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## ROCKY HILL SCHOOLS

### School Program Molds Good Behavior In Rocky Hill

By AMANDA FALCONE

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ROCKY HILL —

The town's three elementary schools are now rewarding students for good behavior.

This year, the schools began Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports, a nationwide program that continues to grow in popularity.

The program sets clear social and academic expectations and reinforces positive behavior. A database tracks students who are sent to the office and allows schools to identify systemic problems.

Superintendent Jeffrey Villar launched the same program in Meriden, where he was an associate superintendent. Meriden, a larger, more urban school system, has more discipline problems than Rocky Hill, but Villar said he was confident that his new program will be effective. There is always a need to improve school climates, he said.

As part of the program, school officials' expectations for students are now always stated in a positive way, said Marian Hourigan, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. For example, students are no longer told not to run, but rather asked to please walk, she said. She said that good behavior translates into improved academic performance, more community spirit and fewer office referrals.

Rewards for a job well done are based on small awards.

At Myrtle H. Stevens School, students receive "Husky hero" tickets that they can enter into a daily drawing. The winner gets to do daily announcements. Students may also save their tickets until they have enough to earn a special prize, such as an extra recess.

"Students will work very hard for that," Hourigan said. "They love to be recognized when they see you with one of these pieces. They are just so appreciative."

The token economy systems are similar at Oran A. Moser School, which gives out tiger paw stickers, and West Hill School, which rewards students with YES tickets.



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The positive behavior program has been well received, Villar said, adding that the district wants to expand it to Albert D. Griswold Middle School next year.

Over 27 school districts and more than 125 schools in Connecticut have been trained to implement the program since 2000, according to a March 2009 report by the State Education Resource Center. The center, which says there is a waiting list for districts that want to participate, collaborates with the University of Connecticut to provide the training.

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