



IOWA BEHAVIORAL ALLIANCE

... for positive behavior supports, dropout prevention, and mental health initiatives

AN INITIATIVE OF THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Alliance Update

In its ongoing efforts to implement positive behavior supports (PBS) with fidelity throughout Iowa, the Iowa Behavioral Alliance has taken two important steps in 2004: identifying 14 expansion sites throughout Iowa (Des Moines has also identified 7 expansion sites) and facilitating training of PBS trainers and School-Wide Information Systems (SWIS) facilitators.

The 14 new expansion sites include: McKinstry Elementary in Waterloo (AEA 267), Grinnell High School in Grinnell (AEA 267), Rockwell City-Lytton Elementary in Rockwell City (AEA 8), Wall Lake View Auburn Elementary and Middle Schools in Lake View (AEA 8), Sac Elementary in Sac City (AEA 8), Webster City Middle School and High School in Webster City (AEA 8), Stratford Elementary in Stratford (AEA 8), Alburnett Elementary and Jr/Sr High in Alburnett (AEA 10), Roosevelt Elementary in Cherokee (AEA 12), Cardinal Elementary in Eldon (AEA 15) and Sigourney Jr/Sr High in Sigourney (AEA 15). The expansion sites will receive their first year of training in Des Moines with Rob Horner, Co-director of OSEP's National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in Eugene, Oregon, and the new PBS trainers. In years two and three, the expansion sites will receive training in a regional location to make it

more accessible and reduce travel time, utilizing our newly trained PBS trainers. The Des Moines sites will receive training from George Sugai, Co-director with Horner of OSEP's National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Eugene, Oregon.

The first training session for the 14 expansion sites took place on August 11 & 12, 2004. Training was provided by PBS trainers Marion Panyan, Carl Smith, Lorie Spanjers, and Kathy Lockard. Robin Galloway, from ISU's RISE program, addressed the issue of data collection.

PBS Trainers

In August, 14 people attended PBS Train the Trainer sessions provided by Rob Horner from OSEP's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Technical Assistance Center in Eugene, Oregon. The trainers will be co-training with Rob Horner during the 2004-05 school year in preparation for providing regional training starting in the 2005-06 school year. Several of the new trainers, including Lorie Spanjers from AEA 8 and Kathy Lockard from AEA 14, assisted in the Expansion Site training held on August 11 & 12.

PBS Trainers continued on page 2

School Year 2004-05 Iowa 14 Expansion Sites Des Moines 7 Expansion Sites



PBS Trainers (Cont'd)

At right, back row from left to right: Lorie Spanjers (AEA 8), Jerome Shaefer (AEA 12), Carl Smith (ISU), Rob Horner. Middle row, from left to right: Mike Peters (AEA 15), Charlene Thiede (Dept. of Education), Don Messmer (AEA 8), Lynne Hoyt (Des Moines Public Schools), Kathy Lockard (AEA 14), Roxanne Dittmer (AEA 10), Paula Baumann (Dubuque's Prescott Early Childhood Center). Front row, from left to right; Jackie Fober (AEA 267), Mindy Jones (Des Moines Public Schools), Craig Rosen (Iowa Juvenile Home), Marion Panyan (Drake) and Jim Jameson (AEA 15).

SWIS Facilitators

In September, 22 people attended SWIS facilitators training sessions with Anne Todd and Nadia Sampson from OSEP's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Technical Assistance Center in Eugene, Oregon. The SWIS facilitators will be assisting PBS sites in recording their office discipline referrals (ODRs) using the web-based SWIS program and using the data for decision making.

At right, back row from left to right: Emily Schaefer (AEA 8), Cheri Brown (AEA 8), Lauryn Kittleson (AEA 15), Robin Galloway (RISE), Marion Panyan (Drake), Ken Hagen (AEA 14), Ilona Avery (Iowa Juvenile Home), Lorie Spanjers (AEA 8), Nadia Sampson, Jim Eads (AEA 15), Anne Todd. Third row from left to right: Nancy Palmer (Des Moines Public Schools), Kathy Brenny (AEA 8), Brooke Dahl (AEA 14), Roxanne Dittmer (AEA 10), Carl Smith (ISU). Second row from left to right: Belinda Blackburn (AEA 267), Suana Wessendorf (Dept. of Education), Craig Rosen (Iowa Juvenile Home), Jackie Fober (AEA 267). Front row: Don Messmer (AEA 8) and Kristi Eckard (Des Moines Public Schools).



Iowa's New PBS Trainers and Rob Horner of OSEP's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Technical Assistance Center in Eugene, Oregon



Iowa's New SWIS Facilitators and Anne Todd and Nadia Sampson of OSEP's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Technical Assistance Center in Eugene, Oregon

See Page 7 for a list of PBS Schools and SWIS Facilitators by AEA.

Behavioral Work Across Iowa (This Issue's Focus: Southern Prairie AEA)



Mary Ellen Becker
Director of Special Education
Southern Prairie AEA 15

Key to the success of the work of the Iowa Behavioral Alliance is the role of Iowa's Area Education Agencies in supporting the work of communities and local education agencies in improving the programs and services available to Iowa's children and youth.

This issue's spotlight is on Southern Prairie AEA, based out of Ottumwa, Iowa. It serves 23 school districts and five approved private schools in ten counties in southern Iowa. One of the priorities identified as an area of need across the AEA is to improve behavioral supports available to all children and youth. This includes students with more severe behaviors who may require special education services and other students served exclusively in general education who are in need of individualized behavioral supports.

With the leadership of the AEA Special Education Director (pictured above), a Behavioral Team was formed in the fall of 2003 that includes representatives from each of the six

regional offices of the AEA, a regional director of special education and a behavioral content support consultant. This team is building on the earlier work of a smaller Behavioral Intervention Support Team formed in 1998.

The primary mission of the Behavioral Team is to work with other stakeholders in the AEA in developing, implementing and sustaining a full continuum of programs and services meeting the social, emotional and behavioral needs of all students. In working on this mission the team plans to accomplish the following:

- a. Gather current information and resources regarding school discipline, school culture and climate and other needs assessment information critical to implementation of a continuum of needed programs and services for all students
- b. Gather, synthesize and disseminate information to LEA and AEA staff regarding current practices across the AEA in serving students with the most challenging needs
- c. Identify and determine through collaborative efforts how best to serve students with the most challenging needs
- d. Identify and assist in providing staff development for LEA and AEA staff regarding the critical elements of school-wide approaches, such as positive behavioral supports, to meeting the needs of all students
- e. Assist schools that express a desire to implement school-wide models such as positive behavioral supports
- f. Assist with evaluation efforts on the effectiveness of social, emotional and behavior interventions across the AEA.

- g. Promote a realization of the continuous interdependence of meeting individual and group behavioral needs at the classroom, building and district levels.

In illustrating the work of the Behavioral Team, it may be useful to focus on some recent activities. With the revised system of Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIPs), which were submitted by all local districts in Iowa in September of 2004, there are ongoing challenges in addressing the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students in addition to traditional academic areas. The AEA 15 Behavioral Team is working on developing technical assistance materials to help local districts in this need area. This includes reviewing those plans that were submitted by districts in September to determine the extent to which these areas are already addressed and the data and strategies for improvement being used in local districts. This will help identify ideas that could be helpful across districts and identify any particular areas in which districts have indicated a desire for further assistance. The Team is also working to identify those practices in the social, emotional and behavioral areas that have been demonstrated to be evidence or research based.

The Behavioral Team is also working on developing an AEA-wide plan that can support those schools adopting school-wide support systems such as positive behavioral supports. Currently there are three districts in the AEA who are participating in the Positive Behavioral Support network of the Iowa Behavioral Alliance. Members of the Behavioral Team are also working with three districts in implementing the Columbia University

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Adult Focus Groups

As part of the evaluation of the statewide PBS initiative, adult focus groups are being conducted on an annual basis. Their purpose is to determine the perception of available services and resources that support behavior/ discipline, dropout and mental health challenges and issues in the demonstration PBS sites. In the fall of 2003, focus group sessions were conducted with a total of 58 key education/human services personnel, parents and community members in the eight fully funded PBS sites. The school counselors and/or principals of the PBS sites were asked to use the following selection criteria to provide names and addresses of parents, business contacts, and human service agency contacts.

Stakeholder Selection Criteria for Focus Groups:

Parents/Guardians –

- Female and male representation
- Collectively represent children attending elementary, middle school/ junior high, and high school through sophomore year
- Representation of children identified with significant behavioral needs for special education
- Representation of children identified as at-risk with significant behavioral needs in general education
- Collectively represent diversity of community (may be supplemented by individual interviews)

Business –

- Employ youth of the community
- Represent diverse types of community businesses
- Serve as employers of large numbers of graduates

Human Service Agencies –

- Diverse representation (examples) – school district, hospitals, medical clinics, mental health clinics, social work agencies, Headstart (preschools), YMCA, churches, family resource centers, Iowa Workforce Development, Area Education Agency (AEA), Department of Human Services.

Summary of Results from Eight Focus Groups

Behavior Challenges and Issues

- Participants from five focus groups shared that they were aware of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) initiative being implemented in their school district
- Participants’ comments suggested that schools could offer better support for dealing with behavioral challenges and issues
- Several focus group participants suggested that the behavioral problems were the fault of both the student and their parents

Behavior Challenges and Issues Frequently Cited

- Parking lot accidents
- Disrespect for people’s property
- Broken homes
- Substance abuse
- Students who do not live at home
- Sexual activity resulting in sexually transmitted diseases
- Problem behaviors after school hours from 3:30 - 6:00 PM

Dropout Challenges and Issues

- Participants from half of the eight focus groups indicated that there were many dropout issues in their school district while the other four focus groups indicated that there were very few dropout issues in their school district
- Participants indicated a lack of communication between available human resources and the school district in regard to services and funds available as well as a lack of available day care

Focus Group Participants’ Perceptions of School District and Community Support of Dropout Challenges and Issues

- Elementary schools’ (not middle schools or high schools) focus on emotional and behavioral health
- Alternative school options provide support
- Financial resources are provided by local businesses
- Community extracurricular clubs are available to community youth

Mental Health Challenges and Issues

- Participants from five of the eight focus groups believed there were many mental health issues in both their district and community
- Participants from four groups suggested that depression was a major problem for many young people
- Participants from five of the eight focus groups suggested that community barriers prevented people from receiving mental health services
- Small districts were believed to be at a disadvantage without a full-time social worker
- Due to financial concerns some districts have had to reduce the time of their school counselors
- Parents need to be better informed about all of the services available to them
- Participants commented that the following services were offered by school districts to address mental health issues: school counselors and psychologists; principals; speech, occupational, and physical therapists; Student Based Youth Services (SBYS); building-level child study teams; and alternative schools

Building Youth, Community, and Family Capacity within the PBS Framework

As a member of the Iowa Behavioral Alliance, one of the primary roles of the Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program is to work with PBS demonstration sites' Coaches and Leadership Teams to foster the development of supportive school and community learning environments for youth. Specifically, 4-H Youth Development Specialists and County Youth Coordinators are assisting demonstration sites in involving youth and community partners in the awareness and implementation of PBS concepts and strategies. Examples of engaging youth and community partners include:

- 1) Utilizing and teaching PBS core behaviors and strategies to local after-school program staff and volunteers who provide educational enrichment activities after school hours for children and youth who attend school-based PBS demonstration sites.
- 2) Facilitating ISU Extension's Boomerang! Character Education Training in partnership with high school student mentors at PBS elementary and middle school project sites. Boomerang! Curriculum directly supports PBS schools' teaching of character education-based behaviors such as respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness.
- 3) Working with youth to create posters that identify the core PBS behaviors being taught and reinforced in school. In turn, students identify local community entities where young people frequent to distribute posters and informative brochures describing the important roles of community partners in supporting the local PBS initiative.

When asked why it is critical to involve youth in leadership and decision-making roles within the PBS initiative, 4-H Youth Development Specialist Ann Torbert indicated that "it is important to give kids opportunities to learn decision making skills in a safe environment while [they are] young so that when they become

“Positive youth development experiences now will develop skills that will benefit youth into adulthood.”

