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APBS President's Update It's Time to Network!

One of the goals of APBS is to have the organization and the conference serve as an opportunity for members to network—to interact and discuss issues that are relevant both professionally and personally. At the conference this year, the last session on Friday focused specifically on networking opportunities in specific topic areas such as autism, family issues, and advocacy. Another opportunity for members of APBS to come together over common issues is to develop an APBS network. We are encouraging members to create a state or regional network of individuals who are interested in developing opportunities to collaborate or strategize around issues that are unique to the group. Currently we have networks in Virginia and Kansas, and other states are developing them as well.

If you are interested in developing a network, discuss with your colleagues whether this might be an opportunity for you. Although these networks are not “chapters” of APBS, they can help groups coalesce their efforts into something that is meaningful to their members. Take advantage of this opportunity by going to the APBS website (<http://www.apbs.org>), downloading the petition form, and submitting it to the Executive Director of APBS, Tim Knoster.

The APBS Website Committee has been working hard to develop and enhance our website. The newly designed [apbs.org](http://www.apbs.org) website now contains a member's section dedicated to networking. YOU CAN HELP! If you are a member of APBS, please send the following information for posting:

- Your name and up to 5 website URLs that you would like to share,
- Information about upcoming conferences in your region, and/or
- Local, regional, or national advertisements for positions, classes, or training opportunities.

Please send all information to Kristin Tate (tatekris@ku.edu) for review.

Three-Tiered Models in Secondary Schools: Importance of Systematic Screening and Rigorous Targeted Interventions

**Kathleen Lynne Lane,
Allison Leigh Bruhn, &
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Many schools across the country have embraced three-tiered models of prevention with primary supports to prevent the development of new cases of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), as well as secondary and tertiary supports to respond more efficiently to existing cases (Horner & Sugai, 2000; Lane, 2007). This model originated in the mental health field, and after being revised to reflect new language and ideas, it is now applied in K–12 educational settings (Lane). Ideally, data are used to determine which students require more focused and validated secondary and tertiary level interventions. Yet, in applied

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settings, these three-tiered models are often incomplete or underdeveloped in that they do not include validated, systematic screening tools to detect students with behavior concerns. In addition, these models often lack precise procedures for using extant school-wide data to identify students in need of targeted interventions and do not include experimentally sound procedures to determine the extent to which the targeted interventions actually achieve the desired goals. In this article we will highlight how Foster Middle School (FMS) built a comprehensive three-tiered model of support that addresses both of these key features: systematic screening procedures and rigorous designs for secondary and tertiary levels of prevention. Specifically, we will (a) describe how non-responders were identified through systematic school-wide screeners, (b) explain how data collected as part of regular school practices were used to place non-responders into secondary and tertiary levels of intervention, and (c) describe the methods of intervening with students who were non-responsive.

Monitoring Student Performance: Systematic Screening at the Middle School Level

Foster Middle School, a rural school located in Tennessee, served 564 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students at the time of this study. Of these 564 students, approximately half ($n = 289$, 51.24%) were male, the majority were Caucasian ($n = 529$, 93.79%), 29% received free or reduced lunch, and approximately 17% received special education services via a full inclusion model. The school-site PBS team participated in a year-long training series during which the team designed a school-wide PBS plan (SW-PBS) to better support students academically, behaviorally, and socially. The plan described expectations for students and teachers in these three areas, procedures for teaching and reinforcing expectations, and procedures for monitoring both program implementation and student outcomes. Although many students responded favorably to the SW-PBS plan, data analysis identified a subset of students who were non-responsive.

Like many SW-PBS programs, the PBS team monitored student performance using extant data such as office disciplinary referrals (ODRs), grade point average (GPA), attendance and tardiness, and referrals for additional supports (e.g., special education, counseling, alternative learning center, pre-referral interventions). In addition, the PBS team also had homeroom teachers complete a

behavior screener, the *Student Risk Screening Scale* (SRSS; Drummond, 1994), on every student at three points during the academic year: approximately 6 weeks after the school year began, prior to winter break, and prior to year end. The SRSS is a 7-item systematic screener initially developed to identify elementary age students (K–6) who are at-risk for antisocial behavior. However, a study of score reliability and validity of the SRSS at the middle school level (Lane, Parks, Kalberg, & Carter, 2007) revealed high internal consistency, test–retest stability, and convergent validity with the *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (SDQ; Goodman, 1997), a 25-item, factor analytically derived systematic screener designed to assess students' deficits and strengths in socio-behavioral domains of students ages 3 to 17 years (Goodman, 2001). At FMS, the PBS team added the SDQ measure to their assessment plan during the second year of implementation, with a goal of securing more precise information regarding students' strengths as well as potential areas of concern. The PBS team used SRSS and SDQ data to monitor the extent to which the level of risk changed over time in response to the PBS program and to identify students for secondary and tertiary intervention efforts (see Robertson & Lane, in press).

Identifying Students for a Secondary Intervention

During the first year of implementation, the PBS team decided to begin secondary interventions in January. During a PBS team meeting, there was discussion that students who were not responding to the primary prevention plan continued to struggle academically and would likely benefit from improved study skills. The PBS team members further indicated that some of these students did not have the requisite skills to resolve problems effectively, which often resulted in conflicts with others and, subsequently, prompted referrals. Therefore, they decided to determine the additive benefit of teaching conflict resolution skills in conjunction with a study skills program. In short, they wanted to answer the following question: Is there a benefit to providing a secondary prevention program that teaches conflict resolution skills and study skills as compared to study skills alone?

