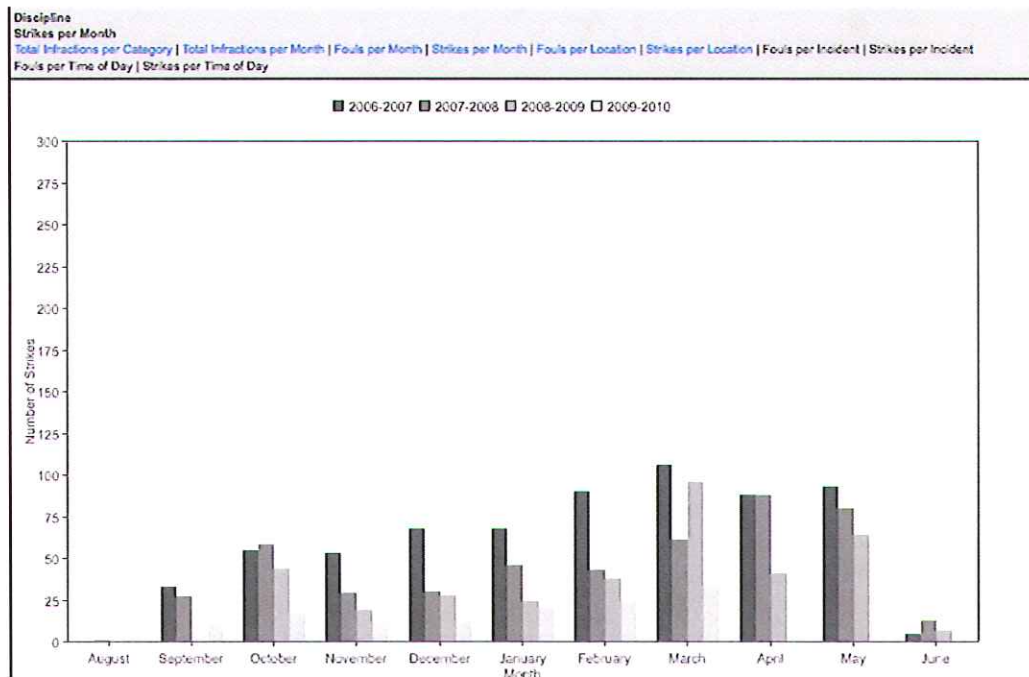
Eichhorn Middle School in the Lewisburg School District has achieved implementation of universal SWPBS with 100% fidelity. As a result, it has significantly reduced the number of student infractions over the course of four years since beginning SWPBS. Eichhorn maintains a dedicated SWPBS team comprised of teachers, support personnel, and the principal. It has established clear behavioral expectations through defining and teaching expected behaviors. Eichhorn celebrates expected behaviors and discourages inappropriate behaviors.

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<sup>21</sup> Please visit [www.papbs.org](http://www.papbs.org) for more information about the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network.

