APBS President’s Update

We knew it was coming but it still caught us by surprise! While the Executive Committee of APBS is voted on by all of the Board Members each year, we were faced with a very unusual situation this March. All of the Executive Committee Members had reached a term limit of three years in their current positions, so each Executive Committee Member could no longer continue in his or her current position. While this leadership continuity has been beneficial for APBS, a reorganization was necessary per our by-laws. As a result, the ABPS Board elected new officers to all four Executive Committee positions. While three of the four new officers had previously held positions with the APBS Executive Committee, all are in new positions. Here are your new APBS Executive Committee Members:

- Don Kincaid: President
- Randall DePry: Vice President
- Heather Peshak George: Treasurer
- Steve Goodman: Secretary

We also welcome new ex-officio members Jean Ramirez and Ashley MacSuga, who fill valuable roles representing the APBS membership. Jean Ramirez, a state agency representative from the Georgia Department of Education, will continue her involvement with the conference committee by assisting with identification of volunteers and will also be connecting with the local community/state to increase involvement and membership in APBS. Ashley MacSuga is a doctoral candidate at the University of Connecticut who will (a) facilitate communication with the student network, (b) increase student involvement and leadership in APBS, and (c) increase student presence and participation at the annual conference. The Board looks forward to their contributions and work on behalf of the membership.

The members of the Executive Committee are very excited about what APBS is poised to accomplish in the next few years. A special thank you is owed to Dr. Rachel Freeman for her three years of distinguished service as the president of APBS. If you know Rachel, you know that one of her strong points is organizing for action and systems change. She has done a fabulous job of organizing the APBS committee structures, reporting and dissemination activities, action plans, and logic model to lay a foundation for effective and efficient operation. As a result, the Board of Directors is excited to begin working hard to bring to fruition many of the ideas and desires you have shared with us. For example, you are likely to see:

- an exciting conference in San Diego in 2013 and plans for conferences across the country through 2017;
- an increase in conference attendance in tandem with a number of webinars throughout the year on topics of interest to the APBS Membership;
- a long-term fiscal plan to take APBS to the next level in terms of activities and impact;
- an increase in our membership to reach our initial goal of 1,000

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by allocating resources to nurture student and international members; and

- a continued expansion of our APBS Networks at national and international levels.

APBS will continue to use this newsletter as a vehicle for responding to membership needs, sharing information about what is happening in the APBS world, and soliciting commitment to and involvement with new initiatives and activities. Thank you again for your passion, commitment, and vision for the Association and positive behavior support.

**Teacher Use of Self-Monitoring to Maintain Fidelity of Evidence-based Classroom Management**

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The call for the use of evidence-based practices in education to improve student outcomes is not a recent issue, yet it continues to pose challenges for researchers and practitioners alike. Researchers continually struggle to develop practices that are both effective in producing desired student outcomes and feasible for practitioners to implement with minimal support. Adding to the challenges of developing feasible evidence-based strategies and making them accessible to teachers is the issue of **treatment fidelity**, which is the accuracy and consistency with which an intervention is implemented as originally intended and designed by researchers (Peterson, Homer, & Wonderlich, 1982). Treatment fidelity is important because successful implementation of evidence-based practices requires accurate implementation; otherwise, effects are likely to be attenuated (Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003). Unfortunately, accurate implementation of evidence-based practices typically does not occur, particularly once support is withdrawn (Witt, Noell, LaFleur, & Mortenson, 1997). Thus, a focus on establishing and maintaining adequate levels of treatment fidelity of these practices, even after training support has been completed, may be one way to achieve desired student outcomes (Hairrell et al., 2011).

**Performance Feedback**

One way to establish high levels of treatment fidelity is through the use of **performance feedback**, a method used to obtain information or knowledge about skills and behaviors following performance to guide implementation (Alvero Bucklin, & Austin, 2001). It typically involves either a face-to-face meeting or an email that includes a description of practices or steps performed well and feedback regarding areas for improvement. Performance feedback is perhaps the most well-documented process for improving treatment fidelity (Alvero et al., 2001; Han & Weiss, 2008). In fact, the strong evidence supporting the use of performance feedback for this purpose has prompted recommendations for its inclusion as part of a comprehensive system to sustain teacher implementation of school-based programs (Han & Weiss, 2005). Although performance feedback’s usefulness in producing desired levels of classroom implementation of evidence-based practices has been well documented, its use can be time consuming. Methods to fade the use of performance feedback quickly and efficiently while maintaining appropriate levels of treatment fidelity are necessary to attain the dual purpose of accurate implementation over time and use of feasible methods in applied settings like schools.

**Self-Monitoring**

One method that can be used to quickly fade the use of performance feedback while still maintaining high levels of treatment fidelity is self-monitoring. This method has been a widely used intervention with students; however, evidence suggests it can be used to change teacher behavior as well (Kalis, Vannest, & Parker, 2007). Self-monitoring is a technique for monitoring or evaluating one’s own performance based on data (e.g., self-recorded) to change or improve practices (Keller, Brady, & Taylor, 2005). Typically, it is less time consuming than performance feedback. The teacher is usually required to rate or score his or her behavior based on some predetermined criteria or set of procedures (e.g., “Did I state the lesson objective? Yes or No?”). Teacher use of self-monitoring may also be beneficial because it can be seen as a less threatening way to monitor practices than conventional evaluation methods (Shake, 1986). Self-monitoring has been successful in increasing teacher use of praise and opportunities to respond (Kalis et al., 2007; Sutherland & Wehby, 2001). When employed in conjunction with performance feedback, self-monitoring can help fade the use of performance feedback while still maintaining high levels of treatment fidelity (Oliver & Wehby, 2012).

