



# IOWA BEHAVIORAL ALLIANCE

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

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The creation of the Iowa Behavioral Alliance in January 2003 at the Drake Resource Center for Issues in Special Education signaled the beginning of a multi-phased 5-year contract. The purpose of the contract is to support 14 positive behavior support (PBS) demonstration sites previously initiated by the Iowa Department of Education, and build a multi-leveled system of behavior and mental health supports and dropout prevention strategies for children and youth in Iowa schools (See inset on page 3 for background of PBS in Iowa). The Iowa Behavioral Alliance represents a collaborative effort with Drake's School of Education, Iowa State University (Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE), Extension 4-H Youth Development, and special education), University of Iowa and the Iowa Federation for Children's Mental Health. Marion Panyan, the Mary Collier Baker Distinguished Professor of Education, and Carl Smith, Director of the Drake Resource Center for Issues in Special Education and Associate Professor of Education, co-direct the program, working closely with a coordinating council and the Iowa Department of Education. Drs. Rob Horner and George Sugai from the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at the University of Oregon provide training and consultation in the area of PBS.

## About the Alliance

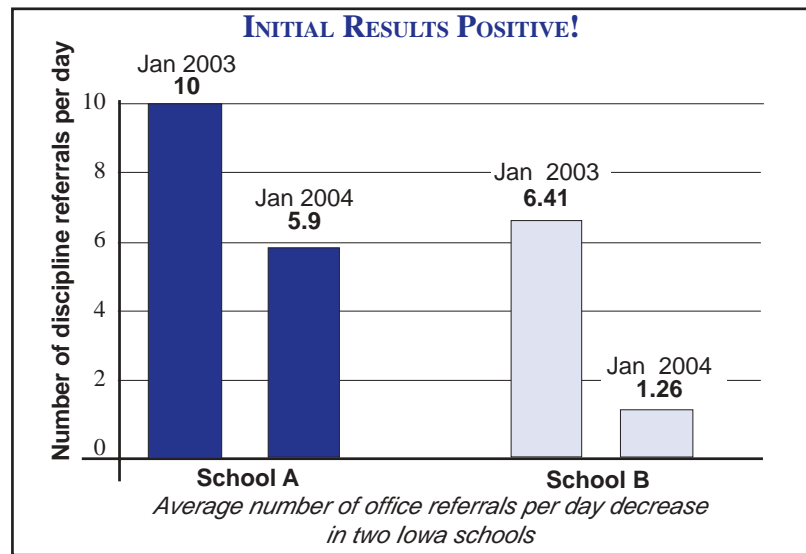
The project incorporates three components:

1. **Positive behavior support (PBS)**, a prevention-based school-wide discipline model using data driven decision-making, behavioral instruction and positive interventions.
2. **A dropout prevention component** focusing on effective practices to enable all Iowa youth, including those with behavioral and emotional needs, to graduate from high school.
3. **A mental health component** seeking to develop community-based supports for families, students, and schools.

Each component is led by a group of stakeholders representing schools, communities, and families. Each component will identify promising practices and model sites in Iowa to serve as a beacon for schools seeking to improve outcomes for students who are at risk.

## Highlights from 2003

The project started with the formation of the Alliance's Coordinating Council and



This chart above shows the savings realized at two demonstration sites.

**School A:**

41 minutes of regained administrative time per day!

82 minutes of regained student instructional time per day!

**School B:**

51 minutes of regained administrative time per day!

102 minutes of regained student instructional time per day!

Based on 10 minutes per referral for administrative time and 20 minutes per referral for instructional time

PBS training and technical assistance for coaches and teams at the demonstration sites. The demonstration sites consist of eight fully funded sites (coach and team receive training) and six partially funded sites (only coach receives training). In August 2003, the Des Moines School District began PBS training in eight schools. Additionally, in October 2003 the Alliance began training 38 prospective PBS coaches from area education agencies interested in school-wide PBS implementation.

## Positive Behavior Support

The school-wide PBS program in Iowa is defined as a philosophy and practice of recognizing the importance of positive relationships among all members of a school community for the purpose of enhancing learning. PBS emphasizes prevention, active instruction, and research-validated practices for:

- establishing and teaching clear expectations for all students in all settings;
- establishing and teaching clear expectations for all staff;
- modeling and rewarding these expectations;
- helping schools staff, families, and community members understand and support the diversity of students, including those students with the most intense support needs;
- understanding the physical and social contexts of behavior;
- using data to guide decisions regarding change.

PBS can be characterized as a systems-oriented approach because it views the school as a complex system capable of initiating, reinforcing and sustaining change.