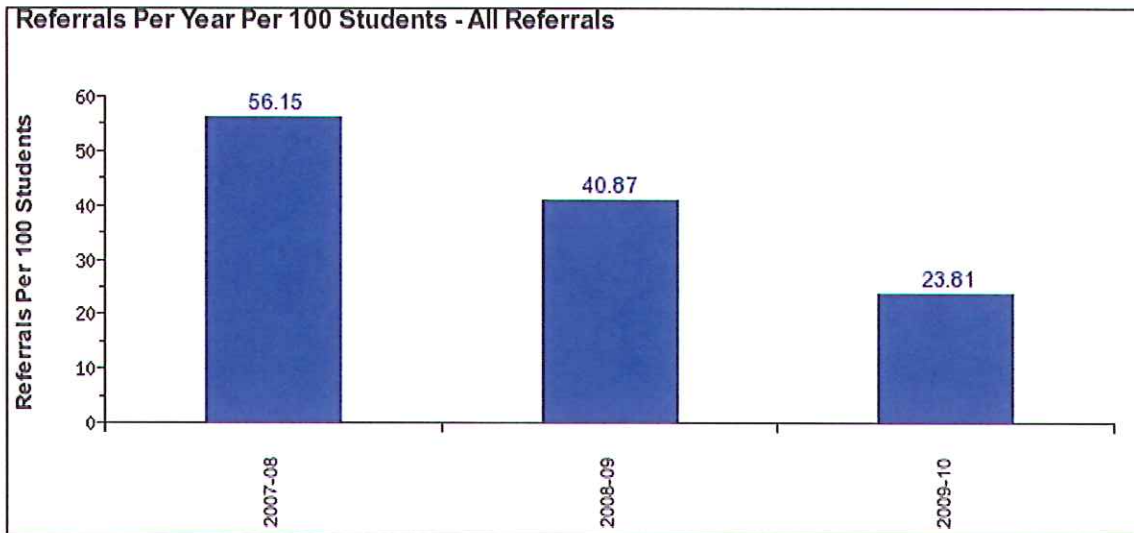


Eichhorn also collects and uses data in decision-making for continued improvement. When the SWPBS team reviewed the data from the 2008-2009 school year, it noticed that March had an uncharacteristically high number of infractions. The team decided that, for the 2009-2010 school year, students needed to be motivated to display the expected behaviors. It came up with a beach party incentive for students earning "dragon stars." The beach party was a success: compared to March 2009, the March 2010 data showed a 45% reduction in the total number of infractions and a 64% reduction in major infractions. The graph below shows Eichhorn's four-year data on major infractions by month through March 2010.

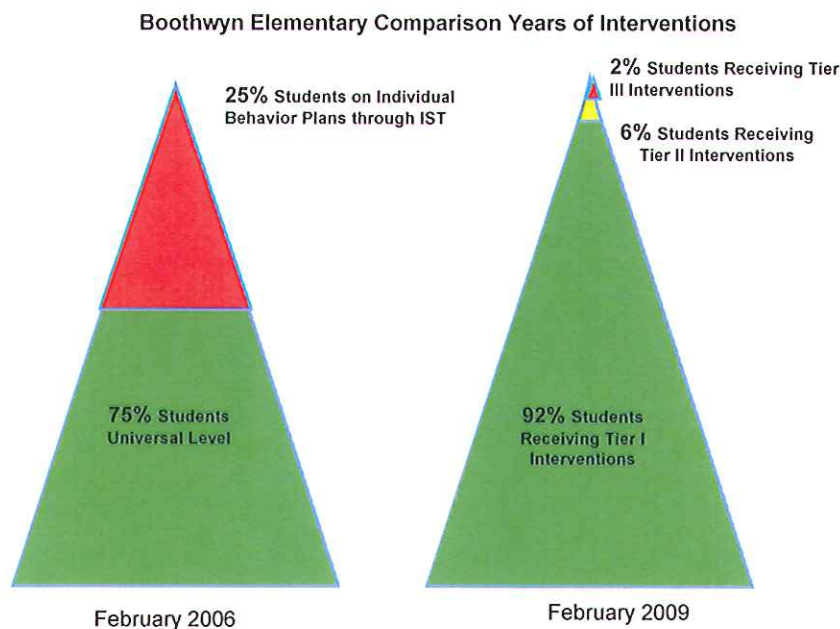


#### • Boothwyn Elementary School

Boothwyn Elementary School in Chichester School District has been implementing universal level SWPBS for three years. Boothwyn phased in secondary level interventions and supports two years ago and began tertiary level interventions last year. In this short three-year time frame, the school has reduced office discipline referrals by more than 50%.



With SWPBS, students' social and behavioral needs are now being met largely by the universal level prevention and supports designed for all students, with a much smaller proportion of students requiring more intensive individualized interventions than before SWPBS was implemented. Before SWPBS, 25% of Boothwyn's students had individualized behavior plans. As shown in the chart below, after SWPBS was implemented, only 6% of students were receiving tier II group interventions and only 2% required tier III individualized interventions. Over this period all other students' needs were met through the universal preventions and supports.



Boothwyn students have also made academic progress. From 2008 to 2009, out of 1,600 schools, Boothwyn Elementary School moved up 384 places in the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in the PSSA, Pennsylvania's statewide



achievement tests. Given the success of SWPBS in other states, and the current state of Pennsylvania's schools, this is the time to take Pennsylvania's limited SWPBS effort to scale. At least in the beginning, it will take additional resources to build the skills and capacity of schools and school districts that are trying to implement SWPBS. SWPBS trainers must go to schools across the state to teach school staff to use SWPBS, to collect needed data, and to monitor implementation over time.

