

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

A WISE INVESTMENT OF ECONOMIC STIMULUS FUNDS

THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS ENCOURAGING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO USE STIMULUS FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS. HERE'S WHY:



Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a

school's sense of safety, and support improved academic outcomes.¹ Over 9,000 US schools are implementing PBS and saving countless instructional hours otherwise lost to school discipline. Implementing PBS improves schools' climate and helps keep students and teachers in safe and productive classrooms.

The US Department of Education is encouraging local education agencies (LEAs) to use their IDEA Recovery Funds for intensive, district-wide professional development in school-wide positive behavioral supports. The Ed. Dept. suggests that LEAs:

*Provide intensive district-wide professional development for special education and regular education teachers that focuses on scaling-up, through replication, proven and innovative evidence-based school-wide strategies in reading, math, writing and science, and **positive behavioral supports** to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.²*

The US Department of Education is urging LEAs to invest stimulus funds quickly in sustainable efforts that will not create unsustainable funding burdens. The Ed. Dept. views PBS training as "aligned with the core goals" of the stimulus because PBS can be sustained effectively with limited district oversight once the stimulus funds are gone.³

Why PBS Works

The premise of PBS is that continual teaching, modeling, recognizing and rewarding of positive student behavior will reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety, and learning. PBS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted, and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate.

Schools that effectively implement PBS demonstrate:

- ➔ Up to 50% reduction in office referral rates per year (and corresponding reduction in suspension and expulsion rates)
- ➔ Improved attendance rates
- ➔ Improved academic achievement
- ➔ Improved staff perceptions of school safety and atmosphere⁴

Data Systems & the Economic Stimulus

LEAs can also use stimulus funds to implement data systems that track disciplinary referrals. The US Department of Education encourages LEAs to use their IDEA and Title I Recovery Funds to implement data systems to improve teaching and learning.⁵ By collecting accurate disciplinary data through programs like the School-Wide Information System™ (SWIS™), schools can work smarter, not harder, to support instruction and improve school climate.⁶ Visit www.swis.org. **States can also apply for stimulus grants to develop longitudinal data systems capable of collecting disciplinary data.⁷**

Implementing Positive Behavior Supports Using Stimulus Funds

LEAs can use stimulus funds, including State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF), to implement school-wide PBS under these federal provisions:

- ➔ Any portion of IDEA Recovery Funds
- ➔ Schoolwide Programs⁷ under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 6314) (Title I Recovery and SFSF Funds)
- ➔ School Improvement⁸ under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 6316) (Title I Recovery and SFSF Funds)
- ➔ Professional Development Grants under Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 6622(b)(9)(B) (SFSF Funds)
- ➔ Early Intervening Services under IDEA (20 U.S.C. § 1413) (SFSF Funds)

After the stimulus, LEAs can sustain PBS using the following federal funds:

- ➔ IDEA Personnel Development Grants, IDEA Technical Assistance Grants, and IDEA Model Demonstration Grants (20 U.S.C. §§ 1461-66)
- ➔ Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Grants (20 U.S.C. § 7102)
- ➔ School Counseling Grants (to train school counselors in PBS) under Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7245)
- ➔ The funding sources mentioned above **States can set aside IDEA funds to assist LEAs in implementing PBS** (20 U.S.C. § 1411) **and can apply for State Personnel Development Grants to do the same** (20 U.S.C. § 1454).

To properly sustain PBS implementation after the stimulus, an LEA should budget:

- ➔ 1.0 FTE of PBS coaching per 15 schools or 10,000 students (LEAs can train and re-position federally-funded staff such as behavior interventionists and school psychologists to serve as PBS coaches)

➔ 0.5 FTE of coaching in targeted and individualized PBS interventions

➔ 0.2 FTE of a district administrator's time to coordinate the LEA's PBS efforts

Training costs vary by source and LEA size. Smaller LEAs can pool funds for training.

For information on the Alabama PBS Network, contact Donna Kirkendoll (ALSDE) at 334-242-8114. For additional information on PBS, contact Marion Chartoff at the Southern Poverty Law Center: 334-956-8352; marion.chartoff@splcenter.org

ENDNOTES

1 Robert Horner et al, *A Randomized, Wait-List Controlled Effectiveness Trial Assessing School-Wide Positive Behavior Support in Elementary Schools*, JOURNAL OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS (forthcoming 2009); Jeffrey R. Sprague & Robert H. Horner, *School Wide Positive Behavioral Supports*, in THE HANDBOOK OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL SAFETY: FROM RESEARCH TO PRACTICE (Shane R. Jimerson & Michael J. Furlong, eds., 2007). For additional research on PBS, please visit www.pbis.org.

2 US DEP'T OF EDUC., AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009: IDEA RECOVERY FUNDS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTHS WITH DISABILITIES, 3 (2009) [*hereinafter*, IDEA RECOVERY FUNDS] available at: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html.

3 *Id.*

4 Horner, *supra* note 1; Sprague & Horner, *supra* note 1.

5 IDEA RECOVERY FUNDS, *supra* note 2 at 3 (2009); US DEP'T OF EDUC., AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009: TITLE I, PART A RECOVERY FUNDS FOR GRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES 4 (2009) available at: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html.

6 The School-Wide Information System (SWIS) is a web-based information system designed to help schools use office referral data to design school-wide and individual student interventions. Visit www.swis.org.

7 The stimulus contains \$250M in state grants for longitudinal data systems. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-5, § 806, 123 Stat. 190 (2009). Guidelines forthcoming.

8 If a school serves a school attendance area in which at least 40 percent of the children are from low-income families, or, if at least 40 percent of the children enrolled in the school are from low-income families, the local educational agency may consolidate Title I funds to upgrade the entire educational program of a school based on the requirements set out in 20 U.S.C. § 6314 (2009).

9 In order to use school improvement funds to implement PBS, a school must first identify the need to improve school culture/student behavior in developing its school improvement plan. 20 U.S.C. § 6316 (2009).



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