

IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE WITH SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

Hoping to prevent minor discipline problems, as well as more serious antisocial and violent incidents, many schools have turned to a school wide positive discipline approach, commonly referred to as School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) (Dwyer & Osher, 2002; Sugai, Horner, & Gresham, 2002; Sprague & Golly, in press) as a foundation response. SWPBS is based on the assumption that when all school staff members within all school settings actively teach and consistently recognize and reinforce appropriate behavior, the number of students with serious behavior problems will be reduced and the school's overall climate will improve (Colvin, Kame'enui, & Sugai, 1993; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sugai et al., 2000).

SWPBS schools aim to a) create a positive school climate, b) establish and teach behavioral expectations school-wide, and c) teach mastery and demonstration of behavioral skills (e.g. compliance to school rules, safe and respectful peer to peer interactions, academic effort/engagement) that will alter the trajectory of at risk children toward destructive outcomes, and prevent the onset of risk behavior in typically developing children. We expect that its effective and sustained implementation will create a more responsive school climate that supports the twin goals of schooling for all children: academic achievement and social development (Walker et al., 1997).

Having an organized, school wide system for behavior management and teaching social behavior is the foundation for effective prevention. In addition to the direct benefit it has on student behavior in school, such a system creates the context for school-based efforts to support effective parenting. When school personnel have a shared vision of the kind of social behavior they want to promote among students and a shared understanding of the type of social environment that is needed to achieve such behavior, they are in a position to inform and support families in creating the same kind of supportive environment at home. When educators are clear about how to use rules, positive reinforcement, and mild, consistent negative consequences to support behavioral development, they are better able to coordinate their efforts with those of parents. As a result, parents will know more about their children's behavior in school and will be able to provide the same supports and consequences that the school is providing.

This article will describe how to establish and implement a school wide, positive discipline plan ranging from needs assessment to implementation to evaluation. A highly acclaimed staff development program called "Best Behavior (Sprague & Golly, in press)" will be showcased as an exemplary approach in this regard. We begin by outlining the scope of today's school discipline problem(s) and its relationship to school safety.

The Challenge of School Discipline

Most schools in the U.S. are relatively safe places for children, youth, and the adults

who teach and support them (U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, 1999; 2000). However, fears about the personal safety of students, teachers, parents, and community members are very real and need to be addressed. It also is true that some schools have serious crime and violence problems and most schools are having to deal with more serious problem behaviors (e.g., bullying, harassment, victimization, drug and alcohol abuse, the effects of family disruption, poverty, and so on) (Kingery, 1999).

No school is immune from challenging behaviors. They exist in every school and community, and they always will. The extent of the challenge will vary in intensity and frequency across schools, and the onset and development of antisocial behavior are associated with a variety of school, community, and family risk factors (Sprague et al., 2002; Walker & Sylwester, 1991). Our challenge is to reduce the frequency and intensity of these problems, and sustain our success over time.

The social problems noted above compete directly with the instructional mission of schools. The result is decreased academic achievement and a lower quality of life for students and staff alike. The *National Educational Goals Panel Report* (U. S. Department of Education, 1998, 2000) lists five essential areas in which national school performance has declined: 1) Reading achievement at Grade 12 has decreased (Goal 3); 2) Student drug use has increased (Goal 7); 3) Sale of drugs at school in grades 8, 10, and 12 has increased (4) Threats and injuries to public school teachers have increased (Goal 7); and, 5) More teachers are reporting that disruptions in their classroom interfere with their teaching (Goal 7). These outcomes illustrate the clear link between school climate, school violence and academic achievement. We cannot achieve national educational goals and meaningful reform without addressing these disturbing conditions (Elias,

Zins, Graczyk, & Weissberg, 2004).

School Practices Contribute to the Problem

Many school practices contribute to the development or existence of antisocial behavior and the potential for violence. Because of an overemphasis on detecting individual child or youth characteristics that predict violence or disruption, many important systemic variables are often overlooked (Colvin, Kame'enui, and Sugai (1993); Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, and Hill (1999); Mayer (1995); Walker and Eaton-Walker (2000), and Walker et al., (1996)). These include, among others:

1. Ineffective instruction that results in academic failure;
2. Inconsistent and punitive classroom and behavior management practices;
3. Lack of opportunity to learn and practice prosocial interpersonal and self-management skills;
4. Unclear rules and expectations regarding appropriate behavior;
5. Failure to effectively correct rule violations and reward adherence to them;
6. Failure to individualize instruction and support to adapt to individual differences (e.g., ethnic and cultural differences, gender, disability);
7. Failure to assist students from at-risk (e.g., poverty, racial/ethnic minority members) backgrounds to bond with the schooling process;
8. Disagreement and inconsistency of implementation among staff members; and,
9. Lack of administrator involvement, leadership and support.

Common response to behavioral problems: Turn to office referrals, suspensions and expulsions! We commonly observe that when a student misbehaves, the first line of

response involves increasing monitoring and supervision of the student, restating rules and delivering sanctions such as referrals to the office, out of school suspension and/or loss of privileges. The administrator may come to a point of frustration and attempt to establish a “bottom line” for disruptive students (usually referral or suspension). Unfortunately, these “tough” responses produce immediate, but short-lived relief for the school but do not facilitate the progress of the student who may already be disengaged from the schooling process.

Paradoxically, while punishment practices may appear to “work” in the short term, they may merely remove the student for a period of time, thus providing respite for school personnel and sometimes students. All too often, these practices also can lead some to assign exclusive responsibility for positive change to the student or family and thereby prevent meaningful school engagement and development of solutions. The use of sanctions, without an accompanying program of teaching and recognition for expected positive behavior, may merely displace the problem elsewhere (to the home or the community). There is little evidence of the long term effect of these practices in reducing antisocial behavior (Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai & Vincent, in press). In fact, evidence suggests that schools using punishment practices alone promote more antisocial behavior than those with a firm, but fair discipline system (Mayer, 1991; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Research shows clearly that schools using only punishment techniques tend to have increased rates of vandalism, aggression, truancy, and ultimately school dropout (Mayer, 1991).

For students with chronic problem behavior these negative practices are more likely to impair child-adult relationships and attachment to schooling rather than reduce the

likelihood of problem behavior. Punishment alone, without a balance of support and efforts to restore school engagement, weakens academic outcomes and maintains the antisocial trajectory of at risk students. Instead, the discipline process should help students accept responsibility, place high value on academic engagement and achievement, teach alternative ways to behave, and focus on restoring a positive environment and social relationships in the school.

For many of us, it is difficult to admit that our own practices and behavior may actually contribute to the problem. Take a moment now to reflect on the questions in box 1 and consider which practices exist in your school that may be making the problems worse, or better.

Box 1: Reflection

- What are practices or conditions in my school that may make behavioral problems worse?
- Does the discipline process in my school help students accept focus on restoring academic achievement, positive social relationships and the overall environment?

If not punishment, then what is the solution? We believe schools can serve as an ideal setting to organize efforts against the increasing problems of children and youth who display antisocial behavior patterns (Mayer, 1995; Sugai & Horner, 1994; Walker et al., 1996). This practice is sustained by a tendency to try to eliminate the presenting problem quickly (i.e., remove the student via suspension or expulsion, or fix a “within-

child" deficit) rather than focus on the administrative, teaching and management practices that either contribute to or reduce them (Tobin, Sugai, & Martin, 2000).

A solid research base exists to guide a careful analysis of the administrative, teaching and management practices in a school and construct alternatives to ineffective approaches. In any school, there are typically developing students, who engage in few problematic behaviors, and other students who engage in multiple, comorbid and destructive patterns of perpetration and victimization of others. This pairing of student types requires that *interventions must be implemented that target both school wide and individual approaches*. Educators in today's schools and classrooms must be supported to adopt and sustain effective, cost-efficient practices in this regard (Gottfredson, 1997; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and & Czeh, 2000; Walker et al., 1996).