Our estimate is that \$3 million dollars per year for the next few years will be needed to take SWPBS statewide. We hope that the Legislature will make the first annual commitment in the 2011-2012 budget. That would allow us to create the infrastructure to begin expanding SWPBS. In the future, legislation will also be needed to ensure that this infrastructure is maintained and has the capacity to support school districts in initiating, expanding, and sustaining quality SWPBS systems.

Without doubt, Pennsylvania has made an important start in introducing SWPBS to its schools. Also without a doubt, additional resources and state level commitment and leadership are needed to make SWPBS available to every school in every school district that wants it. If you want to become a believer in SWPBS, check it out in person. The Pennsylvania schools that are implementing SWPBS with fidelity welcome you to visit and see SWPBS in action!<sup>22</sup>



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<sup>22</sup> Please contact Deborah Gordon Klehr at [dklehr@elc-pa.org](mailto:dklehr@elc-pa.org) or visit [www.papbs.org](http://www.papbs.org) for more information about the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network.

## **HAVE OTHER STATES SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED SWPBS?**

As of July 2010, SWPBS (sometimes referred to as PBIS) was already underway in over 10,000 schools nationally, and has emerged as the leading strategy for establishing a welcoming, positive learning environment and improving student behavior. Either statewide or in specific school districts, SWPBS is underway to some extent in every state and Washington, D.C. Illinois leads the nation in SWPBS implementation with 1,200 schools in 299 districts. Large school districts such as Los Angeles Unified, Chicago, and Detroit have also implemented SWPBS district-wide. Many states such as Maryland, Colorado, New Jersey, and Oregon have committed to SWPBS as a state-wide initiative.

SWPBS usually begins in a few targeted schools where commitment to the program is high. Successful school programs can then be duplicated in other schools with the state or district providing support and training to school personnel. Data collection is extremely important to SWPBS. Many districts have adopted a variety of tools to evaluate implementation status and needs. There are multiple options to evaluate SWPBS, including: the School Wide Information System (SWIS – an on-going collection of school office discipline referrals), the Self Assessment Survey and the Benchmarks of Quality (both used to determine the extent and quality of implementation of SWPBS in each school), the Team Implementation Checklist (each school implementation team’s assessment of program fidelity), and/or the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (“SET”) data tool to aid in this effort. SET is used to evaluate SWPBS programs across schools in each school year. The results are used to assess SWPBS features, determine annual goals, and compare SWPBS efforts from year to year.<sup>23</sup>



### **Examples of State and District SWPBS systems**

\* Illinois began its statewide SWPBS program over 10 years ago. The program functions through an Illinois State Board of Education funded initiative, the Illinois SWPBS Network. School districts that are interested in SWPBS must first prepare at the district level by committing to SWPBS for five years and creating a leadership team. Then the district is assisted by a Network Coordinator in selecting schools for initial implementation. SWPBS has been implemented in 1,200 or 30 % of Illinois schools and the Illinois Network expects to add 200 schools per year over the next three to five years. The Network stresses full implementation and works to support schools in moving to school-wide commitment to SWPBS. The Network also hosts an online information sharing system and several statewide professional development activities and conferences. Recent studies show that Illinois schools with fully implemented SWPBS

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<sup>23</sup> See Horner, R. *et al.*, “The School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET): A Research Instrument for Assessing School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support,” *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 6, 3-12 (2004). See also Horner, Sugai, & Lewis-Palmer “School-wide Positive Behavior Support Evaluation Template,” October 2005. See also [www.pbssurveys.org](http://www.pbssurveys.org) for additional information.



programs have significantly fewer Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) and have a greater number of students meeting or exceeding state reading levels. Schools with fully implemented SWPBS also met AYP (the NCLB requirement of “annual yearly progress” toward mastery) at a significantly higher level than other schools.<sup>24</sup>

\* SWPBS is used to some extent in all 24 school districts in Maryland. Over 95% of SWPBS elementary schools in Maryland using SWPBS have 80% or more of their students with fewer than one office discipline referral per year. In Baltimore County, eighth grade math scores showed a 69% increase in SWPBS schools from 2003-2006.<sup>25</sup> The core of the Maryland SWPBS program is the state leadership team which includes staff from the Maryland Department of Education, Johns Hopkins University, and local behavioral support coaches. The Team meets monthly to plan and coordinate the training and support for the school teams and behavior support coaches. The Leadership Team also provides training for School-Wide Evaluation Tool Assessors and trains school personnel in the use of the School Wide Information System (SWIS). Maryland has also trained over 380 Behavior Support Coaches. The majority of Coaches are school psychologists, and they work with three to five SWPBS schools. Coaches attend SWPBS school team meetings and provide ongoing support for implementation and maintenance efforts. Additionally, coaches meet at the state level five times each year to share ideas, and challenges.<sup>26</sup>

