



ASSOCIATION FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Newsletter

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APBS President's Update

As 2008 is winding down, we have lots to look forward to in the New Year. We are especially excited about the upcoming conference in March and bringing in new members to our Board of Directors. Voting is in, and the new members of the Board will be listed in our next newsletter.

Conference Update

We are all looking forward to the 2009 APBS conference on March 26 and 27 in Jacksonville, Florida. The keynote speaker will be Rob Horner, and we will have many exceptional speakers at the conference. The title of his address will be “**Extending the Science, Values, and Vision of Positive Behavior Support.**” The following is the abstract:

Positive behavior support is now an approach being used in schools, communities, homes, recreation settings, and workplaces throughout the country. As PBS is extended to more arenas in our society, we have an increasing need to define with clarity the science, values, and vision that will not only retain the core elements that make this approach valued but guide future improvements.

In addition to our Keynote Address, we will have 7 Featured Speakers, 11 Invited Presenters, and 6 panels for you to

choose from. Stay for the Saturday workshops as well: There will be 2 full-day and 10 half-day workshops that will allow you to delve into specific topics for a better training experience.

Please help us to advertise the conference by downloading a postcard regarding the conference to hand out at your own professional activities. This card is available on the website (www.apbs.org).

Finally, we are always looking for volunteers for the conference. The APBS Conference Planning Committee is now accepting applications for volunteers. Visit the Volunteer page on the website to learn more about the tasks to be covered and to download the Volunteer Application form. This is a great opportunity for students!

So don't forget to register early! Please see our website for more details (www.apbs.org).

Website Update

The Open House on the Member section of the website closed in October, but for those of you who are APBS members, there is still a lot of great information to access in the Members Only section. We have current job postings, conference listings, and—especially popular—access to PowerPoint presentations from last year! Tell all your friends and colleagues and encourage them to become members of APBS so they can fully appreciate the resources our website has to offer.

Positive Behavior Support and Response to Intervention: Becoming One Unified Team

Stephanie Martinez
University of South Florida

Patti Vickers, Yolanda Rodriguez,
Linda Callahan, and Lisa Overton
The School District of Osceola
County, Florida

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA 2004) and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) have prompted school districts to adopt the use of Response to Intervention (RtI) in lieu of the traditional discrepancy model when determining eligibility for special education services. Batsche et al. (2006) defined RtI as “the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions” (p. 3). In addition, Florida’s Department of Education adopted a new rule for Exceptional Student Education Eligibility for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (E/BD; July 1, 2007). This new rule requires that prior to referring a student for evaluation for E/BD, the school must use an RtI process with the student. If research-validated interventions are applied with fidelity, and the student does not make adequate progress, he or she can be referred for testing (Exceptional Student Education Eligibility, 2007; Florida Department of Education, Exceptional Education and Student Services, 2008).

As a result of these changes, The School District of Osceola County decided to fully commit to adopting the RtI process for both academics and behavior. Currently, few model school districts have adapted an RtI approach for academics and behavior on all three tiers (Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007). Because their adoption of RtI with a focus on behavior was new territory, the district collaborated with Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project (FL-PBS). This article will highlight the collaborative process that was used over the 2007–2008 school year to help build an infrastructure at the district level. Once the infrastructure was built, the focus turned to identifying supports the schools needed for full implementation in the 2008–2009 school year.

Building an Infrastructure at the District Level

The School District of Osceola County, which is located in central Florida, has 21 elementary schools, 4 multi-

level schools, 7 middle schools, and 9 high schools serving approximately 53,531 students (The School District of Osceola County, 2008). The district and FL-PBS has been working collaboratively since 2003 to build district capacity in implementing School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS).

As one of the key features of RtI is a three-tiered model of support at each school (Batsch et al., 2006; Sandomierski et al., 2007), the first step was to identify which tiers each school already had in place. Of the 41 schools in the district, 34% already had a Tier 1 core curriculum in place with SW-PBS. Of the 14 schools implementing SW-PBS for Tier 1, 6 had received training on Tier 2 from the FL-PBS Project. The district’s model divides Tier 2 into two phases: (1) implement a Tier 2 support and (2) if a student does not respond to the initial Tier 2 support, try a different support or intensify or revise the Phase 1 support. In addition, data collection (i.e., classroom observations, records review, student/teacher interviews) also begins at this phase for use in a comprehensive Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Process (FBA/BIP) if Tier 3 supports are needed. While revising its district behavior support process, district staff determined that changes to their FBA/BIP forms were necessary to match the RtI framework. These forms thus were reworked to include a focus on identifying, teaching, reinforcing, evaluating, and monitoring both the replacement and targeted prosocial behaviors. The new forms also include the competing pathways model and a plan for generalization and maintenance of the replacement behaviors.