Continued:

Improving School Climate With School Wide Positive Behavior Supports

Changing School Climate is an Essential Element. The biggest challenge we face is to enhance our overall capacity to create and sustain positive and effective schools. We should begin school wide prevention activities early, keep at it and never quit (O'Donnell, Hawkins, Catalano, Abbott, & Day, 1995). We know it is never too late, nor never too early to support children and youth in our schools (Loeber & Farrington, 1998). Research indicates that schools can create resilient, engaged students, and establish clear expectations for learning and positive behavior while providing firm but fair discipline, and also provide students with valued roles and meaningful

responsibilities in the school. Students will be more motivated if they feel listened to and learn skills that can be applied for years to come (Katz, 1997). Effective schools have shared values regarding the school's mission and purpose, carry out multiple activities designed to promote pro-social behavior and connection to school traditions, and provide a caring nurturing social climate involving collegial relationships among adults and students (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988).

A well developed body of research evidence on school safety indicates that (a) early identification and intervention with at-risk children in schools is feasible, (b) the risk of dropping out of school, delinquency, violence and other adjustment problems is high unless these children are helped, (c) academic recovery is difficult if early intervention is not provided, and (d) universal interventions need to be combined with interventions targeted to specific problems (Gottfredson, 2001; Tolan et al., 2001).

Our challenge then becomes how to give schools the capacity to adopt and sustain the processes, organizational structures, and systems that enable them to carry out these effective interventions (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and Czeh, 2000). The problem for schools is not the lack of *effective* programs (those that work), but rather it is one of *efficacy* (helping typical schools adopt and carry out effective interventions).

Where to start: No Child Left Behind—Principles of effectiveness

We recommend use of the USDOE Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools "Principles of Effectiveness" as an organizing framework for planning and

implementing whole-school approaches to safety and effectiveness (see chapter 2 on safe schools planning for additional information). The steps outlined therein include 1) a local **needs assessment** of the risk and protective factors affecting the school, families, and the community, 2) establishment of **measurable goals and objectives** by the school that are integrated with school improvement planning, 3) selection of **research-based and research-validated curricula and interventions**, and 4) implementation of a comprehensive and **rigorous evaluation plan** which includes evaluation of inputs (resources, staff, materials), outputs (actual costs, description of the process of implementation), outcomes (e.g., student behavior change), and impact (overall satisfaction with project products and outcomes). In the next section, we will introduce you to School Wide PBS and use the Principles of Effectiveness as an organizing framework.

School Wide, Positive Discipline: How to get there!

School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a positive systems-based approach that promotes safe and orderly schools. Researchers at the University of Oregon (see Sprague, Sugai & Walker, 1998; Sprague, Golly et al., 2001; Sugai & Horner, 1999; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997, www.pbis.org) have extensively field-tested and researched the efficacy of SWPBS approaches in reducing school behavior problems and promoting a positive school climate. SWPBS is a multiple system approach to addressing the problems posed by antisocial students and coping with challenging forms of student behavior. The key practices of SWPBS are:

- Clear definitions of expected appropriate, positive behaviors are provided for students and staff members;

- Clear definitions of problem behaviors and their consequences are defined for students and staff members;
- Regularly scheduled instruction and assistance in desired positive social behaviors is provided that enables students to acquire the necessary skills for the desired behavior change;
- Effective incentives and motivational systems are provided to encourage students to behave differently;
- Staff commits to staying with the intervention over the long term and to monitor, support, coach, debrief, and provide booster lessons for students as necessary to maintain the achieved gains;
- Staff receives training, feedback and coaching about effective implementation of the systems; and,

Systems for measuring and monitoring the intervention's effectiveness are established and carried out.

Improving discipline is a priority. First, we recommend that improvement of school discipline be one of the top school improvement goals. With competing resources and goals, if work in this area is not a priority, progress will be difficult.

Administrator leadership. *Every* school needs a principal committed to SWPBS leadership and participation. In the absence of administrative leadership and district support (e.g. policy, fiscal) it will be difficult to effect broad-based changes. Hallinger & Heck (1998) reviewed the evidence on the principal's contribution to school effectiveness. They concluded that principals exercise a measurable effect on schooling

effectiveness and student achievement. Kam, Greenberg, & Walls (2003), reported that the ability of principals to initiate and sustain innovations in their schools is related to successful program implementation. The length of time administrators have spent in the school setting and the leadership characteristics they show in maintaining good relations with teachers, parents, school boards, site councils, and students also are positively related to successful implementation outcomes. (Gottfredson et al., 2000) & Ingersoll (2001) showed that high levels of administrative support were also associated with reduced staff turnover.