Rather than relying solely on teacher recommendation to identify students' potentially in need of these secondary supports, the PBS team examined school-wide data to identify students who were not responding to the SW-PBS program as evidenced by continued academic and behavioral concerns. An *academic concern* was operationally defined as earning either (a) a low grade point

average (GPA \leq 2.7) or (b) one or more failing grades according to second quarter data. A *behavior concern* was operationally defined as (a) scoring in the moderate or high risk status on the SRSS rating during the mid-point assessment or (b) receiving one or more office discipline referrals (ODRs) within the first 4 months of the year. The team also decided to exclude students with poor reading skills who were enrolled in Read 180 (Scholastic Inc., 1997), given that these students were already receiving targeted support and were likely to lack the necessary reading skills to participate actively in the curriculum. Students meeting the inclusion criteria were randomly assigned to either (a) conflict resolution + study skills or (b) study skills only. Students received 21 weeks of instruction (28 hours) as part of a regularly scheduled elective class beginning in January (see Robertson & Lane, in press, for intervention outcomes). As expected, some students responded more favorably to interventions than did others. To this end, the least responsive student, Aaron, was identified for further support at the tertiary level.

Identifying Students for a Tertiary Intervention

Aaron, a 14-year-old eighth-grade student, was identified for participation in tertiary level support during the following fall semester of the next academic year because he continued to struggle academically and behaviorally as evidenced by (a) an overall GPA of 2.17 during the fourth-quarter grading period of the previous academic year (including one failing grade) and (b) a year-end SRSS score of 14 and 9 earned ODRs. Further, he earned 3 ODRs during the first six weeks of the new school year. Based on school-wide data, Aaron was the least responsive of all students who participated in the secondary plan and was therefore invited to participate in the following tertiary support: a functional assessment-based intervention.

In the classroom, Aaron demonstrated high levels of noncompliance, refusing to participate in instructional tasks despite multiple prompts from the teacher. Aaron frequently asked for help from peers seated near him, yet he seldom completed the assigned work. Item level analysis from the SRSS revealed high levels of lying, cheating, and sneaking in addition to poor academic achievement. Aaron also had impaired relationships with peers, a negative attitude, and problem behaviors in general.

Aaron participated in a functional assessment-based intervention during his science class, with a general education teacher who was a member of the PBS team as the primary interventionist. The function-based intervention

utilized a systematic approach to analyzing functional assessment data; selecting an intervention method; developing the intervention components; and incorporating the core components (e.g., social validity, treatment integrity, maintenance) necessary to draw valid conclusions (Umbreit, Ferro, Liaupsin, & Lane, 2007).

In brief, data collected suggested that Aaron engaged in non-compliance to access teacher attention and escape assigned tasks. Further, it was determined that although Aaron was capable of performing the replacement behavior, the classroom environment could be adjusted to better support Aaron. The intervention focused on improving the classroom by (a) adjusting antecedent conditions to increase the probability of the replacement behavior occurring while decreasing the likelihood of the target behavior occurring, (b) providing contingent positive reinforcement for the replacement behavior, and (c) placing the target behavior on extinction. Results of a withdrawal design revealed a functional relationship between the introduction of the intervention and corresponding decreases in Aaron's noncompliance. In addition, Aaron's science grades increased, as did his overall grade point average (see Lane, Rogers, et al., 2007).

Summary

As researchers and practitioners move toward developing three-tiered models of support, we encourage the inclusion of validated, systematic screening tools to detect students who will require secondary and tertiary levels of prevention. In addition, we encourage the use of rigorous, yet feasible methodologies and procedures to determine the effectiveness of the subsequent secondary and tertiary preventions that follow (Lane, 2007). The incredible PBS team and progressive teachers at FMS are a testimony to the potential of three-tiered models of prevention.

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Tell-a-Friend About APBS

**Randall L. De Pry
and Lisa Bowman-Perrott**

As a member of the Association for Positive Behavior Support (APBS), you already know that your organization offers a variety of resources and benefits to its members. Perhaps you've recently had an opportunity to visit our updated website (<http://www.apbs.org>), with its new look and members-only section? Or maybe you and your colleagues are working together as members of an APBS Network on issues that are specific to your state or region? Perhaps you've recently had an opportunity to learn about a new research-validated practice at our annual international conference or by reading the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*? APBS is committed to growing and offering our members a variety of resources that are intended to support your work and interest in PBS. Your involvement is essential to our continued growth and development as an organization.

APBS offers a number of affordable member options, including reduced rates for family members and students, multiple-year member discounts, agency memberships, and transitional rates for students who have recently completed their college and/or university program. As you reflect on the numerous benefits that you enjoy as a member of APBS, consider sharing with your colleagues and peers what you've gained from being a member. In

other words, take a moment this week to "Tell-a-Friend" about APBS. We know that word of mouth is one of the best ways to encourage others to join and become involved. Take advantage of this fun and easy way to help grow your organization and tell a friend this week about the benefits of becoming a member of APBS.

If you would like to become more involved in membership development and/or member care, please contact us at the e-mail addresses below.

Randall L. De Pry (rdepry@uccs.edu)

Lisa Bowman-Perrott (lbperrott@tamu.edu)

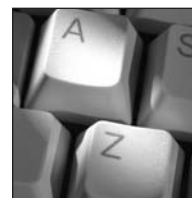
Did You Know . . .

As one of your benefits of APBS membership, you are able to access the electronic version of the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* online. You will be able to view and search issues back to 1999.

Go to the SAGE website society member subscriptions activation page (<https://online.sagepub.com/cgi/activate/basic>). Enter your Your APBS Member Number in the appropriate field, select APBS from the dropdown menu, and click submit. Follow the instructions to complete your user set-up. Once complete, you can access JPBI online at the JPBI website (<http://jpbi.sagepub.com/>). Please note, your online access begins with your first print issue. New members should wait to receive their first print issue before attempting to register for online access.

APBS Newsletter

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