

SDDFS NOTES

on Schoolwide Prevention & Program Implementation

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Special Points of Interest:

- Schoolwide Prevention: Moving from Puzzled to Proactive
- Improving Program Implementation
- Spotlight on Effective Programs

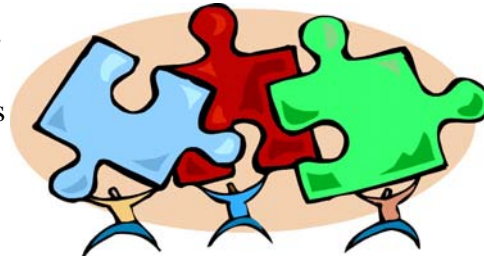
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Schoolwide Prevention: Moving from Puzzled to Proactive

Many jigsaw puzzles for very young children have features designed to eliminate guesswork by the inexperienced user. For example, the holes into which the pieces fit have the same picture as the puzzle piece. The child not only has the shape of the recessed hole, but has a matching picture to reduce the chances that he or she will put the piece into the wrong hole or get frustrated trying to figure it out.

When it comes to schoolwide prevention efforts, it is unlikely that you as a coordinator have such advantages. Deciphering how all the pieces fit together into a cohesive whole can be a daunting task. Even just defining the pieces of the puzzle can be challenging. Schoolwide prevention is the effort made by an entire school to prevent behaviors which threaten the safety



of students and staff. Bullying, fighting, threat and intimidation, as well as alcohol, tobacco, and drug use are all behaviors which can make students feel unsafe. Unlike a single classroom prevention program, schoolwide prevention involves everyone on campus, including school staff, students, and families in the development, discussion, and implementation of rules and consequences. The goal of the schoolwide approaches is to create and maintain a positive learning environment for all students.¹

It is clear to any coordinator walking the halls of our schools that a negative, disorderly, and unsafe school climate

can contribute to problematic development among students.² Recent studies confirm this.

Why are schools re-directing their strategies toward schoolwide efforts? The beneficial effects of school-based substance use prevention programs that have not been fully integrated into the school's climate have proven over the long term to decline in effectiveness.³ In response, many schools are recognizing the need to enlist all members of the school community in prevention efforts. One way to look at the future is to envision your school matching the words of Sheppard Kellam, senior research scientist at the American Institutes for Research: "We are moving into a new generation in which prevention and education will be seen as one

See "Puzzled", Page 2

What the Research Says



About Schoolwide Prevention

- If antisocial behavior is not changed by the end of grade 3, it should be treated as a chronic condition much like diabetes. That is, it cannot be cured but managed with the appropriate supports and continuing intervention.¹⁰
- Rather than concluding that existing prevention approaches do not work, it is equally reasonable to conclude that they produce short-term effects which, without adequate booster sessions (or ongoing intervention), erode over time.³

Schoolwide Prevention: Moving From Puzzled to Proactive

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great whole.”⁴

Two types of schoolwide prevention practices that schools are currently using are environmental practices and individual practices:

- **Environmental practices focus on the structure or management of school or classroom environments;**
- **Individual practices focus on improving the skills of individual students.**⁵

Classroom management programs are an example of environmental practices. Standards written and enforced for schoolwide discipline is another example of an environmental practice. Using prevention criteria to teach students social competency skills is a type of individual practice.⁵ Of the individual prevention strategies, those that focus on teaching students self control, positive decision making and refusal skills through active role playing, were found to be more effective than lecture, seat work, and some mentoring and counseling programs.¹⁶

When looking at these two categories of prevention practices, the researchers found that the environmental programs were, in general, better implemented than the individual, social competency prevention lessons. (For more on implementation, see page 5.)

While environmental prevention practices seem to be somewhat more effective than individual prevention practices, the most effective approach is a blend of both the environmental and the individual.⁵

By adopting a schoolwide commitment to a particular approach (such as “Guidelines for Success” Expectation Set), the majority of students will be

supported for their positive behaviors and the principal’s time can be more effectively focused on the small number of children requiring more intensive intervention. The payoff shows up in the classrooms too, by enabling teachers to shift their focus from disciplining to instructing. Student academic performance can improve.⁶

Prevention programs experience the most success when prevention interventions are integrated into the regular school program, and are initiated by school insiders.⁵ Schools trying to “plug in” a stand alone prevention program without weaving it into the school’s existing curriculum risk failure of the program. In discussing the success of his school’s *Steps to Respect* bullying prevention program, Principal Mike Foy of a K-8 school in Seattle, WA emphasized that the program “is well integrated into the curriculum and is not just an add-on.”⁷ Integrating prevention programs also protect students who would be alienated if pulled out for a “special program”.

This issue of Notes calls upon the experience of some of your peers who have implemented schoolwide prevention initiatives. Your puzzle may not be complete yet, but with insight into how the components interlock, a more complete picture can develop. A school in Duval County implemented the schoolwide initiative, *Guidelines for Success*. The principal of the school comments that four years ago it was not unusual to hear a teacher yell at students in an attempt to organize them. Now, order prevails and students clearly thrive from understanding and using their *Guidelines for Success*.⁹

Schoolwide Prevention: How Does it Impact School Culture and Climate?

School culture and school climate are the sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways.¹³ The types of things that contribute to school climate include teaching practices, diversity among the school population, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students.¹³ Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, there is a difference between them:

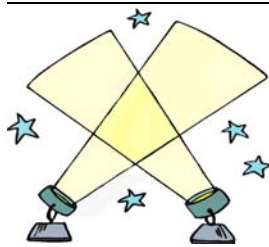
- ◆ **School climate refers mostly to the school's effects on students;**
- ◆ **School culture refers more to the way teachers and other staff members work together.**

Most schools considering implementing a schoolwide prevention initiative first assess the school climate. In Duval County, for example, a school climate assessment is conducted among teachers, students, and parents. In addition, other extensive data is gathered including office referrals, SESIR (School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting), and code violations.

The following positive changes in school climate are often noted when students practice in the whole school, those positive actions they learn in the classroom:

- 1) a safe and orderly learning environment,
- 2) additional clarity about and focus on the school's mission on education,
- 3) ability of the principal, freed from discipline issues, to lead and support the school in positive directions,
- 4) students gain expectations for their own success as well as for their peers,
- 5) teachers teach and students learn skills that will help them succeed,
- 6) students manage their own behavior,
- 7) frequent monitoring of students' progress is promoted, and
- 8) improved home-school relations.¹⁴

Randy Sprick reminds coordinators that it is possible to get a feel for the climate of the school within ten minutes of entering the school. When a school adopts the belief that "every social interaction you have with a child teaches him or her something,"¹⁰ every prevention effort has a greater chance of success, because a student's readiness to absorb the message is likely to improve. Part of creating a schoolwide positive climate involves buy-in from everyone, custodians to the principals, in their roles as protectors of the school's climate.



Spotlight on: *Foundations: Establishing Positive Discipline Practices*

The *Foundations: Establishing Positive Discipline Practices* process is one option available to schools that have decided to place a priority on designing a positive and proactive schoolwide discipline plan.¹¹ Although it is frequently referred to in casual conversation among interested parties as a “program,” developers and those who use *Foundations* are quick to point out that it is much larger and broader. It is a process. At least two Florida districts (Duval and Orange) are implementing a *Foundations*-based approach in some district schools.

Dr. Randy Sprick, primary author of the *Foundations* materials, points out that the approach is “not a quick fix; it is longitudinal intervention across time.” Dr. Sprick stresses the exponential power in getting everybody in the school working together on a mutually agreed-upon plan rather than on well-intentioned but fragmented efforts which do not have schoolwide support.

Kathy Bowles, Health Education Supervisor in Duval County, has been intimately involved with the initial implementation of *Foundations* in the pilot schools. At each school, a leadership team, consisting of five to seven members of the faculty and staff, is formed to evaluate the potential of *Foundations* at the school. Next they present *Foundations* to the entire faculty to propose using the process. The team schedules a meeting with the faculty, and at the faculty meeting, after a ten-minute input period (Dr. Sprick believes that most productive ideas arise in the first ten minutes), there is a vote regarding whether or not the school will implement *Foundations*. One way to structure the voting involves the following “levels of satisfaction”:

- 5 – “I wholeheartedly support this
- 4 – “I love it and will do what we agree but can’t currently go over and above”
- 3 – “I am fine with it”
- 2 – “I have some concerns but don’t know why, and I will go along if everyone else does,” and
- 1 – “I have grave concerns”

If there is even one “1” vote, the committee returns to the drawing board, with the party (or parties) who voted “1” as a committee member(s). Amy Lingren, Principal of North Shore Elementary in Duval County, noted that she intentionally put several identified “resisters” on the core committee. According to Ms. Lingren, “that allowed them to have the responsibility to help the staff implement, as well as, receive more in-depth training which helped them hone their own skills and change some negative behaviors.”

Ms. Lingren stresses the reliance of the program on using data to guide the leadership team in prioritizing problem areas. The leadership team also relies on data when developing guidelines for success and fostering positive, consistently understood and communicated school values.

Ms. Bowles provided the example of a high school with more than 3,100 children, where the lunchroom was identified as the most problematic area. Because of the large volume of students, lunch time took virtually all day. The lunchroom was continually crowded and there were no trash cans in the room, due to the lunchroom’s reliance on a trash compactor. In fact, the custodian cleaned the lunchroom with a leaf blower due to the large volume of trash. After reviewing observation sheets and other data, the leadership team developed a plan, with the philosophy “fix what you can.” Tables were separated and trash cans added. A lesson plan was created to teach students the expectations for lunch room behavior. It was approximately a 10-minute lesson plan, the goal of which was to teach everyone the same rules. The basic plan was to teach, reteach and have an alternate plan. The consequences of not following lunchroom guidelines was a “reteaching session” with the guidance counselor. The more traditional consequences for antisocial behaviors, such as losing recess or free time, were not included as part of the consequences.

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Foundations

“You can never punish somebody into being motivated.”

—Dr. Randy Sprick,
Primary Author, *Foundations: Establishing Positive Discipline Practices*

After common campus areas are addressed, many schools implement the schoolwide classroom management component of the Foundations process, CHAMPS. With CHAMPS, each classroom teacher is trained to provide students with a very specific set of behavioral expectations, tailored to the various activities in which the students engage. These expectations are reinforced by others, including paraprofessionals, who work with students during the day. According to Kathy Bowles, CHAMPS “gives a format for each activity, so there is no guesswork about how to communicate expectations and deal with behaviors outside of what is expected.”

Since the Duval County project is so young, there is no evaluation data available beyond the initially established baselines. However, schools in Texas and Kentucky have been able to show positive changes in behavior indicators:

- At Westview Middle School in Austin, TX, tardiness decreased from 400 per day to 5 per day in a one-year period.
- At Blanco Middle School in Austin, TX, referrals decreased from a baseline of 984 to 347 in year 1 and 157 in year 2.
- At Mendez Middle School in Austin, TX, fights decreased by 85% in the first year of implementation.¹²

While the numbers are informative, many educators involved with Foundations report it to be powerful in ways difficult to measure. Kathy Bowles says that, “The kids become ‘our kids,’ not ‘your kids’ or ‘my kids,’ all guided by the same school beliefs.” Principal Lingren states, “The entire culture of our building has changed.” Ultimately, *Foundations* provides evidence that a school wide approach to discipline can result in some very positive outcomes. When children are given clear expectations and clear goals, when these are clearly communicated, and consistently enforced by all staff, we allow our children to be successful.

