

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT TEAM (BIST) 7-YEAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EVALUATION REPORT



Prepared for:
Ozanam

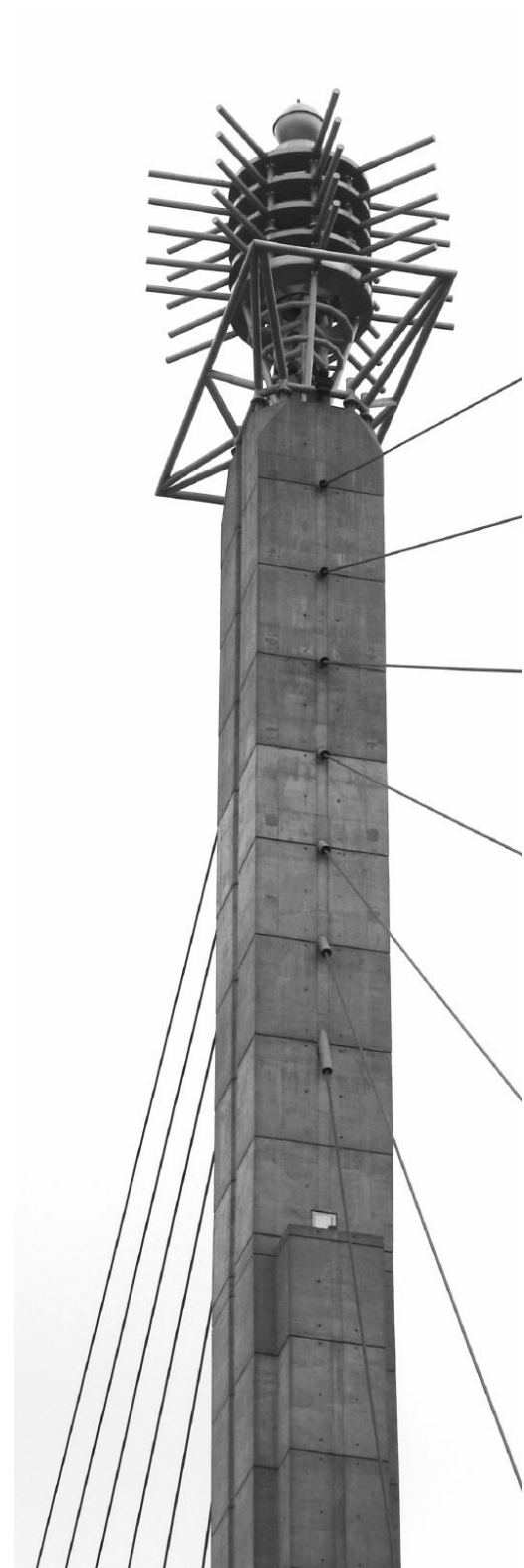
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Picture: One of Bartle Hall's art deco pylons, an unmistakable fixture in the Kansas City skyline.

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Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) 7-Year Elementary School Evaluation Report

INTRODUCTION

The Resource Development Institute (RDI) analyzed eight years of evaluation data from an elementary school which had implemented the Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) program on a school-wide basis. The analysis included one pre-implementation years and seven years with the BIST program.

PROGRAM

Programs directed at positively altering the school and classroom environment seek to reduce or eliminate problem behaviors by changing the overall context in which they occur. Such programs are closely linked to social organization theory, and work from the premise that all aspects of school life can affect violence and substance abuse (Sherman et al., 1998). According to Gottfredson (1998), programs aimed at clarifying and communicating norms about behaviors are effective ways to reduce crime, delinquency, and substance abuse. Instructional approaches that combine social and thinking skills have been shown to be effective in enhancing students' abilities, attitudes, and behaviors inconsistent with substance abuse and other kinds of delinquent behavior (Northeast Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies, 1999). Programs directed at classroom organization, management, and instructional strategies attempt to enhance the protective factors that promote opportunities for active participation in learning, skills to establish positive social relationships, and bonding to school and pro-social peers (OJJDP, 2008).

The Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) program is well-grounded in behavioral theory (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005) and combines strengths-based and resiliency principles

(Benard, 2004) within the context of the ecological, person-in-environment model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). BIST strategies are person-centered and based on the core conditions of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1986).

The BIST program simultaneously engages school administrators, teachers, parents, and students in a proactive/preventative, problem-solving school discipline plan, designed to teach social and behavioral skills, enhancing the academic and social growth of students. This ecological approach requires the skills necessary to engage issues at all levels, in multiple modalities, and in a collaborative way (Gutierrez, Yeakly, & Ortega, 2000).

The BIST model provides a multi-level approach which includes the establishment of universal prevention elements such as: clarifying expectations for faculty members; establishing clear and consistent rules; teaching expectations to all students; enhancing student social and problem-solving skills; affording students the opportunity to practice expectations; and reinforcing appropriate behavior. BIST provides secondary and tertiary levels of support through an array of progressively intense levels of assessment and interventions, matched to the types of skill deficits exhibited and identified needs, for students who require more teaching and practice to develop social and behavioral skills. This multi-level approach parallels several other proactive discipline models (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, and Walker, 2000).

A primary feature distinguishing the BIST program from other proactive discipline plans is that BIST does not solely provide teacher training workshops. A key element of the model is the establishment of an ongoing partnership between school personnel and BIST consultants who meet monthly with school personnel in a collaborative problem-solving capacity, in support of their ongoing professional development. BIST also provides on-going phone and email support as well as personal consulting if a teacher feels a student is in crisis. As part of that professional

development, staff members are also taught how to collect and utilize data on an ongoing basis for effective decision-making regarding the social skills and behavior instruction in their classroom and school.

METHODOLOGY

A secondary analysis of office referral data collected prior to, and throughout a seven academic year period was conducted. In addition, the evaluator conducted qualitative interviews with school administration, and BIST consultants.

Participants

The evaluation involved a public elementary school (grade K-5) located in a Midwestern city having a population of nearly 450,000. The participants included the entire student, teacher, and administrative population of the school during seven consecutive academic years (2002-2008). Since all teachers and administrators received the BIST training, and the entire student body was involved in the implementation of the BIST program, a comparison group of students, teachers, and administrators from the year prior to implementation was used as a comparison group.

The average number of students enrolled in the school fluctuated within the 220's in the last four years of the evaluation period, after decreasing from 329 students in 2002 to 221 students in 2005. The percentage of non-Hispanic White students remained relatively stable over the evaluation period, fluctuating between 55% and 42.4%. The percentage of non-Hispanic Black students also remained relatively stable over the first six years of the evaluation period, fluctuating between 50.7% and 42.9%, but has decreased over the last two years to 30.2%. The percentage of Asian and Hispanic students has increased over the last three years (see Table 1).

Table 1: Student Participants by Academic Year

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
American Indian /Alaska Native	N/A	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Asian/Pacific Islander		2 (0.6%)	4 (1.5%)	4 (1.6%)	4 (1.8%)	8 (3.5%)	10 (4.4%)	10 (4.7%)
Black, non-Hispanic		141 (42.9%)	134 (49.8%)	114 (45.6%)	112 (50.7%)	103 (45.0%)	87 (38.0%)	64 (30.2%)
Hispanic		4 (1.2%)	5 (1.9%)	7 (2.8%)	7 (3.2%)	20 (8.7%)	22 (9.6%)	28 (13.2%)
White, non-Hispanic		181 (55.0%)	126 (46.8%)	125 (50.0%)	98 (44.3%)	97 (42.4%)	110 (48.0%)	110 (51.9%)
Free and Reduced Lunch		119 (36.0%)	121 (45.8%)	114 (48.7%)	92 (40.5%)	99 (42.5%)	102 (45.9%)	102 (44.9%)
Total		329	269	250	221	229	229	212

*Data is from the 2007-2008 State of the Schools Report

The school is designated as a Title 1 school. The percentage of students qualified for free and reduces lunches has remained fairly consistent in the mid-forties.