**A Case Example**

In a research study by Oliver and Wehby (2012), the researchers successfully used self-monitoring to fade the use of performance feedback while still maintaining high lev-
levels of treatment fidelity of an evidence-based classroom management intervention, the Good Behavior Game (GBG; Barrish, Saunders, & Wolf, 1969). Researchers used performance feedback to establish initial levels of treatment fidelity and then quickly faded the support by having the teachers self-monitor their implementation of the GBG. After receiving initial training on how to use the GBG, teachers began using the intervention in their classrooms. The researchers observed teachers’ implementation of the GBG daily and rated the teachers’ implementation on both the number of steps implemented (or not) and the quality of implementation. Performance feedback was provided immediately after the conclusion of the game, and the percentage of correct implementation steps was graphed for the teachers to see. Once teachers consistently implemented the GBG with high fidelity (80% or higher after approximately 1 week), they began self-monitoring their implementation. The results indicated teacher use of self-monitoring was effective in maintaining the initial high levels of treatment fidelity established with performance feedback (Oliver & Wehby, 2012). A case example of how to use performance feedback and self-monitoring is described next.

1. Determine the Evidence-based Practice and the Critical Steps. The first step is to determine (a) what the critical steps of the evidence-based practice are and (b) whether they need to be implemented or have already been implemented but the teacher requires additional support. This technique works best if procedures are observable. Identifying the practice’s observable steps that are core to implementation is necessary to develop the treatment fidelity checklist that will be used to provide performance feedback and subsequent teacher self-monitoring. This information can be obtained by reviewing manuals or asking questions such as, “What should I see the teacher doing if the intervention is being implemented accurately?” The treatment fidelity form for the GBG has 14 steps categorized by procedures to (a) begin the game (e.g., announce game before beginning), (b) handle disruptive behavior during the game (e.g., responding immediately to rule violations), (c) end the game (e.g., review scores with class), and (d) conduct the game overall (e.g., game is played with a clear beginning and end). Each of these steps is observable and important to implementing the practice.

2. Provide Performance Feedback. The next step is to determine how performance feedback will be provided and who will provide it once the teacher has received initial training on implementing the evidence-based practice. A school psychologist, administrator, behavioral consultant, or even another teacher can offer performance feedback, which can be done through a face-to-face meeting, a phone call, or an email exchange. Typically, simple notes left for the teacher are not effective (Kalis et al., 2007). In the above example, a research assistant observed the teacher conducting the GBG for 10 to 15 min each day. Performance feedback was provided face-to-face immediately following and consisted of (a) describing each step the teacher performed accurately; (b) describing any steps that were missed or of low quality; (c) showing the teacher a graph of her performance (percentage of treatment fidelity); (d) encouraging her to continue using the GBG; and, finally, (e) reminding the teacher that the research assistant would be back the next day (Oliver & Wehby, 2012). When providing performance feedback, begin with positive reinforcement for steps implemented accurately to provide encouragement and highlight what the teacher is doing well.

3. Fade Performance Feedback Using Teacher Self-Monitoring. Once the teacher is implementing the practice with fidelity over a period of time, fade the support by having the teacher monitor her own implementation. The decision regarding when to switch to self-monitoring will be based on the complexity of the practice and the teacher’s comfort level. Some teachers may need booster trainings or more frequent performance feedback. Researchers in the above study faded to self-monitoring after 5 consecutive days above 80% treatment fidelity. During self-monitoring, teachers can use the same form used during performance feedback. An initial training period should be conducted in which the teacher and observer both score the self-monitoring sheet independently and then compare results to determine the percentage of agreement. This step is important to ensure teachers are accurately scoring the self-monitoring form or checklist before they begin self-monitoring independently. After the teacher demonstrates accuracy with using the treatment fidelity checklist (e.g., 100% agreement with another observer three times in a row), the teacher begins self-monitoring. It would be ideal if the observer could return for periodic observations to ensure there is no drift in teacher self-monitoring.

Conclusion
Improving student outcomes requires effective evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices, but successful adoption and sustainability of these practices by classroom teachers requires support. The use of perfor-
Performance feedback is an effective procedure to shape teacher behavior and establish high levels of treatment fidelity of an evidence-based practice (Alvero et al., 2001; Han & Weiss, 2008). Continued use of performance feedback is time-consuming; however, this support can often be successfully faded by having teachers monitor their own implementation once performance has reached an established criterion. The use of performance feedback prior to teacher self-monitoring is desirable to shape teacher behavior and ensure the teacher has developed adequate skills to implement the evidence-based practice accurately before switching to self-monitoring. The combined use of performance feedback and self-monitoring is a promising approach to support teacher implementation of evidence-based practices, thereby improving student outcomes.

References