\* “Colorado PBIS” has been training districts since its inception during the 2002-2003 school year. Since that time, 742 schools have been trained in 70 school districts and facilities. In the 2008-2009 school year, one third of all Colorado public schools were implementing PBIS. In PBIS schools, the average number of out-of-school suspensions dropped from 45 to 22 in three years while the state average only dropped from 43 to 42. Instructional time has also increased in schools that are fully implementing PBIS. One highly-impacted school district had 55% fewer office referrals by the third year of implementation, resulting in over 650 additional hours of instructional time. The implementation process is based on data and research collected at the state and national level. Districts that have committed to implementation provide PBIS coaching, release time of staff, and utilize best practice behavior progress monitoring.<sup>27</sup>

\* The Los Angeles Unified School District first adopted SWPBS through a change in the district-wide discipline policy in 2007. All schools in the district were asked to modify their discipline policies to reflect the LAUSD’s support for school wide positive behavioral support. The District then provided each school with a number of tools to help grow SWPBS, including guiding principles, school resource surveys, and

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<sup>24</sup> See Lucille Eber, “Welcome and Opening,” Slide #18-19, Illinois PBIS Network January 2010 Winter Leadership Conference, Jan. 20, 2010; Illinois PBIS Network, “End of Year Report- FY09,” available at [www.pbisillinois.org](http://www.pbisillinois.org). See generally [www.pbisillinois.org](http://www.pbisillinois.org).

<sup>25</sup> See PBIS Maryland, “PBIS Supports Academic Achievement,” PBIS Maryland Spring Newsletter 2007.

<sup>26</sup> See Johns Hopkins CTE, “The Maryland Model,” available at [http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/pbis/ses1\\_act2\\_pag1.shtml](http://cte.jhu.edu/courses/pbis/ses1_act2_pag1.shtml). See generally [www.pbismaryland.org](http://www.pbismaryland.org).

<sup>27</sup> See Colorado Department of Education, “Positive Behavior Support – Outcomes,” available at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/pbs/Outcomes.htm>. See generally <http://www.cde.state.co.us/pbs/>.

alternatives to traditional disciplinary methods. Each local district also has a team leader and implementation team responsible for providing technical assistance to schools. LAUSD additionally offers continuous professional development to teachers and school coaches. A recent report examining the implementation of SWPBS in South Los Angeles emphasized the importance of parent and community collaboration and involvement and showed a decrease in the number of suspensions and expulsions from 2005 to 2009.<sup>28</sup>

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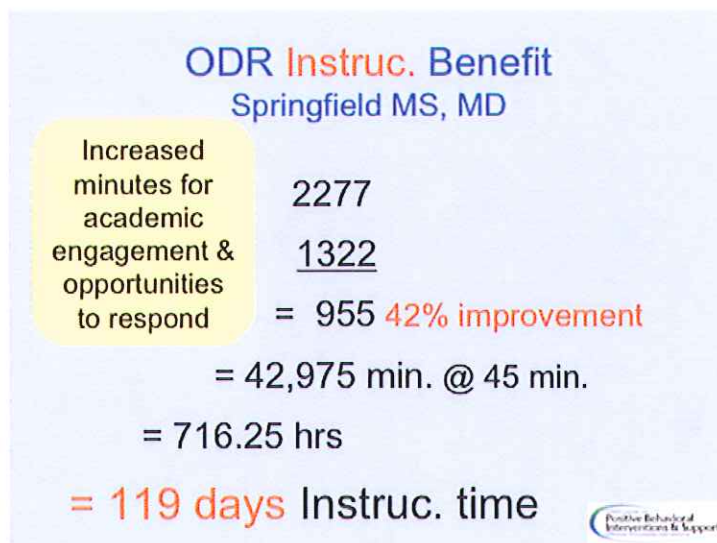
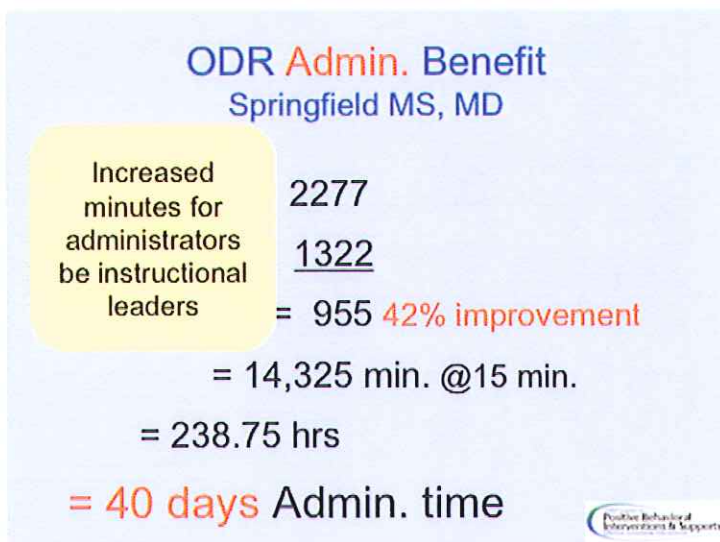
<sup>28</sup> See CADRE *et al.* "Redefining Dignity in Our Schools," available at [http://www.cadre-la.org/media/docs/4488\\_RedefDignityFullLengthReport\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.cadre-la.org/media/docs/4488_RedefDignityFullLengthReport_FINAL.pdf).



## WHAT DOES SWPBS COST AND HOW WILL IT SAVE US MONEY?

### When school incidents decrease, schools save time and money.

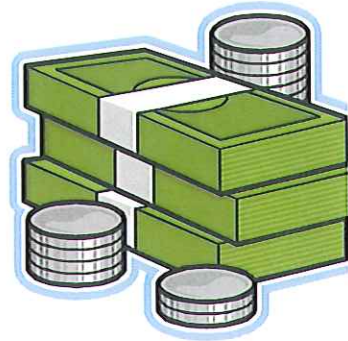
For example, Springfield Middle School in Maryland had 955 less office discipline referrals from one year to the next after implementing SWPBS. The reduction in referrals translated into significant savings of both administrative and instructional time.<sup>29</sup>



<sup>29</sup> Andrea Napolitano-Romer & George Sugai, "Supporting Learning and Teaching through Effective Classroom Management," Slides #20-21, Augusta, Maine, May 11, 2010 (OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)).

SWPBS has some front-end costs. At least until SWPBS is spread statewide and institutionalized in school districts, additional state support will be needed. This support will cover the expansion of SWPBS from a few schools towards statewide implementation. We estimate that, with a modest commitment of \$3,000,000 per year for several years, Pennsylvania can become one of the lead SWPBS states, and the students in many more school and school districts will benefit.

Individual schools may also incur some costs in the initial implementation of SWPBS. Schools will need to establish a leadership team consisting of teachers, staff, and administrators. Schools will have to cover the costs of missed work time for participants to attend leadership meetings and trainings. There may be additional costs for schools associated with data management and SWPBS materials. State level staff (state coaches) can work with schools to determine these costs during the first year of the proposed grant program.



As more districts adopt SWPBS, the state's costs decrease because local school districts can begin to employ their own district-wide coaches instead of relying on state coaches. External technical assistance to state staff also becomes less necessary. See Robert Horner, George Sugai and Claudia Vincent, "School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Investing in Student Success," *Impact: Feature Issue on Fostering Success in School and Beyond for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders* 18(2), 2005, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, available at <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/default.html>

Once the SWPBS infrastructure is set up at a school and school wide training has occurred, no additional dollars should be needed to maintain the program. In fact, past experience with SWPBS shows that, with fully implemented SWPBS, schools see a significant drop in problem student behaviors and a commensurate reduction in staff time needed to respond to these behaviors. Since time is money, the result is a substantial savings. At one middle school that implemented SWPBS, the school had an annual reduction of 850 office discipline referrals and 25 student suspensions translating into a time savings of 30 administrator days and 121 student days. See Horner, Sugai, and Vincent, 2005. A reduction in problem behaviors will also lead to a reduction in the number of students referred to the juvenile justice and special education systems with further cost saving for schools and students.





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