Websites for Schoolwide Prevention Resources

Schoolwide Behavior

Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Program (<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/>)

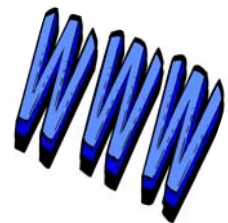
OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (<http://www.pbis.org>)

Safe and Civil Schools Series (<http://www.safeandcivilschools.com>)

School Safety and Violence Prevention

Centers for the Study and Prevention of Violence, (<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html>)

National School Safety Center (<http://www.nssc1.org>)



Key Factors in Improving Program Implementation

The quality of implementation is key to successful prevention programming. In the *2000 Annual Summary of Effective Prevention Principles and Programs*, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) identifies four emerging issues in the implementation of prevention programs. They are:

- >> **fidelity,**
- >> **adaptation,**
- >> **core component analysis, and**
- >> **dose-response relationships.**

Looking at **fidelity** reveals whether the program was delivered as intended. In CSAP's example, students that received at least 60% of the prevention program, were shown to have benefited most strongly from the prevention programs. These students had significantly fewer drug users (44%). A different facet of fidelity, staff consistency, can impact and, in the negative (high turnover), erode intervention fidelity. Randy Sprick, author of the *Foundations* process, points out that if schools change principals within the first three years of implementing *Foundations*, the process's momentum can be severely compromised.

The second issue is **adaptation**. While program fidelity is extremely important, CSAP's Summary says "the challenge for social scientists is to develop substance abuse prevention programs that are flexible yet robust." Modifications to a program can facilitate a sense of ownership with the users, which may then lead to the success and durability of a prevention program.

The next issue is related to adaptation. If we can ascertain the core, active ingredients of a program's success (**core component analysis**), we can emphasize these components, ensuring that if we do adapt a program, we do not eliminate a crucial component of that program.

Finally, there is the issue of **dose-response relationships**. This reinforces the necessity of documenting how much of a substance-use prevention program is taken or received. According to Resnicow and Botvin,³ prevention effects that do not endure are explained by either the brevity of the program (low dose) or insufficient or nonexistent booster sessions.

See "Implementation", page 7

More websites for Schoolwide Prevention Resources

General

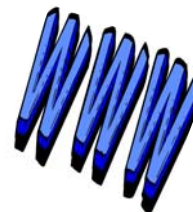
Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (<http://cecp.air.org>)

National Registry of Effective Prevention Programs
(<http://www.preventionregistry.org/>)

Bullying Prevention

<http://www.bullying.org>

Steps to Respect Bullying Prevention Program (http://www.cfchildren.org/program_str.shtml)



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Implementation

In the National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools,¹⁶ the authors state that “many individual prevention activities are implemented with insufficient strength and fidelity to be expected to produce measurable difference in desired outcomes.” The U.S. Department of Education found that programs implemented by schools are not nearly as comprehensive or extensive as the programs found to be effective in research. The amount and content of prevention programming varies greatly from classroom to classroom and school to school – even in districts trying to deliver consistent programs.¹⁶ Emphasizing high quality implementation in schools should be given priority.

The *Study*¹⁶ emphasizes the following key implementation factors:

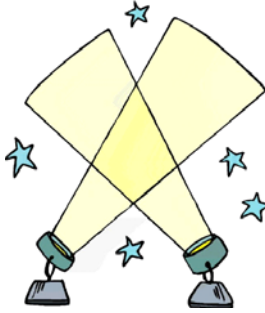
1. **Provision of high quality teacher training**— Some teachers reported they had not received sufficient training, weren't comfortable with the subject matter or the teaching methods recommended, and that teaching prevention was of relatively low priority in an already full school day.
2. **Integration of activity into normal school operations/greater organizational support**— The quality of prevention programs is better for activities that are integrated into the regular part of the school program. Supervision of prevention programs is important, and principal support for these programs is essential.
3. **Local initiation of prevention activities**— Local initiation, local planning, and local use of information (but not local *development* of programs) are linked with higher quality implementation and better program results.
4. **Greater standardization of program materials**— Well written curriculum guides, program standards, and quality control strongly contribute to the success of a school's prevention programs.

Carefully review these factors to see where your district's strengths are and where there is room for improvement.

Successful implementation may be difficult due to one or more of the following circumstances:¹⁶

- instruction by PE teachers who are unfamiliar with teaching a curriculum,
- limited instructor classroom management skills,
- large classes,
- distracting settings, or settings that are usurped by other activities,
- teachers who are not prepared for or committed to taking on a new instructional role,
- teacher turnover and the loss of trained instructors,
- deviations from the curriculum,
- supplementation of, or replacement of material with other material,
- failure to use available technical assistance.

The better the implementation, the better the outcome, which means with good implementation, you are more likely to meet your programs' objectives, and will have a more positive impact on the lives of your students.



Spotlight on: *Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support*

Positive Behavior Support (PBS, referred to also as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)) focuses on applying positive behavior interventions and systems to achieve socially important behavior change.¹⁰ The research base upon which PBS is founded includes functional analysis of behavior, proactive discipline, and clear and consistent consequences for problem behavior.

Seventy-one schools throughout Florida are currently implementing schoolwide Positive Behavior Support. These include schools in Indian River, Orange, St. Lucie, and Bay Counties. According to Heather Peshak George, Ph.D., Coordinator of Florida's Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Project, the purpose of the project is to "increase the capacity of Florida's educators, families and support organizations to address challenging behaviors using positive behavior support technology."¹⁵

When initially working with schools interested in pursuing PBS, the developers of PBS note the following commonalities. Do you see any in your environment?

- ⇒ Problem behavior is increasing.
- ⇒ Schoolwide discipline systems are typically unclear and inconsistently implemented.
- ⇒ Educators often rely on reactive and crisis management interventions to solve chronic problem behavior.
- ⇒ Teachers are being asked to do more with less.
- ⇒ Students have limited opportunities to learn school-based social skills and to receive feedback on their use.¹⁰

As an example of the positive changes that can result from the implementation of EBS (Effective Behavioral Support), the "overarching conceptual base of PBS", Tim Lewis, Ph.D., cites a Kentucky School which gained 776.8 instructional hours in one school year by reducing in-school suspension through building positive systems. Dr. Lewis reports, "having the kids in the classroom results in more instructional hours and therefore increases standard scores. There were 42-50% increases in reading, language, and math scores in one school year."¹⁰

In Florida schools beginning their second year of implementation, many encouraging results have been recorded:

- The average number of Office Discipline Referrals (ODR's) per day from six participating schools in Florida dropped from an average of 3.72 a day in 2001-2002 to 2.72 a day in 2002-2003.
- Seven out of eight schools had a decrease in ODR's.
- Seven schools averaged a 29% decrease in ODR's (from baseline data 2001-2002).
- Out of 25 schools, 22 increased the percentage of students meeting high standards in reading.
- Out of the same 25 schools, 21 increased the percentage of students meeting high standards in math.
- Out of the 25 schools studied, 15 schools increased the percentage of students meeting high standards in writing.¹⁵

Endnotes

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The members of the SDDFS staff, as well as the staff of the Safe Schools Office at the Department of Education, stand ready to provide support through training and technical assistance to schools and school districts. Please encourage educators to take advantage of our services. For additional information on these resources or to find out how to access these resources, please contact Patricia Elton at (850) 414-0236 (SunCom 994-0236) or by email at elton_p@firn.edu.

Florida Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free
Schools Project

Phone: (850) 414-9976

SunCom: 944-9976

FAX: (850) 414-9979

SunCom FAX: 944-9979

Website: www.unf.edu/dept/fie/sdfs

The Department of Education, through the Bureau of School Safety and School Support, funds the Florida Institute of Education's (FIE's) Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools Project. FIE is an institute of the University of North Florida. The Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools Project offers technical assistance and support in the development and implementation of drug use and violence prevention strategies. For more information, contact the FIE/SDFS Project.