Dependent Measures

The primary dependent measure for the evaluation was the number of office discipline referrals (ODR’s) issued each academic year. Office discipline referrals were issued by teachers for disruptive behaviors which rose to the level of being a safety issue or included threats or violence. Research has shown that natural resources such as the number of office discipline referrals is an efficient evaluation measure of school climate and the functioning of the school-wide discipline system (Irvin, Horner, Ingram, Todd, Sugai, Sampson, & Boland, 2006; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004).

IMPLEMENTATION

The BIST program was initiated at the request of teachers and administrators who were concerned about improving student discipline, setting policies that would become standard practice within the school community, and using strategies that had a positive focus. The primary

objective was to reduce the number of school discipline referrals by creating a positive learning environment that encouraged and reinforced academic participation, adherence to school rules, and display of pro-social skills among the student population.

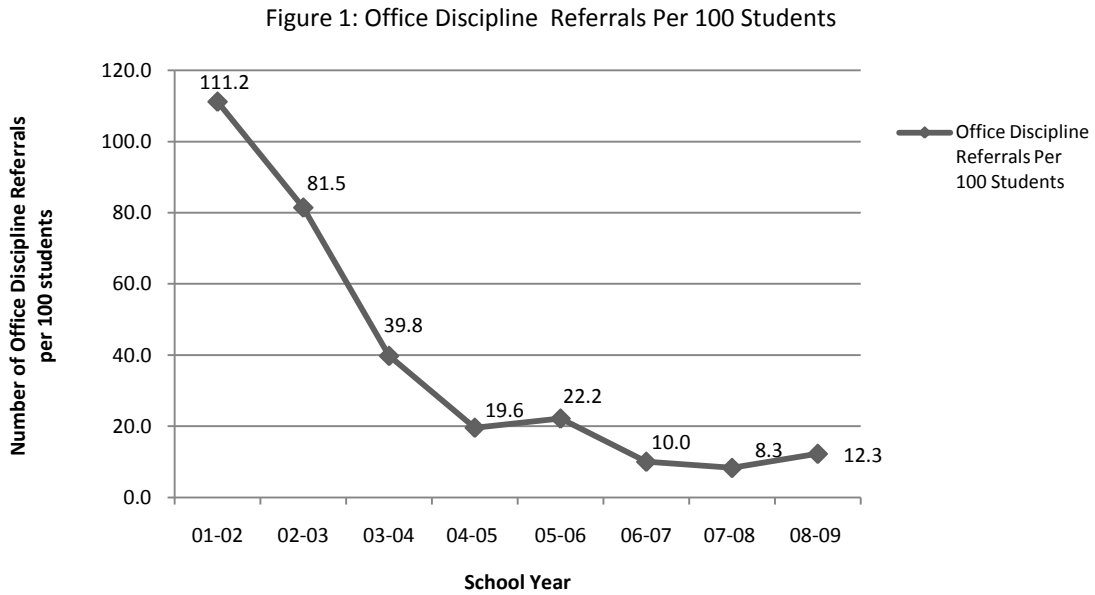
During the 2002-2003 school year school administration adopted a school-wide student discipline plan using the BIST model. Faculty and administration were trained in the BIST model, and attended a week-long workshop during the summer prior to implementation. Through the course of the seven years of implementation, new administration and faculty members completed the BIST training which was provided in subsequent years either during the summer, or during the first weeks of the fall semester (when someone was hired after the summer workshops had been completed). Administration and faculty members who had previously attended a BIST workshop were also given the opportunity to attend ongoing workshops to enhance their understanding and skills in the implementation of the BIST model.

Faculty and administration used a variety of program tracking data to determine when a student reached the threshold calling for an individual plan, monitor the student's progress in developing the identified deficit skills, and develop solutions for situations requiring more intensive interventions. Faculty and administration met once a month with an outside BIST consultant as part of the professional development in the use of the BIST methodologies and to further ensure adherence to fidelity to the program. See appendix A for a copy of the fidelity measures BIST consultants used in their discussions with faculty and administration.