## Dropout Prevention

The work of this component is guided by the Dropout Prevention Advisory Group (DPAG). The DPAG's work focuses on dropout prevention

programs especially in relation to students considered as having significant social, emotional, or behavioral needs.

The outcomes for the Dropout Prevention element are:

- Identification of existing programs and the implementation of new dropout prevention approaches based on best practice.
- Reduction of dropout rates for students in Iowa.
- Reduction of absenteeism, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions.
- Improvement in grades of at-risk groups at middle and high school PBS sites.
- Increased participation in extracurricular activities in at-risk groups at middle and high school PBS sites.
- Increased awareness of the availability of alternative school resources.
- A state profile of promising practices in dropout prevention for students with behavioral needs. This document will be published and disseminated to educators and human service providers and families.

To achieve these outcomes, the activities in this area are organized into five phases.

1. Identify and prioritize needs based on data analysis.
2. Establish a resource network of sites with proven practices.
3. Identify policies that contribute to students dropping out and recommend areas for policy development.
4. Collaborate with DE and existing agencies for a unified approach to dropout issues.
5. Develop a performance measurement system to determine effectiveness.

The Alliance has developed a process for nominating worthy sites/schools that are implementing best practices which have made a difference in dropout rates. AEA Administrators, Iowa Alternative School Coordinators, Decategorization Coordinators, and

Juvenile Court Officers have been contacted so far. To date, 12 sites have been nominated and the Alliance is following up through structured interviews with administrators and key implementers at these sites. The Alliance invites individuals to self-nominate or to nominate a site/school with successful programs and practices that help students (especially students with behavioral/emotional needs) graduate. After a site is nominated, the Alliance will contact the site to learn more about its work and determine if the site is open to ways for its work to be shared with other schools and programs. Contact Dr. Marion Panyan (see page 4 for contact information) if you would like to nominate a site.

## Mental Health for Children and Youth

Another component of the Iowa Behavioral Alliance is the development and implementation of multi-system school-based mental health services for students with emotional/behavior problems. Of particular concern are those youth whose needs are significant and complex. The Alliance's goals are person-centered planning and wraparound services determined and delivered in a partnership that includes schools, families, natural supports and community service providers. Wraparound will be culturally competent and build on the unique values, preferences and strengths of children, families and their communities. A Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC) guides this effort.

As the PBS system takes hold and becomes part of a school's culture, we expect fewer children to experience the kinds of stresses that trigger acting-out, being disruptive or withdrawn, and possibly experiencing suicidal behaviors. Similarly, the MHAC predicts that more students considered at-risk for serious social and academic difficulty will be positively affected when school- and

community-based preventive and intervention programs have met their needs.

A newly formed action committee is the Alliance of Families for Children's Mental Health. Representatives from key family support agencies (PTI, IFAPA, CHSC, PEC, NAMI, ASK, FFCMH) are working to build a model network to promote positive relationships between schools, families, and communities. Through training and advocacy, the Alliance of Families for Children's Mental Health will support the mental health needs of Iowa children and youth.

## Evaluation

Data are collected from several instruments and analyzed by the Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) at Iowa State University. Initial evaluation activities have largely focused on PBS.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the program is based on a quasi-experimental design that combines quantitative and qualitative data. Researchers will analyze quantitative data from standardized achievement tests, discipline referrals, suspensions and expulsions, and qualitative data from focus groups and interviews with administrators, faculty, and students.

Implementation with integrity is an important factor of the PBS program in Iowa and relates directly to the results. School-wide PBS provides two measures of implementation that have been tested for reliability and validity. Each site is provided with a Team Implementation Checklist that identifies the implementation steps and measures the implementation process. Teams use the Checklist to self-assess their progress. These reports are submitted for review four times a year. Scores on the Checklist are compared to the scores a building achieves on its School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET).

The SET is designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of school-wide effective behavior support across each academic school year. External observers gather information necessary for this assessment tool through multiple sources

including review of permanent products, observations, and staff and student interviews or surveys. The chart on page 4 shows a comparison of the data gathered from the checklists and SET.

Referral data are collected through the School-Wide Information System (SWIS™) at the local schools. SWIS™ is a web-based information system used to improve the behavior support in elementary, middle (junior high), and high schools. The purpose of SWIS™ is to provide school personnel with accurate, timely, and practical information for making decisions about discipline systems. The demonstration sites began to implement SWIS™ at different times during the spring of 2003. The SWIS™ system generated the data found on the front page of this report.

Through collaborative efforts of ISU's RISE and Extension 4-H Youth Development Program, another evaluation component was conducted. Parents, community business representatives, and human service providers in the eight fully funded PBS sites participated in focus groups to discuss their perceptions of their school's approach to student behavior.