The second step was developing an RtI leadership team to build an infrastructure to support implementation of the RtI process. The team consists of personnel from Student Services, Exceptional Student Education, Curriculum and Instruction, and Instructional Technology. The team developed a PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope; Pearpoint, O’Brien, & Forest, 1998) to identify goals for the next 1 to 3 years in relation to blending RtI and PBS. By blending the different departments at the district level, the district serves as a model for the schools in that they should also blend their RtI and PBS teams so that a common group of people work toward the same goals in a similar manner rather than different groups working on the same goals but utilizing different processes.

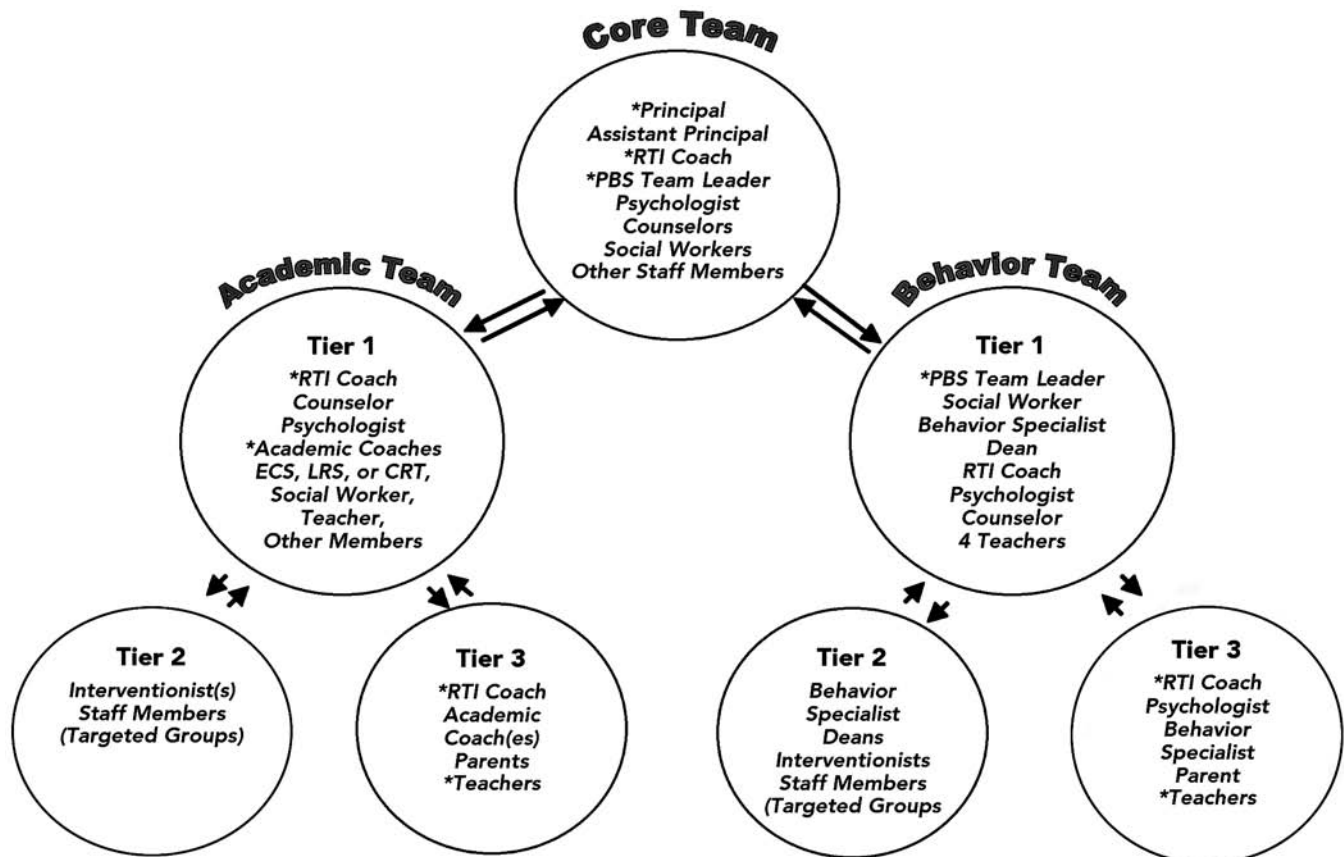
Supporting Schools for Full Implementation of RtI for Behavior

Initially, the district team was aware that not all schools had in place a Tier 1 core curriculum for behavior. As previously mentioned, 14 schools were in various stages of implementation of Tier 1 SW-PBS supports. These schools identified Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports for academics and behavior at the annual SW-PBS booster training. The remaining 27 schools were asked to identify expectations and rules for specific set-

tings, along with a plan to teach and reinforce the expectations and rules that were developed.