- Annette Brown,

4-H Youth Development Specialist

adults, they have the ability to look at situations and make sound judgments.” According to 4-H Youth Development Specialist Annette Brown, “Expanding PBS strategies beyond the school walls is important because youth do not live in an isolated environment of the school building. Many other people (parents, community members, the religious community, retail personnel, employers, etc.) influence young people beyond the school hours. Youth need to exhibit socially acceptable behavior wherever they are. They also need adults in all parts of their lives to model appropriate behaviors. Positive youth development experiences now will develop skills that will benefit youth into adulthood.”

When youth and community partners, including family members, have meaningful responsibilities in the planning and implementing of local PBS initiatives, then the collective stakeholders of an entire community play a critical role in supporting the positive development of its young people. By mobilizing youth and community partners in strengthening PBS concepts, strategies, and frameworks, it reminds all stakeholders the “important

role all of us play in the development of youth. Modeling appropriate behavior, expecting appropriate behavior from others, and providing recognition when youth do well benefit the community as a whole,” states Annette Brown in summarizing the vital role of modeling in youth development.

For more information regarding how the Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program is working with PBS Coaches and Leadership Teams to foster youth and community partnerships, please link to [http://](http://www.rc4alliance.org)

www.rc4alliance.org or call Keli Tallman at 515-294-0688.

And the answer is . . .

At a recent PBS training, teams were asked to identify the one key thing they could do that would assure them of sustainability. “Expand core ideas to include families and community members” was the response from one team.

Students spend part of their day in school, but the rest is at home and in the community. Having the same expectations in all environments increases the chance for good outcomes. “If you want success with a school practice, get the parents involved,” comments Candy Taylor, Family Support Specialist. “Once they understand the benefits to the family, the child and the school, they will be your most vocal supporters. Get them on the local PBS Leadership Team from the start so they can help define the expectations and reinforce them at home. People own what they help to create, so involve the key players from the beginning.”

Dropout Prevention

Work is proceeding on “Program Profiles,” a searchable database which includes brief descriptions of dropout prevention programs in Iowa. An individual may search the database by program level, program location and key features. For example, if you were looking for a dropout prevention program at the middle school level, located in a rural setting that had a mentoring/tutoring component, the database would highlight just programs with those characteristics for you. With respect to program features, one can search for 16 of them that are based on the Keys to Success in Dropout Prevention from the National Dropout Prevention Center. These features include: outcome data systems, school-based enterprise, innovative strategies for promoting and measuring social/emotional/physical well-being, family outreach, community collaboration, aggressive outreach, learning styles/multiple intelligences, positive approaches to discipline, personalized planning, promotes caring relationships, student voice and leadership, nontraditional timelines, innovative academic strategies, mentoring/tutoring, reducing absenteeism, and other.

Program directors of all sites included in the data base welcome visitors. The goal of the advisory group is to increase the number of sites in the database to over 100 programs. These numbers will make it more likely that successful ideas and strategies will be widely disseminated and shared among programs – new and old. The way to access these program profiles would be at: <http://www.educ.drake.edu/rc/programprofiles.html> **OR**