Commitment to participate. We also have found it important to secure a commitment to implement the intervention by at least 80% of school staff. Some schools have chosen to use a “vote” to assess this level of commitment. We have found a few approaches that can move your colleagues toward program implementation (Embry, 2003).

- Talk about cost and benefit. All adults involved need to know the costs (time, funds) and benefits of working to improve school discipline. For example, presentations by school leaders on the anticipated effects of program adoption (e.g., studies indicate that discipline problems are dramatically reduced as are referrals to the principal’s office, teaching time is substantially increased).
- Emphasize the long term benefits. It also is useful to discuss the “higher good” of prevention and how much your colleagues value such outcomes as better academic achievement, prevention of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, less teacher stress, etc. These discussions may prove to be more powerful and persuasive than simply appealing to authority or law (i.e., we have to do it!).

- “Try before you buy.” School wide PBS is comprised of many smaller techniques (reward systems, teaching rules) (Embry, in press) that can be promoted as trial products. You can ask innovators in your building to share their successes, or arrange visits to schools that have already adopted SWPBS practices.
- “Go with the goers.” The practice is far more likely to be adopted if you recognize and support people who get on board early, as well as encourage those who are reluctant, or even resistant.

To begin your journey toward establishing a more effective school program, we recommend that you begin by completing the needs assessment presented in Figure 1 (Sprague & Golly, in press). Another excellent self-assessment is the “Assessing Behavior Support In Schools” survey developed by George Sugai and his colleagues (Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2000; available at www.pbis.org). While we strongly recommend that all adults in the school complete this type of assessment, you can also reflect on your own views about your school’s status on each item. The survey asks you to reflect on whether the practice is in place in your school and to choose which items are priorities for improvement. Once you have identified areas needing improvement, use the goals table that follows to write goals and set concrete action steps. Your school behavior team will refer to these goals often, and modify them as indicated by your review of key data you will gather regarding effectiveness (e.g., office discipline referrals, rates of problem behavior on the playground).

---Insert Figure 1 Here---

Select Evidence-Based Practices. Best Behavior (Sprague & Golly, in press) provides a standardized staff development program aimed at improving school and classroom discipline in schools, and associated outcomes such as school violence, and alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. It is based on the School Wide Behavioral Support (SWPBS) (Sugai and Horner, 1994, Sprague, Sugai and Walker, 1998) approach developed at the University of Oregon and the National Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org) (an Office of Special Education Programs funded research center). The goal of the Best Behavior program is to facilitate the academic achievement and healthy social development of children and youth in a safe environment conducive to learning.

The program includes intervention techniques based on over 30 years of rigorous research regarding school discipline from education, public health, psychology, and criminology disciplines. Best Behavior program components address whole-school, classroom, individual student, and family collaboration practices and is intended to be used in combination with other evidence-based prevention programs such as the Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum (Committee for Children, 2002). Representative school team members are trained to develop and implement positive school rules, direct teaching of rules, positive reinforcement systems, data-based decision making at the school level, effective classroom management methods, curriculum adaptation to prevent problem behavior, and functional behavioral assessment and positive behavioral intervention plans. Teams are also coached to integrate Best Behavior with other prevention programs to maximize effectiveness.

What is the evidence? Best Behavior and similar approaches (see Embry & Flannery et al., 1994; Knoff & Batsche, 1995; Taylor-Green et al., 1997) have been studied by other researchers using similar and identical intervention techniques. The effects of the program are documented in a series of studies implemented by researchers at the University of Oregon (Metzler et al., 2001; Sprague, Walker, Golly, et al., 2002; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997, see also www.pbis.org for the latest research studies and reports). Studies have shown reductions in office discipline referrals of up to 50% per annum, with continued improvement over a three year period in schools that sustain the intervention (Irvin, Tobin et al., in press). In addition, school staff report greater satisfaction with their work, compared to schools that did not implement Best Behavior. Comparison schools typically show increases or no change in office referrals, along with a general frustration with the school discipline program.

