

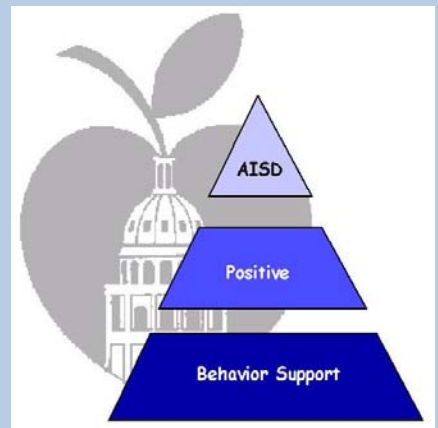
Program Description

Positive Behavior Support (PBS), first piloted in Austin Independent School District (AISD) in 2003–2004, is a systems approach to the prevention of problem behavior and the improvement of students' academic performance. In Fall 2010, the district PBS program was implemented at 81 AISD campuses, and staff at one additional campus were preparing for implementation. Working with AISD PBS specialists, campus staff used data to problem solve and monitor strategies for change. Strategies ranged from universal interventions, implemented across all students, staff, and settings, to intensive interventions for individual students with high needs. This research brief describes levels of PBS implementation in October 2010; campus participation in district training; and services provided to campuses by district PBS specialists during Fall 2010, which was the last semester during which district support was available for campus implementation of PBS.

What was the extent of PBS implementation in Fall 2010?

As the 2010–2011 school year began, PBS specialists worked with campus teams to set goals and to assess current PBS implementation in the four PBS systems: campus team, school wide, classroom, and individual student systems. Levels of implementation were assessed at campuses using the AISD Benchmark Tool (Benchmark). The Benchmark consisted of 27 statements about PBS activities, each of which was rated as being at one of five implementation levels: *no action*, *planning/training*, *beginning*, *intermediate*, or *advanced*. In October 2010, averaged across all PBS campuses, the implementation level at each of the four PBS systems was the beginning level. PBS implementation by school level is discussed below.

- Elementary schools:** Benchmark data were collected from 56 elementary schools in October 2011. On average, implementation was in the beginning stage for all four PBS systems.
- Middle schools:** Benchmark data were collected from 17 middle schools in October 2011. On average, implementation was in the beginning stage for all four PBS systems.
- High schools:** Benchmark data were collected from six high schools in October 2011. On average, implementation was in the beginning stage for the team and classroom systems and in the



OVERVIEW

In Fall 2010, at a time during which PBS was not yet fully implemented at the primary prevention tier, PBS specialist resources were focused on high-intensity intervention efforts. Effective use of resources may require an optimal balance between district support for campus prevention efforts and high-intensity interventions for persistent behavior problems.

Campuses Implementing PBS in October 2010

Elementary schools	56
Middle schools	17
High schools	6
Alternative schools	2

Fall 2010 Highlights

- ✓ *In October 2010, PBS implementation levels for the team, school-wide, classroom, and individual student systems, averaged across all PBS campuses, were at the beginning stage.*
- ✓ *PBS specialists provided 110 single-event professional development sessions and 11 training series at PBS campuses.*
- ✓ *PBS specialists responded to 332 requests for coaching services.*
- ✓ *Although PBS was not yet fully implemented at the primary prevention tier, PBS specialist resources were focused on high-intensity intervention efforts.*

planning/training stage for the school-wide and individual student systems.

- **Alternative schools:** Benchmark data were collected from Lucy Read Pre-Kindergarten School and The Alternative Learning Center (ALC). At Lucy Read, implementation was in the intermediate stage for all four PBS systems. Data were collected separately for ALC middle and high school grades. Both grade groups were in the intermediate stage for the team system and were not implementing the individual student system. The school-wide and classroom systems were in either the planning/training stage or the beginning stage for both grade groups.

What services do PBS specialists deliver to campuses?

AISD PBS specialists, working in teams of three, trained administrators, staff, and parents to implement PBS practices. The PBS specialists worked with campus PBS teams as they set goals, planned interventions, and measured progress. In addition to building campus PBS capacity, PBS specialists responded to administrators’ and teachers’ requests for individualized help with, for example, managing classroom behavior, problem solving to improve the behavior of individual students or small groups of students, and coordinating interventions for students with intensive needs.

Between July and December 2010, in addition to two districtwide, multi-day training sessions, the 15 PBS specialist conducted 784 service activities at PBS campuses, an average of about 10 units of services per campus. Services to campuses fell into three main categories: (a) meetings with campus administrators, campus PBS teams, and internal PBS coaches; (b) professional development activities; and (c) individualized services in response to requests for coaching assistance. These categories of services are described in more detail below.

CAMPUS MEETINGS

The district PBS specialists met with campus administrators and the campus internal PBS coach, and participated in campus PBS team meetings. The PBS specialists assisted administrators and staff in the identification of campus needs, planning, analysis of campus data, and the creation of materials and procedures. In the process, they drew upon a knowledge base developed over the nine previous years of PBS implementation in AISD to transfer a wealth of information about PBS principles and practices and to build campus PBS capacity. The number of meetings at campuses varied considerably, ranging across PBS campuses from zero to 14 meetings, with an average of 4.09 meetings per campus during Fall 2010 (Table 1). Five of the six campuses that did not have formal meetings received other types of coaching services and were at or above the average implementation level in Fall 2010.