RESULTS

Raw numbers for office discipline referrals (ODR's) were converted to number per one hundred students in preparing results to accommodate for fluctuating student enrollment from year to year. Figure 1 presents the numbers of ODR's recorded (per 100 students) for the

comparison group (the year prior to the implementation of the BIST program), and the seven academic years of program implementation. The data document a decrease in ODR’s in each of the first three years that the school-wide program was in effect, with the numbers leveling off for two years, dropping again, before leveling off again in the last three years.



The number of ODR’s in the first year of implementation was 26.7% lower than the comparison group (the year prior to implementing the model). The ODR’s dropped an additional 51.2% between the first year of implementation and the second year. The average number of ODR’s in the fifth through seventh year of using the BIST model was down to less than 10% of the comparison group.

Students with multiple office discipline referrals (ODR’s)

Starting in the 2004-2005 academic year, the number of students receiving multiple ODR's was tracked. Across the years, a small percentage of the overall student body was responsible for a disproportionate percentage of the ODR's (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of ODR's per Number of Students by Academic Year

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
# Students w/ 5 ODR's Percent of Total ODR's				1 (10.2%)	1 (10.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
# Students w/ 4 ODR's Percent of Total ODR's				0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (15.4%)
# Students w/ 3 ODR's Percent of Total ODR's				2 (12.2%)	1 (6.1%)	2 (26.1%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)
# Students w/ 2 ODR's Percent of Total ODR's				5 (20.4%)	6 (24.5%)	3 (26.1%)	3 (15.8%)	3 (23.1%)
# Students w/ 1 ODR Percent of Total ODR's				28 (57.1%)	29 (59.2%)	11 (47.8%)	10 (52.6%)	16 (61.5%)
# Students w/ ODR's (Total # ODR's)				36 (49)	37 (49)	16 (23)	14 (19)	20 (26)

Eight students (3.2%) received 42.9% of the ODR's in 2004-2005; eight students (3.6%) received 40.8% of the ODR's in 2005-2006; five students (2.2%) received 52.2% of the ODR's in 2006-2007; four students (1.7%) received 52.2% of the ODR's in 2007-2008; and four students (1.9%) received 38.5% of the ODR's in 2008-2009. These findings are consistent with research which indicates that approximately three to seven percent of students have behavior problems considered serious enough to warrant intervention (Little, Hudson, & Wilks, 2000) and may account for more than half of all office referrals in many schools (Sugai & Homer, 1994; Taylor et al., 1997).

Office discipline referrals (ODR's) and Race/Ethnicity

Starting in the 2004-2005 academic year, the race/ethnicity of students receiving ODR's was also tracked. The race/ethnicity of those receiving ODR's is compared to the overall student body race/ethnicity in Table 3 below.

Table 3: ODR's by Race/Ethnicity compared to school's Race/Ethnicity by academic year

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
American Indian /Alaska Native (ODR's)	-	-	-	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
American Indian /Alaska Native (School)	N/A	(0.3%)	(0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Asian/Pacific Islander (ODR'S)	-	-	-	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.7%)	1 (4.3%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (3.8%)
Asian/Pacific Islander (School)	N/A	(0.6%)	(1.5%)	4 (1.6%)	4 (1.8%)	8 (3.5%)	10 (4.4%)	10 (4.7%)
Black, non-Hispanic (ODR's)	-	-	-	30 (78.9%)	19 (51.4%)	14 (60.8%)	4 (28.6%)	14 (53.8%)
Black, non-Hispanic (School)	N/A	(42.9%)	(49.8%)	114 (45.6%)	112 (50.7%)	103 (45.0%)	87 (38.0%)	64 (30.2%)
Hispanic (ODR's)	-	-	-	1 (2.6%)	1 (2.7%)	2 (8.7%)	2 (14.3%)	2 (7.7%)
Hispanic (School)	N/A	(1.2%)	(1.9%)	7 (2.8%)	7 (3.2%)	20 (8.7%)	22 (9.6%)	28 (13.2%)
White, non-Hispanic (ODR's)	-	-	-	7 (18.4%)	16 (43.2%)	6 (26.1%)	7 (50.0%)	9 (34.6%)
White, non-Hispanic (School)	N/A	(55.0%)	(46.8%)	125 (50.0%)	98 (44.3%)	97 (42.4%)	110 (48.0%)	110 (51.9%)

No reliable comparison or trend analysis based on race/ethnicity could be conducted due to the small number of students receiving ODR's in each of the academic years.

Comparison to previous evaluation

The results of this evaluation mirror the results of two previous evaluations. The first evaluation was of a 5-year school-wide implementation of the BIST model in a public, central city middle school (grades 6-8) located in a Midwestern city having a population of less than 250,000 (Boulden & Twillman, 2008). The results of that evaluation indicated that at the end of the 5-year implementation period the number of ODR's equaled one third (33.3%) the ODR's of the comparison group. The second evaluation involved the school-wide implementation of the BIST model in two public elementary schools (grades K-5) located in a Midwestern city having a population of less than 250,000 (Boulden, 2009). The results of that evaluation indicated that at

the end of the 4-year implementation period for one of the schools, the number of ODR's equaled less than 10% of the comparison group; and the number of ODR's equaled 14.5% of the comparison group in a 2-year evaluation period of the second school.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of effective student discipline practices is a dominant concern of public administrators and educational personnel. Once school-wide behavior support programs have been established, it is critical that their efficacy be demonstrated and maintained long-term. The longitudinal evaluation described in this report involved a seven-year period post BIST implementation at a public elementary school (grade K-5) located in a Midwestern city having a population of nearly 450,000. The primary data for this evaluation were the number of student office discipline referrals (ODR's) issued at all grade levels. The recording of ODR's in the year prior to the whole-school implementation of the BIST program, provided ample data from the comparison group for the evaluation.

The evaluation revealed a reduction in office discipline referrals (ODR's). Disruptive behaviors were dealt with by the teachers in the classroom resulting in students staying in the learning environment of the classroom more often after implementation of the BIST program compared to prior to implantation. Serious rule violations which threatened the safety of students or included threats continued to be referred to the office. Across the years, less than 5% of the overall student body received almost half of the ODR's. The overall results suggest that the positive effects from implementing the BIST model on a school-wide scale appear to be cumulative and can be sustained over multiple academic years.

Limitations

Using ODR's as a primary measure is not as precise as data generated from direct classroom observations but reflects the incorporation of natural sources as an index to evaluate the usefulness of school discipline programs. It should also be noted that the reliability of recording student office discipline referrals and the procedural fidelity of teachers implementing the behavior support program were not systematically assessed beyond being one of the routine topics discussed during meeting with BIST consultants. These shortcomings stemmed from this evaluation being conducted retrospectively.

Future Evaluations

It is recommended that additional evaluations of the BIST program be conducted in other school districts at the elementary and middle school levels to further determine whether or not similar results will occur in different settings. It is also recommended that additional evaluations be designed and conducted that would facilitate a comparative analyses based on at-risk status and chronic versus infrequent discipline problems.

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Appendix A

BIST Fidelity Checklist

School name: _____ City: _____ State: _____

	Almost Never	About 25% of the time	About 50% of the time	About 75% of the time	Almost always
Faculty/staff consistently utilize each step of the BIST Continuum when responding to student discipline issues.					
When processing with the student, faculty/staff consistently connect events to the missing skill and building standard.					
Following a classroom observation, the BIST consultant is able to provide immediate feedback to the classroom teachers.					
Student plans are reviewed regularly and altered if the impact has decreased.					
Faculty/staff utilize early intervention through daily triage and providing one redirect.					
Students are sent home consistently when unable to partner and meet the standard in the office.					
Teacher support team is utilized in a productive manner by staff (i.e.: CARE, SST, etc.)					
Faculty/staff process and hold students accountable by asking students questions instead of telling them the problem.					
Faculty/staff are prevention-based with students (build in visits for exercise, triage, and consider the impact of triage, etc.)					
When there is a problem, staff is able to talk about it in a productive and effective manner.					
Faculty/staff engage in effective communication to facilitate consistent maintenance of the building standard.					
Faculty/staff utilize effective time management to resolve problems and issues.					
Faculty/staff receive adequate support to manage problems and issues.					