

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT TEAM (BIST) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION 2009 EVALUATION REPORT



Prepared for:
Ozanam

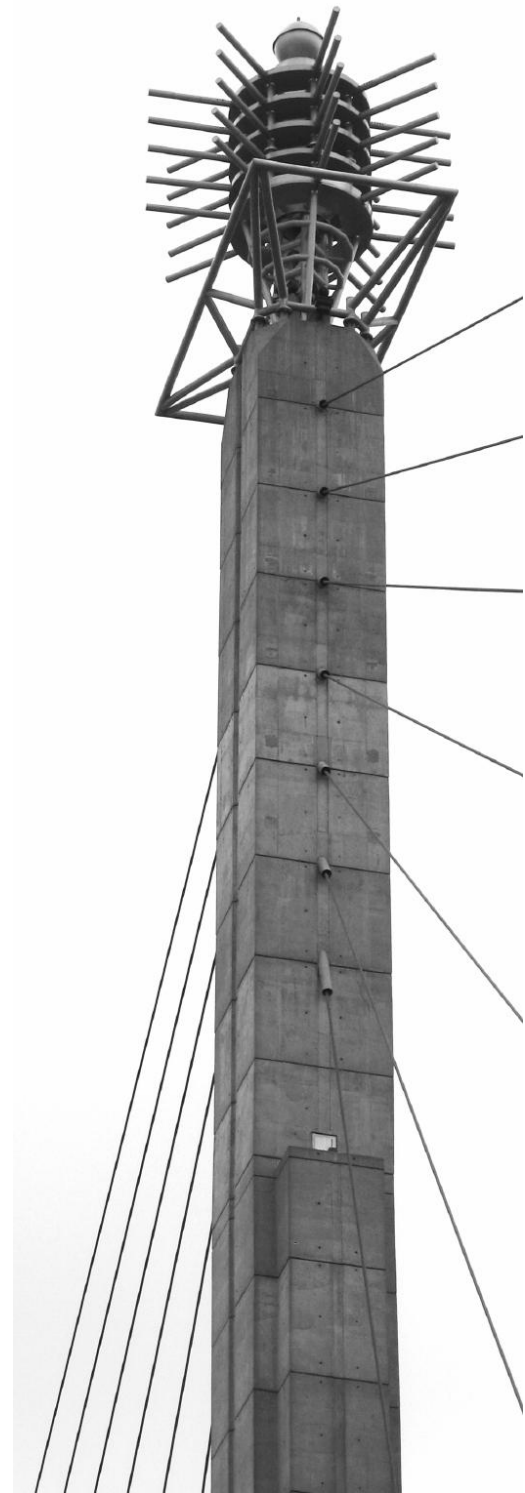
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Kansas City's Leader for Evaluation, Research, and Consultation

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) 2009 Elementary School Implementation Evaluation Report

INTRODUCTION

The Resource Development Institute (RDI) analyzed evaluation data from two elementary schools which implemented the Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) program on a school-wide basis. The evaluation data from these two elementary schools is presented in this report along with a comparison to the results of an evaluation conducted in 2008 by RDI of data from a middle school which had implemented BIST school-wide.

METHODOLOGY

A secondary analysis of office referral data collected prior to and during evaluation period was conducted. In addition, the evaluator conducted interviews with school administration, and BIST consultants.

Participant Schools

The evaluation included two public elementary schools (grades K-5) located in a Midwestern city having a population of less than 250,000. The participants included the entire student population of the school.

School “A” implemented the BIST Model in the 2005-2006 academic year. The overall enrollment of school “A” averaged slightly less than 220 students during each year in the evaluation period. School “A” is a Title 1 school with 87% of their students qualifying for free/reduced lunch and with 46% of the students being English Language Learners (see Table 1).

Table 2: School “A” Student Participants by Academic Year

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
White, non-Hispanic	113 (51.2%)	97 (48.0%)	102 (44.0%)	92 (42.6%)	N/A
Black, non-Hispanic	63 (28.5%)	64 (31.7%)	75 (32.3%)	77 (35.6%)	N/A
Hispanic	16 (7.2%)	22 (10.9%)	28 (12.1%)	18 (8.3%)	N/A
Asian/Pacific Islander	8 (3.6%)	8 (4.0%)	8 (3.4%)	9 (4.2%)	N/A
American Indian /Alaska Native	21 (9.5%)	11 (5.4%)	19 (8.2%)	20 (9.3%)	N/A
Free and Reduced Lunch	186 (84.2%)	171 (84.7%)	196 (84.5%)	187 (86.6%)	N/A
English Language Learners	N/A	N/A	80 (34.5%)	100 (46.3%)	N/A
Total	221	202	232	216	219

School “B” implemented the BIST Model in the 2006-2007 academic year. The overall enrollment of school “B” averaged slightly less than 250 students during each year in the evaluation period. School “B” was a Title 1 school with 69% of their students qualifying for free/reduced lunch and with 41% of the students being English Language Learners (see Table 2). Note: School “B” was closed at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year as part of a school district consolidation plan.

Table 2: School “B” Student Participants by Academic Year

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
White, non-Hispanic	119 (46.3%)	114 (46.5%)	103 (41.7%)
Black, non-Hispanic	40 (15.6%)	45 (18.4%)	54 (21.9%)
Hispanic	68 (26.5%)	60 (24.5%)	61 (24.7%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	28 (10.9%)	25 (10.2%)	25 (10.1%)
American Indian /Alaska Native	2 (0.8%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)
Free and Reduced Lunch	160 (62.3%)	163 (66.5%)	179 (72.5%)
English Language Learners	105 (40.9%)	80 (32.7%)	100 (40.5%)
Total	257	245	247

Dependent Measures

The primary dependent measure for the study 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 2005-2006 academic year school administration in School "A" adopted a school-wide student discipline plan using the BIST model. School administration in School "B" adopted a school-wide student discipline plan using the BIST model during the 2006-2007 academic year. In both schools, 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 evaluation period, all new administration and faculty/staff members also 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.

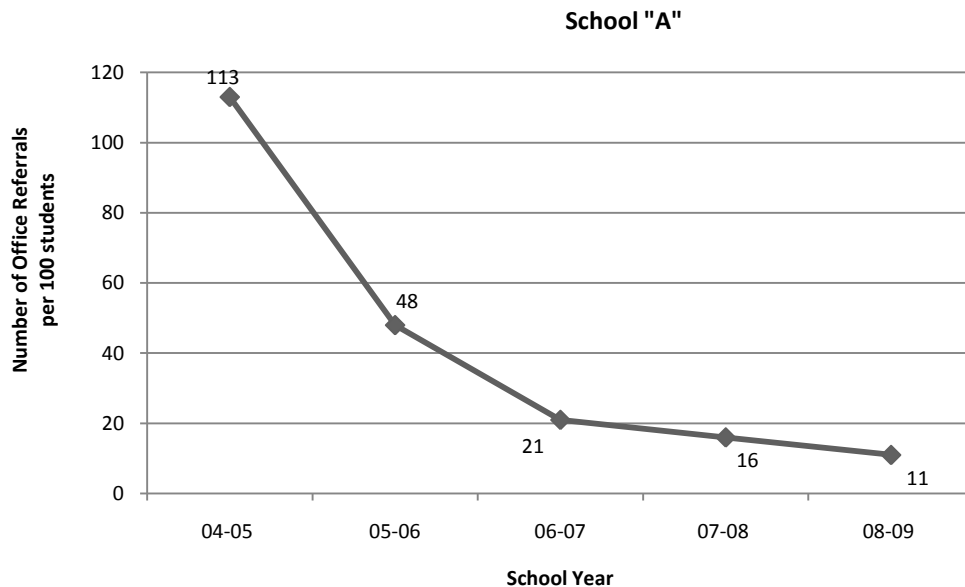
RESULTS

Data Analysis

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. Figures 1 and 2 presents the numbers of ODR's recorded (per 100 students) for the year prior to the implementation of the BIST program in each school, and the subsequent academic years of the evaluation. The data in both schools document a decrease in the frequency of ODR's in each year that the school-wide program was in effect.

School "A"