In studies employing the components included in the Best Behavior program, reductions in antisocial behavior (Sprague et al., 2002), vandalism (Mayer, 1995), aggression (Grossman et al., 1997, Lewis et al., 1998), later delinquency (Kellam et al., 1998; O'Donnell et al., 1997), as well as alcohol, tobacco and other drug use (Biglan et al., 2003; O'Donnell et al., 1997) have been documented. Positive changes in protective factors such as academic achievement (Kellam et al., 1998 O'Donnell et al., 1995) and school engagement (O'Donnell et al., 1995) have been documented using a school wide positive behavior support approach such as Best Behavior in concert with other prevention interventions.

How is Best Behavior implemented? The essential features of the Best Behavior approach should guide implementation of your School Wide positive behavior support

system. We describe the approach here, using illustrative examples. Table 1 provides a summary of the big ideas.

--Insert Table 1 Here--

Train and support a representative school team. While it would seem ideal to train all school staff all the time, it will rarely be feasible or sustainable to provide training at this level due to cost and logistical concerns. We have found that a representative group of adults, representing all school stakeholders (including students at the secondary level) can learn the key practices of SWPBS and set goals for improvement. The stakeholders can then function as leaders or coaches as they inform their groups of the team activities (for example, at staff or area meetings) and give support and encouragement during the improvement process. Increasingly, we see district- and state-wide initiatives supporting the dissemination of SWPBS training and coaching systems.

While participating in training, and after mastery of the basic material, we recommend that school discipline teams (building administrator, representative teachers, other stakeholders) meet approximately once per month to review training content as needed and to set up a regular process of reviewing and refining the school discipline plan (initial goals are developed during training) and other, school site-based activities. A format for these meetings should be specified and each meeting should last between 20-60 minutes.

Set and promote school wide expectations. A critical first task for the implementation team is to establish school-wide behavior rule teaching related to student-teacher compliance, peer-to-peer interaction, academic achievement, and academic study skills. We recommend using the general framework of “safety,” “respect,” and “responsibility” and directly teaching lessons throughout the year to establish and maintain those patterns of behavior. We also recommend posting the rules publicly in posters, school newsletters, local media, announcements, assemblies, etc.

Plan to recognize expected behavior and actively supervise students. Your school will need to establish a consistent system of enforcement, monitoring and positive reinforcement to enhance the effect of rule teaching and maintain patterns of desired student behavior. Reinforcement systems may include school wide token economies in the form of "tickets" stating each school rule delivered by all adults in the building. These tokens are to be “backed up” with weekly drawings and rewards for the teachers as well. Each school should implement the procedures to fit their school improvement plan and specific discipline needs. Figure 2 provides a sample “token” from a school implementing SWPBS practices.

---Insert Figure 2 Here---

Define and effectively correct problem behaviors and their consequences for students and staff members. As stated earlier, schools using excessive sanctions experience greater levels of vandalism and other forms of misbehavior (Mayer, 1995; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Positive reinforcement is more effective than punishment because it does not result in the type of counter-aggression and withdrawal (fight or flight) that

punishment can produce and because it does not focus teachers' attention on detecting and correcting rule violations. This is why ignoring minor instances of misbehavior is preferable to attending to it in the hopes of correcting it; we tend to get what we attend to!

Students should see rules applied fairly. When they feel that rules are unevenly applied, students are more likely to misbehave. Schools with clear rule and reward systems and business-like corrections and sanctions also experience fewer problems. These schools signal appropriate behavior for students and respond to misbehavior predictably.

Students in such schools are clear about expected behavior and learn there are consequences for misbehavior. When rules are consistent, students develop a respect for rules and laws, and internalize beliefs that the system of governance works (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; D. Gottfredson, 1987; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993).

Report data to make decisions and give/seek feedback to/from staff. To increase the efficiency of problem solving and to provide recognition for success, we also suggest giving data-based feedback to schools regarding their responses to the: "Best Behavior" survey (Figure 1) and discipline referral patterns using systems such as the School-wide Information System developed at the University of Oregon (Sprague, Sugai, Horner & Walker, 1998; Sugai, Sprague, Horner & Walker, 1999; www.swis.org). Simple bar graphs of each school's performance can be produced and the entire school staff asked to review the data at monthly staff meetings. Staff members will be encouraged to comment on the data and participate in problem solving discussions and developing action plans during regular school meetings.

A superb example of this type of system can be viewed at www.swis.org. The Schoolwide Information System (SWIS) is a web-based information system designed to help school personnel to use office referral data to design schoolwide and individual student interventions. The three primary elements of SWIS are a) an efficient system for gathering information, b) a web-based computer application for data entry and report(s) generation, and c) a practical process for using information for decision making

These three elements give school personnel the capability to evaluate individual student behavior, the behavior of groups of students, behaviors occurring in specific settings, and behaviors occurring during specific time periods of the school day. SWIS reports indicate times and/or locations prone to prompt problem behaviors, and allow teachers and administrators to shape schoolwide environments to maximize students' academic and social achievements. Schools are asked to summarize and report the data to school faculty at least monthly. The school team is to be representative of each major stakeholder group. Once implementation goals are set, all stakeholders should receive training and information.

Maintaining SWPBS practices in schools remains an elusive goal for many. Research has shown that for intervention to be effective, training and coaching support must be available for you and your colleagues across the school year. When training or coaching your peers, be sure to include rationales, modeling, practice and coaching. Focus on the data (e.g., office discipline referral patterns) and change your approaches as problems become evident.

As your positive behavior support program progresses, team members can take on the role of trainers and provide technical assistance or help on new methods, co-teach expected behavior lessons, and observe or coach colleagues. Some additional types of support to consider include gaining release time for observing or coaching, staff meeting time for discussion and planning, and provision of follow-up training. Finally, additional support needs for your school may include evaluation, “expert” training and consultation, and family liaison.

Conclusion

We have described a system herein for implementing positive behavior support methods at the school wide level. It is critical to not view school wide PBS as a set of “tricks” but rather as an integrated, sustainable system of supports for students, yourself and your colleagues.

Research and demonstration efforts are focusing on the long term impact of school wide positive behavior support, and new and improved strategies for implementing universal, selected, and indicated behavior support are emerging. The most important message, however, is that a continuum of behavior support comprising three very different levels of intervention is needed. The intensity of the intervention must match the intensity of the problem behavior and the complexity of the context in which problem behavior occurs. School wide Positive Behavior Support is the foundation for all three levels.

Chapter 6 discusses critical issues, procedure and recommended approaches for meeting the needs of at risk and severely involved students in the school for whom a schoolwide intervention is not sufficient. In addition, a successful demonstration of an alternative school program for this population is described and illustrated. The coordination of schoolwide interventions with specialized accommodations of this type is the key to creating a safe, effective and inclusive school.

Table and Figure Captions

Table 1: What does School Wide PBS look like?

Figure 1: Sample needs assessment for planning and evaluating SWPBS

Table 1: What does School Wide PBS look like?

- Train and support a representative school team (20-30 hours of formal training)
 - Principal actively leads and facilitates the process
 - Take time to plan, coach and continuously improve
- Set and promote school wide expectations
 - Plan to teach expected behavior
 - Plan to recognize expected behavior and actively supervise
- Use performance-based data to make decisions and give/seek feedback to/ from staff
 - Office discipline referral patterns (www.swis.org)
 - Discipline survey results
 - Changes in academic performance, attendance
 - Student safety surveys
- How do I know its working?
 - Expected behaviors taught 20+ times/year
 - Students actively supervised in all school areas
 - Students acknowledged frequently for expected behavior
 - 4:1 positive : negative interactions
 - 80% students & adults can describe school-wide expectations
 - Safe, respectful, responsible

Best Behavior Positive Behavior Supports Assessment

School Name: _____

Date: _____

Your Role (please choose one)	
Administrator	
Teacher	
Classified	
Special Education Teacher	

Related Service Provider	
Parent	
Student	
Other	

School Capacity	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
1. A representative building leadership team is formed to guide program implementation and evaluation of effectiveness.				
2. The school administrator is an active member of the school-wide behavior support team.				
3. School personnel (80% or more) have committed to improving school discipline and safety by implementing, supporting, and agreeing to use positive				