### What do Family and Community Stakeholders Say About School-wide PBS?

"I think the key is that when the language is getting used school wide and it's consistent, the kids really understand what the expectations are and what they are supposed to be doing."

"It's (the expected behaviors) posted everywhere. In the lunchroom, it's there. They know what the expectations are. In the hallway, it's there. You go to the classrooms, it's there. You go to the bathroom, it's there. It's visible to the students and teachers all the time."

"The PBS program that they do encourages respect, responsibility and citizenship."

(Quotes from Focus Groups conducted by RISE)

## BACKGROUND OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS (PBS) IN IOWA

The Iowa Department of Education, through initiatives like Success4 and the Iowa Area Education Agency (AEA) positive behavior support (PBS) training, promotes the use of research-based practices to support the social, emotional, intellectual and behavioral development of children and youth in schools. The Department of Education initiated training for 14 demonstration sites in school-wide PBS in August 2002 in partnership with Dr. Rob Horner, from the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at the University of Oregon. The Department requested proposals to support and evaluate the PBS demonstration sites, to introduce new avenues of access to mental/behavioral services for school-age youth, and to implement promising dropout prevention programs. The work outlined in the contract is aligned with the following goals identified by the Iowa Department of Education:

- All Iowa children and youth are healthy and socially competent.
- All Iowa children and youth succeed in school, and are prepared for productive adulthood.
- All youth have the benefit of safe and supportive families, schools and communities.



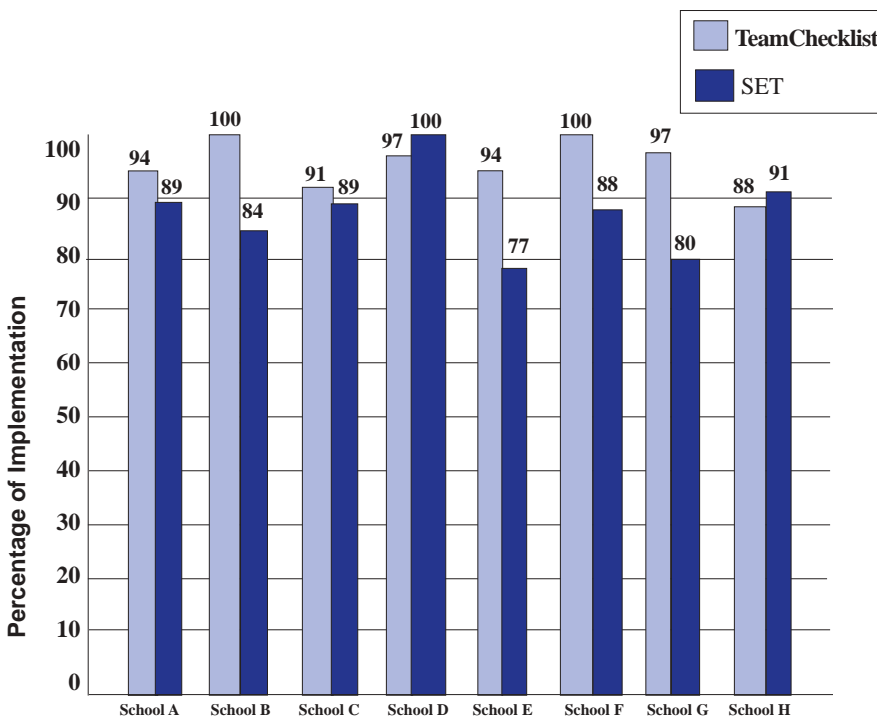
**Partnerships**

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.

**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
- Linda Lind ..... Iowa State University/Drake University
- 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 Information Center
- Lori Reynolds ..... Iowa Federation for Children’s Mental Health
- Mack Shelley ..... ISU Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE)
- Carl Smith ..... Drake Resource Center for Issues in Special Education
- Keli Tallman ..... ISU Extension 4-H Youth Development Program
- Candy Taylor ..... Drake Resource Center for Issues in Special Education
- Charlene Thiede ..... Department of Education
- Dawn Vetter ..... Orchard Place
- Paula Vincent ..... Urban Education Network
- Suana Wessendorf ..... Department of Education, Project Manager

**Iowa PBS Demonstration Site Implementation After One Year of PBS Implementation**



Scores on the the PBS Self-Assessment Team Checklist are compared to the scores a building achieves on the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). The chart shows the level of correspondence between the team’s self-assessment and the external observer’s ratings.

**PROJECT CONTACTS**

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