Figure 1: Office Discipline Referrals per 100 Students

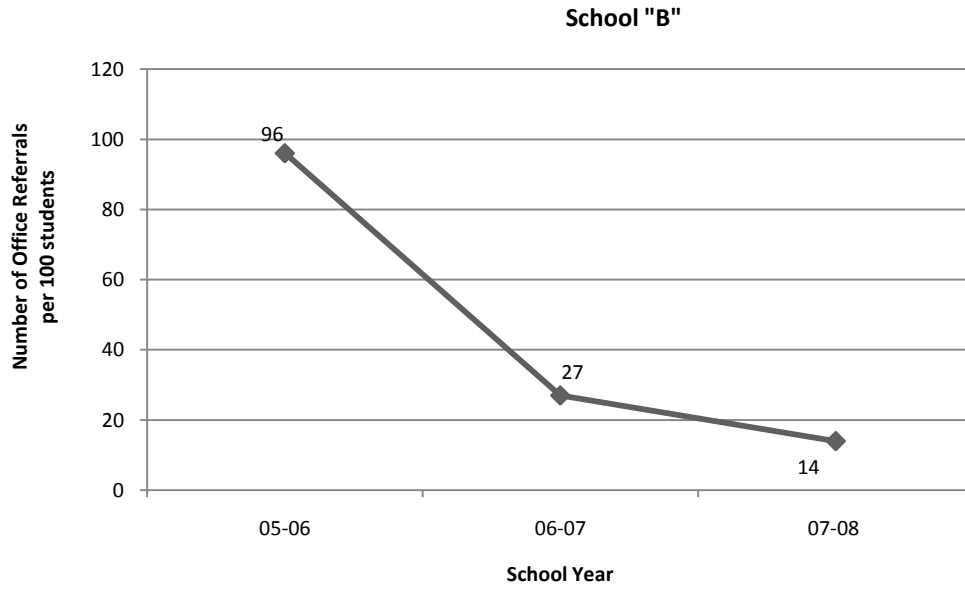


In school "A", the number of ODR's dropped by more than 57.5% in the first year, dropped an additional 56.3% between the first year of implementation and the second year. The

number of ODR's in the four year of using the BIST model was down to less than 10% of the year prior to implementing the model.

School "B"

Figure 2: Office Discipline Referrals per 100 Students



In school "B", the number of ODR's dropped by almost 71.9% in the first year; and the number of ODR's in the second year of using the BIST model was down to 14.5% of the year prior to implementing the model.

Comparison to previous evaluation

The results of this evaluation mirror the results of an evaluation 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, 2008). In that evaluation, the results indicated that at the end of the 5-year implementation period the total number of ODR's equaled one third (33.3%) of the ODR's during the year prior to implementation.

Interviews

Both the principal and staff members that were interviewed noted the importance of having an outside consultant working with the BIST teams on an ongoing basis. They indicated that learning to implement the program takes time, practice, and the regular opportunities for collaborative discussion of student concerns and barriers to implementation as they arise. They felt the outside consultant was able to establish a collaborative relationship with staff and teachers which facilitated their openness and allowed them to grow professionally in a way that would have been inhibited had the principal or another senior administrator tried to fill that role, due to the inherent hierarchical, supervisory relationship between administration and faculty.

In an interview with one of the school principals, she stated,

“Key to our success has been the training and ongoing support from the BIST staff. The entire school staff participated in the week-long training. This in-service is a must. It gave us the time needed to learn the core principles of B.I.S.T. as well as time to discuss our common expectations for students, how we would teach the children routines and procedures, and a plan for our positive incentive program.”

She continued by saying,

“One trainer spends a full day each month in our building coaching teachers and myself as we work with children. I believe this on-going support is critical to the success of implementing and sustaining BIST.”

Finally, she noted,

“As a principal, I can’t imagine leading a school without BIST. I remember how it used to be: students coming to my office for a myriad of reasons just waiting for me to deliver an ‘appropriate’ consequence. Now we have very few office referrals because teachers have an understanding of how to identify missing skills, to process and plan with students, and a school team to support their work. BIST promotes an environment that allows us to fulfill our fundamental purpose as educators: Teachers can teach and students can learn!”

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 evaluation described in this report involved a 2-year period of implementation of the BIST model at one public elementary school (grades K-5) and a 4-year period of implementation at a second public elementary school (grades K-5); both located in a Midwestern city having a population of less than 250,000. The evaluation revealed a substantial reduction in office discipline referrals. Classroom behaviors were dealt with by the teachers resulting in students being able to stay in the classroom more often than the previous classroom management process. Serious rule violations which threatened the safety of students or included threats continued to be referred to the office.

The overall results of the study suggests that the positive effects from implementing the BIST model on a school-wide scale can not only be sustained over multiple academic years but appear to be cumulative. 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 began prior to the whole-school implementation of the BIST programs, providing ample baseline data for the evaluation.

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 BIST team meetings. These shortcomings stemmed from the fact that this evaluation was conducted retrospectively and not planned as a formal research study.

Another limitation on the evaluation is that the aggregate data do not differentiate students who had infrequent discipline problems from those with more high-rate and chronic difficulties. Neither did it differentiate students who were members of identified at-risk groups based on race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, or disability.

Future Evaluations

It is recommended that additional evaluations of the BIST program continue to be conducted in other school districts, and at all school levels, to determine whether or not similar results will continue to 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.