www.rc4alliance.org

Dropout Prevention
Search

Mental Health for Children and Youth

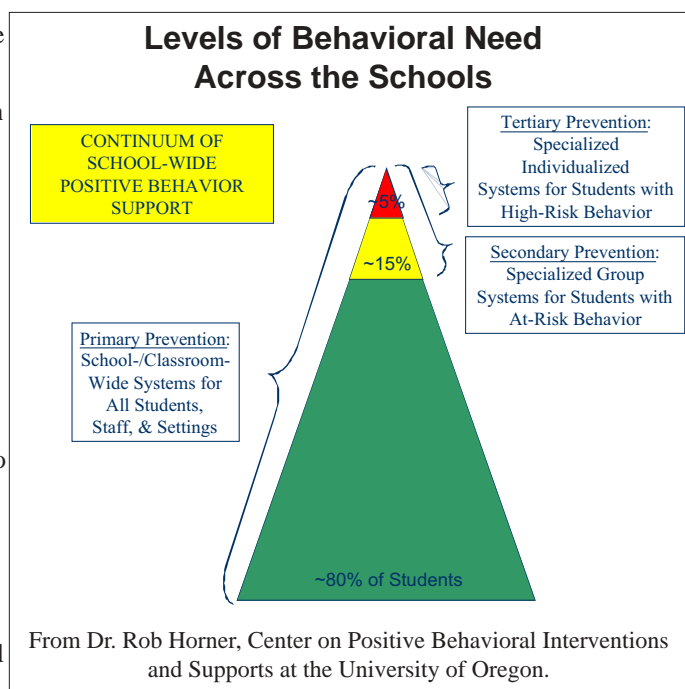
Working to improve mental health services for children and youth in Iowa is a major component of the Iowa Behavioral Alliance. Last year, we gathered a Mental Health Advisory Group to advance these goals. It includes representatives from the *multi-systems* we need to involve—community mental health, family advocacy, juvenile justice, and social services agencies as well as educators and specialists focused from

early childhood through high school. The advisory group models the parent-school-community collaboration that is central to the kinds of services we are to develop and implement in an effective mental health support system.

Our Mental Health Advisory Group surveyed Iowa schools to understand the history of school-based mental health services. We visited PBS schools to learn their particular needs and perspectives in Iowa’s current health and welfare environment. These experiences and a review of literature about best practices made it clear that family and community involvement is essential if we are to keep mental health issues from causing students to fail, hate, or drop out of school.

Developing Partnerships is First Goal

The goal of developing systems of care within our schools, partnering with state and community agencies to wrap services around specific children and their families, is complex and will take time. We started work immediately. However, on one key



objective, increasing schools’ comfort and confidence in the value of frequent and positive interactions with the parents of students with significant and complex behavioral/mental health issues presents significant challenges.

The Iowa Behavioral Alliance Coordinating Council is committed to a greater inclusion of parent voices on all PBS activities. New PBS schools are working to include parents on local PBS Leadership teams. We hope to see this become true for all local PBS teams in Iowa. In addition, the Iowa Behavioral Alliance Family Team, a group established to focus on this specific need, is also working to define how to make such involvement as meaningful as possible

Meaningful family involvement at the primary prevention or universal level will mean fewer students will need secondary or tertiary interventions such as illustrated in the diagram above. For those students whose needs do rise to the top of the triangle, we are working to develop stronger circles of support that can only be accomplished with a unified approach involving families and schools.



Alliance Coordinating Council Members

- Mary Bartlow Drake Resource Center for Issues in Special Education
- Mary Ellen Becker AEA Special Education Director
- Pat Carlson Iowa State University
- Patrick Clancy School Administrators of Iowa
- Sharon Dreyer Iowa Workforce Development
- Robin Galloway ISU Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE)
- Mary Gannon Iowa Association of School Boards
- Barbara Khal University of Iowa's Child Health Specialty Clinics
- Cindy Laughead Parent Educator Connection
- Mary Mohrhauser Department of Human Services
- Dick Moore Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning and
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development
- Ray Morley Department of Education
- Polly Nichols Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Iowa
- Marion Panyan Drake University
- Bob Perry Drake Resource Center for Issues in Special Education
- Carla Peterson Iowa State University
- Jule Reynolds Parent Training and Information Center
- Lori Reynolds Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
- Mack Shelley ISU Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE)
- Carl Smith Iowa State University
- Keli Tallman ISU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program
- Candy Taylor Drake Resource Center for Issues in Special Education
- Charlene Thiede Department of Education
- Paula Vincent Urban Education Network
- Suana Wessendorf Department of Education, Project Manager

Partnerships

The Alliance consists of researchers, clinicians, family advocates, and teachers from the University of Iowa, Iowa State University (RISE, Extension 4-H Youth Development and special education), the Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, the National Regional Research and Training Center based at the University of Oregon, and many local agencies. A Coordinating Council of the Alliance includes key individuals from many agencies in education, mental/behavioral health, and juvenile justice.

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