One district-level concern was that confusion might occur when introducing RtI to schools that had been implementing SW-PBS for several years. Through discussions with school staff, it became clear that they were indeed struggling with how to blend RtI and PBS processes because most were using two separate teams. Thus, several members of the district RtI team and the FL-PBS team developed a plan to identify potential PBS schools' implementing Tier 1 supports with fidelity and obtain their buy-in to receive additional training and support on blending the two teams into one. As a result, the idea of a core Intervention Assistance Team consisting of academic and behavior subcommittees was developed (see graphic). Initially, it appears that there are seven different teams; this is not the case. The core team serves as a communication link between the academic and behavior teams as there may be students in the RtI process for both academic and behavior supports. The Tier 2 and Tier 3 "teams" do not necessarily have formal meetings, but rather represent the people responsible for ensuring that interventions are implemented. Members of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 "teams" are better seen as "subcommittees" of the Tier 1 behavior team or academic team.

A second outcome of the meetings was that eight of the SW-PBS schools that were implementing Tier 1 supports with fidelity would pilot the new Intervention Assistance Team process. Once these schools were identified, a presentation was made to representatives of the schools' administration, PBS team, and RtI team to solicit their involvement. The administrations of all eight schools indicated interest and a willingness to attend a training to learn how the Intervention Assistance Team would function in their schools. Additionally, two schools (one elementary and one secondary) shared their RtI process with the district team and FL-PBS representatives so that the process the schools currently were using could be identified. This assisted with identification of the training and supports that would be needed. The two schools shared struggles, including scheduling, blending the RtI and PBS teams, obtaining resources for behavior for Tiers 2 and 3, and monitoring progress. Based on this information, the FL-PBS project developed a 2-day training for the administration, RtI team, and the PBS team staffs from the eight pilot schools. The training assisted the schools in determining how to blend the two teams, with an emphasis on how to implement RtI for behavior, how to use a four-step problem-solving process (Batsch, et al., 2006) at all tiers, and how to utilize a database to monitor progress at all



Suggestions of possible staff members for the Intervention Assistance Team.

three tiers. Case studies were used for all tiers to give school teams practice in making data-based decisions about fidelity of implementation and students' response to intervention.

Summary

There has been an increased interest in school districts' implementation of the RtI process. As this is a new venture for most districts, especially as it relates to behavior, The School District of Osceola County reached out for training and technical assistance to support staff through the process. Through a collaborative effort, the district and FL-PBS have begun the process of building an infrastructure for the district and are in the beginning stages of piloting a unified RtI/PBS process at the school level. During July 2008, eight pilot schools went through a training to develop one unified Intervention Assistance Team that will truly start to focus on both academics and behavior for the 2008–2009 school year.

References

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Calling All Students and Professors

Randall L. De Pry

Since our international conference in Chicago last March, a core group of student members has been meeting on a regular basis to discuss how to increase student involvement and membership in APBS. This dedicated group of students represents the future of our organization and should be applauded for their efforts. Soon, all student members of APBS will be contacted by e-mail to ask about their interest

in getting involved with student leadership and membership development. If you are currently a student member, we encourage you to consider this opportunity.

Professors, we would like to encourage you to discuss with your students about how involvement in APBS is an excellent opportunity for developing leadership skills and networking. Consider distributing membership information each semester to your students (remember, students get a discounted rate) and sharing how your involvement in this organization has enhanced your work as a PBS practitioner, trainer, and/or researcher.

Finally, discussions have also been held about the development of a student leadership council and submission of a proposal to create an APBS Student Network. We look forward to sharing with you about these efforts in the coming months. Want to learn more or start getting involved right away? Please feel free to contact our student members (JoanMarieSchumann [joan.schumann@utah.edu], Christian Sabey [christiansabey@gmail.com], Kelly Jewell [kjewel2@gmail.com]) or myself (rdepry@uccs.edu).



Don't Miss Out: Register Today!

The 6th International Conference on Positive Behavior Support is dedicated to promoting research-based strategies that combine applied behavior analysis and biomedical science with person-centered values and systems change to increase quality of life and decrease problem behaviors. For information regarding the Conference, please visit www.apbs.org.

APBS Newsletter

Please consider contributing to the APBS Newsletter. The newsletter is a mechanism for sharing perspectives on PBS. Please consider submitting:



- Innovative Applications
- Member Perspectives
- Training Events & Workshops
- Resources and Materials
- Success Stories

If you would like to submit to the newsletter, please contact:

Carie English, via phone: (813) 974-1898
or via email (cenglish@fmhi.usf.edu)