



House Public Education Committee
HB 1340 – School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
April 19, 2011

Texans Care for Children is a statewide nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated exclusively to the children of Texas. We look to our broad base of community-based experts—our partners and 147 members throughout the state who together represent thousands of Texas children—to inform our work and help us in developing our legislative agenda. We also co-convene various stakeholder groups which bring together a wide range of organizations, families, and advocates around our areas of focus, which are: family economic security; infant, child and maternal health; children’s mental health; child welfare; and juvenile justice and at-risk youth.

Two of these stakeholder groups - the **Texas Children’s Mental Health Forum** and **Texas Juvenile Justice Roundtable** have identified the promotion of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SW-PBIS) approach as a policy priority to better respond to students with mental and behavioral concerns and to prevent students from needlessly entering the juvenile justice system.

HB 1340 would encourage and assist school districts in implementing a school-wide positive behavioral intervention and supports (SW-PBIS) approach, a recommended strategy to help all students be safe and successful in school.

What is School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS)?

- SW-PBIS is not a curriculum, intervention, or practice, but an approach schools can use to **coordinate effective strategies and interventions targeting student behavior** into an integrated manner that **improves outcomes for all students**.
- Instead of waiting for inappropriate behavior to occur before intervening, SW-PBIS works to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm, teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them.
- Students who do not respond to preventative interventions receive more targeted interventions based on their individual needs, in a graduated, multi-tiered process.

Why is SW-PBIS something our state should consider right now?

- Last session, the legislature passed a law to mitigate zero tolerance policies in schools, but did not supply teachers and school staff with new tools to address problem behaviors.
- Budget cuts within our schools are resulting in higher class sizes and less support for teachers and staff. New supports are needed to promote student success.

How much does SW-PBIS cost to implement?

- There is no “one-size-fits-all” way to implement SW-PBIS. While some schools choose to seek additional funds to support their SW-PBIS efforts, **most can implement SW-PBIS for minimal or no additional money**.

- State guidance and leadership proposed by HB 1340 would assist schools interested in implementing SW-PBIS in accessing many of the supports necessary to implement it to fidelity, such as recommendations on realigning existing resources targeting student behavior to be used more efficiently and effectively and seeking outside funding sources to augment their efforts.

Outcomes Associated with SW-PBIS:

- Schools that implement SW-PBIS have been shown to see **fewer disciplinary problems**, and a **greater sense of safety** on campus,ⁱ as well as **improved academic performance**,ⁱⁱ increased attendance,ⁱⁱⁱ and a reduction in students referred to Special Education.
- Less disciplinary incidents translates into **more time for teachers and school administrators to spend on student learning**.^{iv} Some schools have seen up to a 60% reduction in disciplinary incidents following school-wide implementation of PBS.^v In one state, 12 schools found they had gained a combined 233 days of administrators' time and 700 days of instruction time for students after implementing SW-PBIS.^{vi}
- When including a **bully prevention** component in the implementation of SW-PBIS, a 55-69% reduction in problem behavior has been demonstrated.^{vii}

Addressing Specific Concerns with SW-PBIS:

- *Bully Prevention & Intervention:*
 - To reduce bullying, it is important to change the climate of the school and the social norms with regard to bullying.
 - Blending bully prevention with school-wide positive behavior supports gives students the tools necessary to increase appropriate responses to bullying incidents, from both victim and bystander, and to decrease incidents of bullying behavior.
 - As part of a larger system of positive behavioral support, bully prevention is far less resource intensive and far more likely to be implemented over consecutive years.^{viii}
- *Reducing Student Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System:*
 - The number one predictor of involvement in the criminal justice system is having received disciplinary actions in school.
 - By reducing the number of disciplinary actions in school through SW-PBIS, the number of today's students ending up in the justice system can be reduced.
- *Addressing the Needs of Students with Mental Health Concerns:*
 - Most schools offer some range of services to support students' mental and behavioral health. However, these strategies are often fragmented and limited in scope.
 - For students who require more targeted interventions, such as such as those with mental or behavioral health concerns, PBIS interventions are applied either in a group setting or through an individualized plan based on students' needs.
 - PBIS is the state and federal recommended intervention for dealing with challenging behavior in children with disabilities.^{ix}
 - By implementing SW-PBIS, schools would be able to reach students with emotional disturbances and other behavioral needs that are not identified for special education.

In Texas, there is no systematic leadership, planning, or coordination at the state level related to the use of SW-PBIS to promote successful behavioral outcomes of all students.

- Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) currently offer Texas schools training or technical assistance on using targeted PBIS with students with disabilities.
- ESCs may offer services related to SW-PBIS, but levels of support and criteria for participation vary across regions.
- In 2008, just 61 schools in Texas reported implementing SW-PBIS.^x Other schools implement SW-PBIS without support from an ESC, but it is not known how many, nor how closely they are following best-practices.
- Some schools report challenges in sustaining an effective SW-PBIS approach on their own.
- Creating a statewide infrastructure to support the implementation of SW-PBIS would allow for increased resources and training for teachers.

How Can Texas Assist Local Schools in Implementing SW-PBIS?

Texas can promote the use of effective, sustainable SW-PBIS by providing **state leadership and guidance** and **establishing effective structures for collaboration** between education and other systems that support students' success at school, such as the mental health system. HB 1340 does not create a local mandate, but instead helps schools maximize resources and take advantage of best practices for reducing problem behaviors.

Texans Care for Children urges the Committee to favorably report HB 1340

Thank you for your time and commitment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or the staff of Texans Care for Children.

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ⁱ Horner, R., Sugai, G., Smolkowski, K., Eber, L., Nakasato, J., Todd, A., and J. Esperanza. (2009). "A Randomized, Wait-List Controlled Effectiveness Trial Assessing School-Wide Positive Behavior Support in Elementary Schools, *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*," *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 133-144 ; Sprague, J., and R. Horner (2007) "School Wide Positive Behavioral Supports", in *The Handbook of School Violence and School Safety: From Research to Practice*. Shane R. Jimerson & Michael J. Furlong, eds.

ⁱⁱ Regional Educational Laboratory. (2010). *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: What does research say about the impact of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) on student achievement?*

ⁱⁱⁱ Luiselli, J. K., Putnam, R. F., & Sunderland, M. (2002). Longitudinal evaluation of behavior support intervention in a public middle school. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 6(3), 182-188.

^{iv} "Cost/Benefit Worksheet," PBIS Maryland, <http://pbismaryland.org/costbenefit.xls>.

^v Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law (2009) Fact Sheet: Why States and Communities Should Implement School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Integrated with Mental Health Care. *Way to Go — School Success for Children with Mental Health Needs* <http://www.bazelon.org/pdf/WayToGo1.pdf>

^{vi} *Way to Go: School Success for Children with Mental Health Care Needs*, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 2006.

^{vii} Ross, S., & Horner, R., (2009). "Bully prevention in positive behavior support." *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 42 (4) 747-760

^{viii} Ross, S., Horner, R., and B. Stiller. *Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support*. Educational and Community Supports.

http://www.pbis.org/common/pbisresources/publications/bullyprevention_ES.pdf

^{ix} U.S. Department of Education. (2000). *Applying positive behavioral support in schools: Twenty-second Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disability Act*.

^x Spaulding, S.A., Horner, R.H., May, S.L., & Vincent C.G. (2008) *Evaluation Brief: Implementation of School-wide PBS across the United States*. OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports.