

Minnesota Principals Academy - Action Learning Plan
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PBIS & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Abstract

This Action Learning Project has evolved around the leadership position that I began in 2014. I became assistant principal in 2014 at New Heights Elementary in East Grand Forks. As part of my duties, I assumed the role of PBIS team leader. The PBIS team in our district began in 2012 with the two elementary buildings implementing first and the middle school joining a year later. At the beginning of the 2017-2018 year, Pre-K will also be implementing. When writing up a plan for my ALP project in 2016, I planned to present and graph the number of Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) that came into the office. PBIS is designed to improve student academic performance by decreasing ODR referrals, which in turn decreases the time spent out of the classroom. Lower ODR referrals equals more time students are positively engaged in the classroom. Another program that was put into place was the PBIS Room. There, students spend time with either myself or a paraprofessional talking about the ODR they received and doing “think sheets” on how to improve their behavior and make better choices. The PBIS room turned out to be a success and is now being considered to be implemented all day vs. two hours during lunch/recess. Additionally, the Peaceful Bus Program was implemented to promote good citizenship while riding the bus. The bus drivers are invited to assemblies and at these assemblies relationships are formed with the students. The bus drivers also reward good behavior while riding on the bus. Lastly, an unexpected gift gave to our district in the form of a grant in which we were able to train 65 teachers in Responsive Classroom. We felt that the combination of PBIS and Responsive Classroom would help decrease ODR’s and increase student achievement.

Vision: ISD 595, in cooperation with family and community, will empower all students to become responsible lifelong learners. PBIS strives on being a positive support system where adults in the schools are recognizing good behavior and good decision-making. Green Wave Pride is used and enforced school wide by every staff member. Positive Behavior = Positive Results. Excellence is the Expectation!

Background/Context: In 2012 the East Grand Forks school district sent their first team of licensed teachers to training for PBIS. New Heights is an elementary building housing K-2 grades. At present, there are 465 students. The team at New Heights has worked very hard using the techniques learned and creating new ideas that will benefit students when making good decisions. Using the TIER 3 model, the areas of concern at New Heights continue to be fighting, physical aggression, bus discipline and disruption. Out of 349 write-ups (ODR) this school year, 266 were minor and 83 were major referrals. New Heights has begun the Peaceful

Bus Program and implemented the PBIS recess/lunch room. As a way to lessen the ODR referrals and the continuing TIER 3 behaviors, the PBIS team leaders wrote a PBIS grant and received \$40,000 to provide Responsive Classroom training.

Program Rationale/Why change? The PBIS Team members feel strongly that building community, practicing social-emotional skills, along with academic perseverance and academic behavior through Responsive Classroom can help address concerns regarding the ongoing physical/aggressive behavior that a group of students are still struggling with.

What we did: Through our Plan-Act-Do Study and data being compiled, the PBIS team agreed that there was need for more professional development for staff in the areas of Effective Management, Engaging Academics, Positive Community, and Development Awareness. The PBIS grant that was awarded to the district provided training in Responsive Classroom for 65 teachers. Responsive Classroom is one of the most “well-designed evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs.” (Responsive Classroom website, 2017.)

What we found out: We found out that our teachers were “hungry” for more training and that the Responsive Classroom approach was exactly what they were needing. Veteran and new teachers overwhelmingly “sang their praises” at the 4 day training and the 1 day training. The PBIS team members are excited to rename PBIS to PBIS/Responsive Classroom. Instead of individual building meetings, district meetings will also be implemented. We found out that teachers are energized and excited to implement both PBIS and Responsive Classroom together. Teachers are excited for the benefits our students will receive with positive interventions and academic excellence.

Implications for practice:

1. The professional development/training in both PBIS and Responsive Classroom needs to be a district priority.
 - a. Yearly training for new teachers.
 - b. Twice/year curriculum day data digs/brainstorming.
2. This new initiative needs to be systematic and used with fidelity.
 - a. Academic data digs.
 - b. SWISS/Synergy data digs.
3. Administrators in each building need to set aside time for teachers to collaborate.
 - a. Allow PBIS/RC at one PLC meeting per month.
 - b. Discuss PBIS/RC as a staff at one Staff meeting per month.
4. Student/Family involvement needs to increase
 - a. Have 1 or more parent/s on PBIS/RC team.
 - b. Introduce at SMART Start “Hook family.”

GOOD TEACHER MANAGEMENT = STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT