

SERC

Best Practices from the State Education Resource Center

Summer 2009

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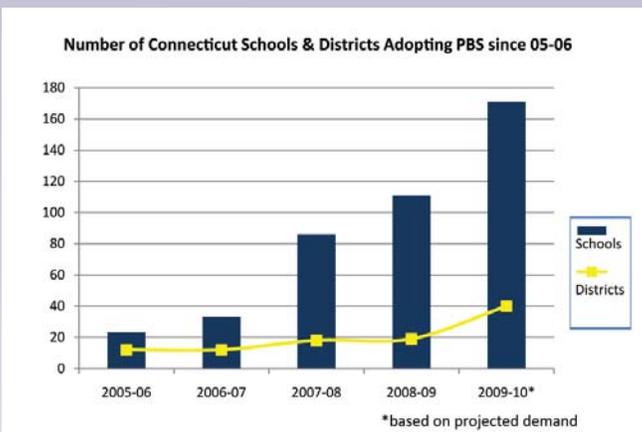
Welcome to *SERC Works!*

The State Education Resource Center (SERC) provides information, research tools, and professional development about best practices to better prepare educators and other service providers to meet the needs of Connecticut students. Each *SERC Works* will cover one particular area of expertise among SERC's many initiatives. This debut issue describes the outcomes of Positive Behavior Support (PBS), which involves a proactive and comprehensive continuum of support designed to provide opportunities for all students to achieve social, behavioral, and learning success. SERC's *PBS Initiative* assists school-based teams in establishing systems to support student behavior at the individual, classroom, and school-wide level, as well as district teams in building the capacity for implementation district-wide.

FOUR YEARS OF SCALING-UP A STATEWIDE SYSTEM FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

DEMAND FOR PBS GROWS

SERC began providing training in PBS in 2000. Since 2005, Connecticut's *PBS Initiative* has existed as a collaboration between SERC and the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. The SERC/UConn collaboration has trained over 100 schools, including preschools and elementary, intermediate, middle, high, and alternative schools. During the 2008-2009 school year, the *PBS Initiative* provided support to 23 new schools.



In January 2009, SERC held an informational meeting for districts interested in participating in PBS during the 2009-2010 school year. The session was attended by superintendents and building principals from 13 school districts across the state. It is expected that 60 schools from both new and returning districts will begin participation in the School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS) Training Series during the fall of 2009, including 15 schools from the newly established regional PBS collaborative between SERC and LEARN.

DISTRICT-WIDE SCALING-UP OF PBS

Partnering districts are required to establish a team for managing implementation and to develop roll-out plans for scaling-up of PBS. Since 2000, several have rolled out PBS district-wide, a process that can range from 3-10 years depending on the size of the district.

East Hartford, one of the 18 districts committed to a district-wide rollout as of 2008, began this effort in the 2001-2002 school year and has since steadily increased its involvement. As of the 2008-2009 school year, all 13 of East Hartford's schools are at various stages of PBS implementation and ongoing professional development.

East Hartford Schools TRAINED	
2001-02	1
2002-03	2
2003-04	5
2004-05	6
2005-06	11
2006-07	12
2007-08	12
2008-09	13



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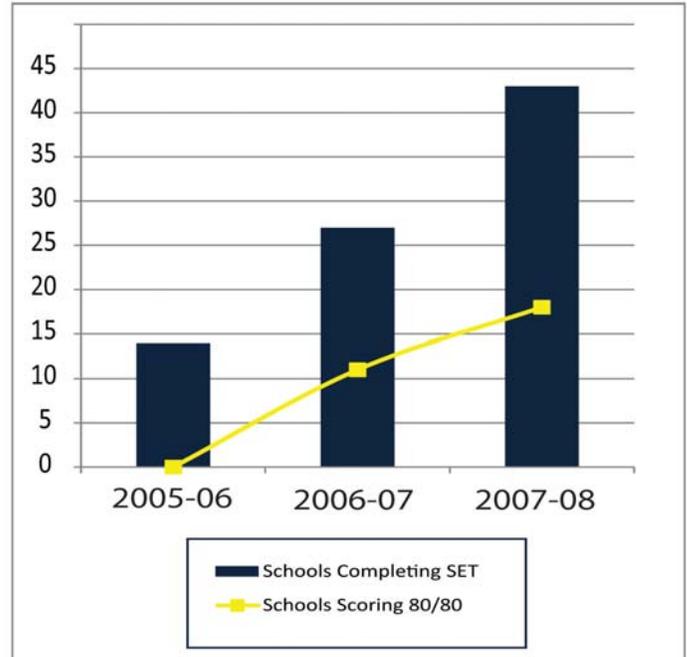
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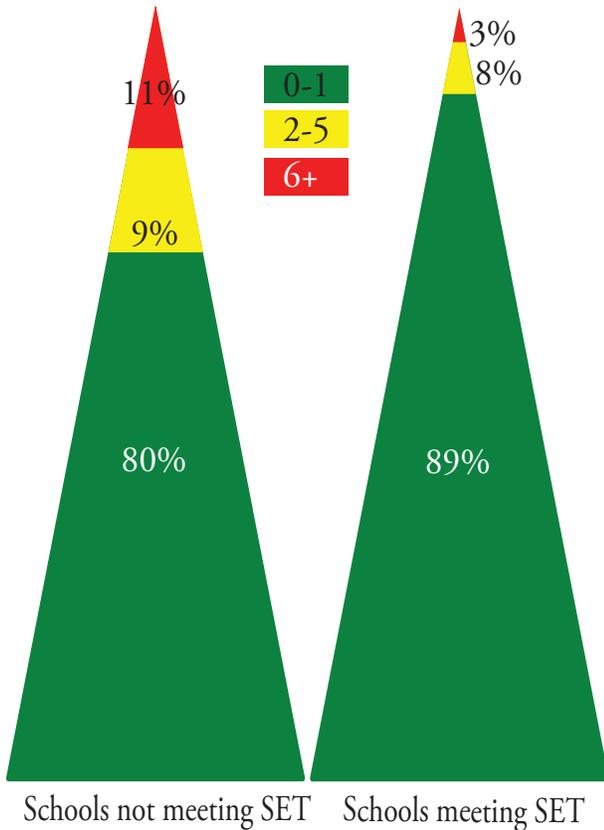
IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY

Connecticut PBS schools continue to focus on achieving full implementation, or fidelity, of PBS. Fidelity at the universal level of PBS ensures that all students continually have access to research-based behavioral support, which results in an effective instructional setting. Establishing a solid universal system is crucial to a school's efforts to build capacity for providing interventions at both the secondary and tertiary levels for up to 10-15% of students who require additional supports.

Implementation fidelity of School-wide Positive Behavior Support in Connecticut is measured annually by the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET), which is designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of school-wide effective behavior support across each academic school year. Based on the SET, schools are labeled implementing to criterion when they have received a score of 80% for the measurement of Expectations Taught and an overall average score of 80% (Sprague & Walker, 2005). From the 2005-2006 baseline SET evaluations to the 2007-2008 SET evaluations, schools have shown impressive increases in attaining and maintaining implementation fidelity.



Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) Per Student



Over a 180-day school year, *fully* implementing PBS schools have, on average, 54 fewer referrals than Connecticut schools that are *partially* implementing PBS.

FULL IMPLEMENTATION PRODUCES FEWER BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Connecticut schools have demonstrated significant reductions in Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) over time as a result of PBS implementation. Data figures from the School-wide Information System (SWIS) that show average referrals per day per month over multiple years are promising at all grade levels. In SWIS, total referrals have reduced for students with disabilities at rates comparable to those of their general education peers.

Connecticut elementary schools that are fully implementing PBS have demonstrated clear reductions in ODRs. Schools that are implementing PBS to criterion have 89% of their student populations with 0-1 ODRs, compared to 80% of students with 0-1 ODRs for schools that are partially implementing PBS.

FULLY IMPLEMENTING PBS SCHOOLS GAIN INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

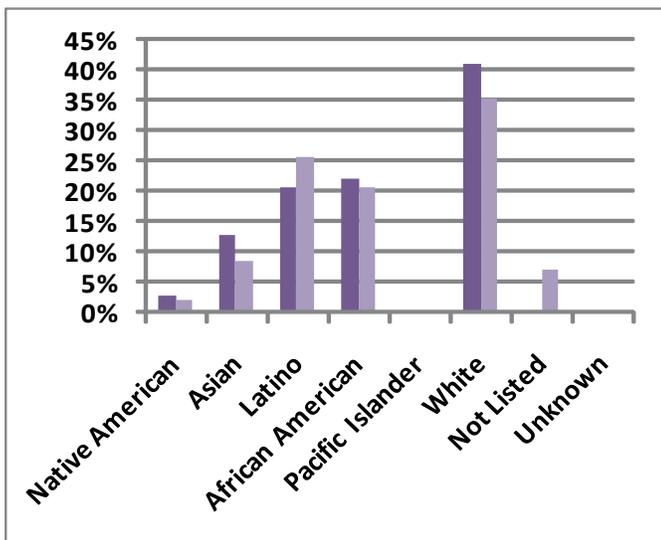
A drop in office referrals accounts for an improved school climate and more dedicated instructional time, which benefits all students.

Connecticut elementary schools that are fully implementing PBS have rates of referrals of .24 referrals/day as compared to PBS schools with partial implementation, which have rates of .54 referrals/day. Over a 180-day school year, fully implementing PBS schools have, on average, 54 fewer referrals than Connecticut schools that are partially implementing PBS. If each ODR takes away 30 minutes of instructional time per student, fully implementing PBS schools save 1,620 minutes of instructional time over the course of the school year.

Data on expulsions and in-school and out-of-school suspensions demonstrate the intersection of race and discipline in Connecticut schools. Statewide and nationwide, students of color are overrepresented in each category (Vincent, 2008). In the 2006-2007 school year, black and Hispanic students were suspended at significantly higher rates (18% and 13% respectively) than Asian and white students (2% and 4%). Nearly two-thirds of these suspensions were for non-violent school policy violations such as insubordination, disrespect, and disruptive behavior (Ali & Dufresne, 2008).

Teachers' Memorial Middle School in Norwich was trained in School-wide Positive Behavior Support in 2005-2006. Then, in the 2008-2009 school year, the school became involved in *Courageous Conversations About Race*, an additional professional development initiative through SERC, as part of the district's larger initiative to achieve racial equity in education. Bill Peckham, principal of Teachers' Memorial, has emphasized the relationship between the school's work on race and its implementation of PBS. Cross-representation on its school equity team and school discipline team ensures communication between groups. Both teams review discipline data by race to examine and discuss how to work proactively toward equity and culturally responsible disciplinary practices and procedures.

ODRs at Teachers' Memorial



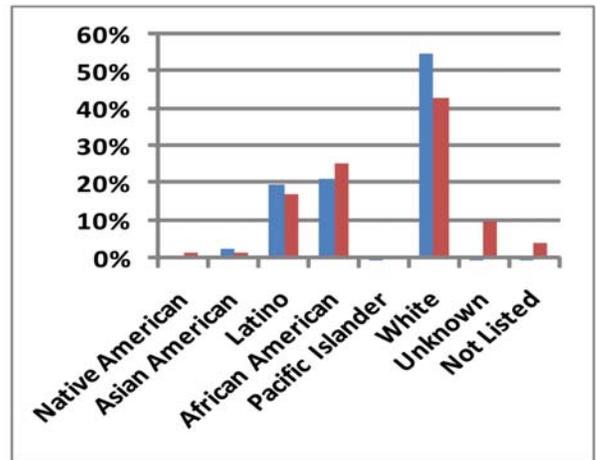
■ % of Enrolled Students ■ % of Students with Referrals

Overall, Teachers' Memorial's discipline data show a greater degree of equity in referrals for students of color than the 2004-2005 national average for schools using the School-wide Information System (SWIS). Despite positive general trends, Mr. Peckham and his staff still reflect on the differences between the referral rates of their racial subgroups. In particular, the school is currently investigating

The graphs below compare the proportion of students within a school by ethnic grouping (the number of students within an ethnic group divided by total enrollment) with the proportion of students with office discipline referrals from each ethnic group (the number of students with a discipline referral divided by the total number of students with discipline referrals). This demonstrates whether the proportion of students being referred over-represents the proportion of students in any ethnic group.

the larger percentage of Latino students with referrals relative to their proportion of the total school population. As a course of action, Teachers' Memorial is considering ways to reduce the social isolation of students in ESL classrooms. By investigating and addressing the school structures that cause the social isolation of racial subgroups, Teachers' Memorial can plan systemic restructuring to proactively prevent or reduce such isolation. Additionally, when considering the role of language and culturally responsive behavior instruction, Teachers' Memorial will view its continuum of support for behavior and its universal behavior practices through a lens of language and culture to meet the needs of its Latino population.

ODRs Nationally — % of Enrolled Students — % of Students with Referrals



93 Schools and 63,667 Students Represented • Grades 6-9
National SWIS Middle School Data Source: www.swis.org

PBS schools in Connecticut that are using SWIS are able to utilize the ethnicity features of the online program to explore the intersection of race and discipline in their schools (Vincent, 2008). Schools using PBS must consider whether their continuum of support and their system for supporting appropriate behavior are culturally and contextually appropriate.

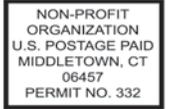
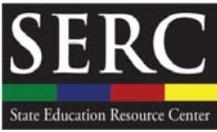
Disproportionate referral of students of color suggests that a school must examine the ways that school policies, practices, and culture may marginalize certain groups of students. Having clear and timely data allows schools to objectively review the outcomes and impact of their disciplinary practices and systems.

Note: Special thanks to Principal Bill Peckham. He can be reached at wpeckham@norwichpublicschools.org.

Sources:

Ali, T. & Dufresne, A. (2008). *Missing Out: Suspending Students from Connecticut Schools*. New Haven, CT: Connecticut Voices for Children.

Vincent, C. G. (2008, November). Evaluation brief: Do schools using SWIS take advantage of the "school ethnicity report"? OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Web site: http://pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_briefs/default.aspx



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To learn more about Connecticut's Positive Behavior Support Initiative's efforts to scale-up within the state, please contact SERC or visit www.ctserc.org/data for the full Data Report.

WHAT'S COMING TO PBS IN 2009-2010

- Focus on Secondary/Tertiary Interventions with UConn
- LEARN Regional PBS Implementation Team in collaboration with SERC
- Continued collaboration regarding the CALI School Climate Module
- Expansion of SET Evaluators
- Expansion in Hartford and Waterbury
- 2nd Annual PBS Data Report