Table 1. Positive Behavior Support Specialist Meetings With Campus Administrators and Staff, Fall 2010

Type of meeting	School level				Total (N = 81)
	Elementary (N = 56)	Middle (N = 17)	High (N = 6)	Alternative (N = 2)	
Meetings with administrators	71	25	12	2	110
Meetings with PBS internal coach	26	14	1	3	44
PBS team meetings	94	38	16	9	157
Meetings with campus IMPACT team	18	2	0	0	20
Total meetings	209	79	29	14	331
Average meetings per campus	3.73	4.64	4.83	7	4.09

Source. AISD Positive Behavior Support program records, Department of Learning Support Services

CAMPUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The district PBS specialists delivered formal professional development services through training series (e.g., book study groups and breakfast club meetings) and single-event training sessions (e.g., classroom management workshops). Training delivered by PBS specialists to campus staff focused on intervention strategies at three levels: (a) universal interventions, geared toward all students throughout the school (e.g., clearly stated behavioral expectations; active teaching; and rewarding of appropriate social skills, planned adult supervision, and consistent consequences for problem behavior); (b) targeted interventions, focused on students needing additional support (e.g., how to respond to negative behavior and align classroom expectations with campus guidelines for success); and (c) intensive interventions, addressing the needs of students with the greatest behavioral challenges. During Fall 2010, 11 training series and 110 single-event training sessions occurred on campuses. Of these, 50 (37.6%) were focused on universal interventions, 21 (15.8%) were focused on interventions targeted at small groups of students, 10 (7.5%) were focused on interventions for students with intensive needs, 44 (33.1%) covered multiple levels of interventions, and the intervention levels of eight training sessions (6.0%) were unspecified. Table 2 presents the number of training series and single-event training sessions by school level.

Table 2. Training by Positive Behavior Support Specialists at Campuses, Fall 2010

Type of professional development activity	School level				Total (N = 81)
	Elementary (N = 56)	Middle (N = 17)	High (N = 6)	Alternative (N = 2)	
Training series					
Whole-school staff development	7	0	2	0	9
Small-group staff development	2	0	0	0	2
Total training series	9	0	2	0	11
Average per campus	.16	0	.33	0	.13
Single-event training sessions					
Whole-school staff development	37	15	5	12	69
Small-group staff development	29	10	2	0	41
Total single-event training sessions	66	25	7	12	110
Average per campus	1.18	1.47	1.17	6.00	1.36

Source. AISD Positive Behavior Support program records, Department of Learning Support Services

In addition to the training sessions and meetings reported above, PBS specialists provided services at five campuses where PBS was not actively being implemented. The majority were provided at a high school where staff were preparing to begin implementation in Spring 2011.

INDIVIDUALIZED COACHING SERVICES

PBS specialists provided coaching services to teachers in response to requests from teachers or administrators. A coaching request initiated a cycle of consultation, observation, and intervention. Coaching requests could be time intensive for the PBS specialist and involve multiple cycles of consultation and observation. Table 3 presents the number of formal coaching requests made to PBS specialists, indicating their level and the average number of requests per campus by level.

Table 3. Requests for Positive Behavior Support Coaching Services, Fall 2010

	School level				Total (N = 81)
	Elementary (N = 56)	Middle (N = 17)	High (N = 6)	Alternative (N = 2)	
Coaching requests	249	67	14	2	332
Average number of requests per campus	4.45	3.94	2.33	1	4.1

Source. AISD Positive Behavior Support program records, Department of Learning Support Services

Discussion

During the 6 years of AISD PBS implementation between 2004–2005 and 2009–2010, only a small number of campuses advanced beyond the beginning stage of PBS implementation (Johnson & Christian, 2011). Continuing this trend, PBS campuses were, on average, at the beginning stage of PBS implementation in Fall 2010, as assessed by the district PBS Benchmark. The examination of program records of PBS specialist services to campuses, reported above, suggests that coaching services to individual teachers, on average, outnumbered professional development services delivered in school-wide or small group sessions. This could indicate that at a time during which PBS was not yet fully implemented at the primary prevention tier, PBS specialist resources were focused on high-intensity intervention efforts. Supports for students with high-intensity behavior problems require a greater investment of resources (e.g., to conduct observations and functional behavior assessments and to develop individualized interventions) than do primary prevention efforts (e.g., ongoing monitoring of student behavior and early interventions when problems first arise) (Horner et al., 2009). Thus, maintaining an optimal balance between district support for campus prevention efforts and high-intensity interventions for persistent behavior problems may be particularly important to the effective use of campus and district resources.

References

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Smolkowski, K., Eber, L., Nakasato, J., Todd, A. W., & Esperanza, J. (2009). A randomized, wait-list controlled effectiveness trial assessing school-wide positive behavior support in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *11*, 133-144.

Johnson, B., & Christian, C. (2011). *Positive behavior support, 2009-2010 research brief* (DPE Publication No. 09.80 RB). Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District Department of Program Evaluation.