Guilford County Schools

Frequently Asked Questions about Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

School Leadership

1. **What is PBS?**

PBS is a process for creating safer and more effective schools. The process focuses on improving a school's ability to teach and support positive behavior for all students, and all staff in all settings.

2. **What are the three components of PBS?**

- Systems: The process of PBS focuses on consistent systems to promote positive behavior and prevent inappropriate behavior in the school, classroom, and for individual students.
- Practices: The PBS process teaches and supports research validated instructional and management practices.
- Data: Accurate, timely and practical information is gathered and utilized at the school level to help school personnel make decisions to transform schools into safe and orderly environments.

3. **How do we collect timely and accurate data at the school level?**

In GCS PBS schools utilize the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to make decisions about discipline systems. SWIS is a web-based information system used to improve behavior support in elementary, middle, and high schools. Schools are trained in the use of SWIS as they begin implementation of PBS.

4. **Does PBS use different approaches to different behavior problems?**

PBS uses the science of behavior to model, teach, and practice socially appropriate behavior in the places where students learn and staff teach. Three systems are designed to make problem behavior less rewarding and to teach desired behavior.

5. **What three PBS systems operate in a school?**

These three systems operate in a school simultaneously:

- Universal (Primary) Systems: Staff develops, teaches, and reinforces rules, routines, and physical arrangements to prevent initial occurrences of problem behavior throughout the school. All students learn, practice, and are supported for exhibiting the desired behaviors.
- Targeted Group (Secondary) Systems: Interventions support students who are having difficulty learning the rules and routines of the universal system and who are at risk for more serious problem behavior. Interventions at the secondary level may include such practices as Social Skills Club, Check In/Check Out systems, or a Newcomer's Club.
- Intense Individual (Tertiary) Systems: The focus is on the needs and characteristics of individual students and specific circumstances related to them. These are students who exhibit behaviors that

are dangerous, highly disruptive, and/or impede learning and result in social or educational exclusion. Individual behavior plans are typically developed by a team of people who know the student best.

6. **When is the intense individual (tertiary) system effective?**

Tertiary Prevention is most effective when positive primary and secondary systems are in place. This systemic piece entails a behavior support team (BST) tailoring interventions to diminish problem behavior and to increase the student's adaptive skills and opportunities for an enhance quality of life.

7. **What is the difference between behavior management and PBS?**

Using traditional behavioral management strategies, schools assumed that all students come to school with all of the skills to behave appropriately despite diverse backgrounds or learning needs. As a result, traditional behavior management has focused on eliminating undesired behavior with punishment.

PBS assumes that all students will need to be taught school and classroom expectations. With PBS, prosocial behaviors are taught in the same way we teach academic subjects. Teachers directly teach, model, practice and reinforce. Different and more intense instructional strategies are used for students who struggle behaviorally, just the same as for those students who struggle academically.

8. **Can schools purchase a new PBS program?**

No. PBS is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior. PBS is not new. It's based on a long history of behavioral practices and effective instructional design and strategies.

For more information on PBS in the Guilford County Schools, contact *Sherry Rogowski at rogowss@gcsnc.com or Beth Woody at woodye@gcsnc.com or call 370-8170.*

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