School Capacity	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
behavioral support systems.				
4. A needs assessment has been conducted to guide intervention selection.				
5. An action plan with clear goals and objectives has been developed to improve school discipline.				
6. Regular school-wide behavior support team meetings are scheduled for training and planning.				
7. School-wide behavior support has a budget for rewarding students (and staff), regular team meetings, teaching activities and materials, and data collection and analysis.				
Whole School Behavior Teaching				
8. 3 to 5 school-wide behavior expectations have been defined (e.g., Be safe, respectful, responsible, etc.).				
9. Positive behavior expectations have been defined for each school setting (e.g., what does “safe, respectful,				

School Capacity	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
responsible" look like in the cafeteria, gym, restrooms, etc.).				
10. Lesson plans have been developed for teaching all behavioral expectations in all school settings.				
11. Rules are posted and/or visible in all school settings (e.g., hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, gym, etc.).				
12. Staff has been trained to teach behavioral expectations.				
13. Staff teaches behavioral expectations.				
14. Behavioral expectations for each rule are taught and reviewed at least 10 times per year.				
15. Expected behaviors for each specific setting are taught in that setting at least one time a year.				
Dealing with Problem Behavior				
19. Problem behaviors are clearly defined and explained to all students.				
20. Consequences for problem behaviors are clearly defined and explained to all				

	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
School Capacity				
students.				
21. Staff use consistent consequences for inappropriate behavior				
22. Staff consistently correct and re-teach students with problem behavior.				
Data-Based Decision Making				
23. Data are collected (discipline referrals, surveys) to guide decision making.				
24. Data are regularly summarized (e.g., at least monthly) by discipline/behavior support team				
25. Staff receive regular (e.g., at least monthly) reports on key discipline outcomes (e.g., information about referrals, suspensions, etc.).				
26. Intervention decisions and strategies are evaluated regularly (at least once per term) based on behavior data.				
Classroom Management				
27. The school has defined systems of classroom behavior management.				

School Capacity	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
28. Curriculum and instruction match student ability, Students have high rates of academic success (75%+ correct)				
29. Transitions within classrooms, between activities, and between settings are planned for, taught to students, well-established, and orderly				
Individual Student Support				
30. Teachers can easily get assistance with problem students in their classroom.				
31. Behavioral assessments are used to identify students with problem behavior.				
32. A behavior support team attends promptly (within two school days) when a student exhibits chronic problem behavior				
33. Teachers are trained in, and use, effective methods to prevent behavioral escalation.				
34. Teachers are trained in functional				

School Capacity	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
behavioral assessment and positive behavioral intervention for students with chronic problem behavior.				
Family Support and Collaboration				
35. Families are active participants in supporting whole school discipline systems				
36. The school supports good parenting practices by providing information and support to families.				
37. The school has defined systems for regular, positive contacts with families.				
38. At least one parent is a member of the whole school positive discipline team				
39. There is adequate staff on playgrounds, during recess and free time, and in other common areas to effectively supervise the number of students present.				
40. A system of positive reinforcement is in place in all common area settings				

School Capacity	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
41. Recess, free time, playground, and/or common areas are easily observable (unobstructed views) from any given position in the area.				
42. Supervisors to make close contact with students in all recess, free time, playground, and/or common areas.				
43. Playground, recess, or recreational equipment are safe				
44. Access to and from the playground, recess, or free-time areas is supervised				
45. Formal emergency or crisis procedures for students and staff on playgrounds, or in recess and other common areas, have been developed and are practiced at least twice a year				
46. Common area supervision staff have been trained in active supervision techniques and methods this year				
47. A system for addressing minor problem behavior in recess, playground, or common areas is in place and				

School Capacity	In place	Working on it	Not in place	Target as a goal?
practiced by common area supervision staff				
48. A system for addressing serious or major problem behavior in recess, playground, or common areas is in place and practiced by all common area supervision staff				
49. Off limits areas are clearly identified, taught to students and staff, and known by all				
50. All staff have received training in active supervision of common areas				

Review the results of your self-assessment and identify the top three or four priorities for improvement of school discipline systems. List a clear goal statement, and then use the box on the left to set concrete action steps.

Improvement Goal	Action Steps
Goal 1	
Goal 2	

Goal 3	
Goal 4	

Figure *: A sample “good behavior” token



For the complete article go to: www.updc.org/library/speducator/multimedia/

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