

Maryland's Initiative

In 1998 The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Sheppard Pratt Health System (SPHS) began to collaborate on the concept of the mental health community working with schools. A team was formed which included members of MSDE and SPHS. In July 1999 MSDE/SPHS conducted the initial workshop for PBIS, "Tough Times – Tough Kids". This event consisted of a two-day workshop conducted by Dr. George Sugai from the University of Oregon. At that time, Maryland had not anticipated the potential or the enthusiasm that has greeted PBIS. Fourteen elementary school-based teams representing 9 local school systems (LSS) were trained during the July 1999 workshop. They learned to:

- Secure commitments to the process from building administrators and school staff,
- Review the status of behavior support and disciplinary practices in their schools, and
- Develop, adapt, and implement action plans to address the unique needs of their building's students and staff.

In FY 2000, Milt McKenna from MSDE and Susan Barrett from SPHS, were selected to coordinate the statewide initiative. In April 2000, McKenna and Barrett and the PBIS state leadership team conducted a two-day workshop. The training on April 25 provided local school systems' (LSS) Assistant Superintendents, supervisors of student services, supervisors of special education, and other stakeholders information on best practices and current research concerning the issues of prevention and early behavioral interventions in schools. The first day emphasized capacity building at the school level with a focus on concrete activities to support safe, nonviolent environments that optimize the potential for learning. The second day focused on the school-based teams that had been trained in July of 1999. One of the workshop's goals was to provide the LSSs with the most current information about PBIS, in order to create an environment where they would make informed decisions about school-based teams from their systems participating in the Summer 2000 Institute.

Having recognized the importance of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) initiative, MSDE committed to conduct a Summer Institute in 2000. Our work with Dr. Sugai led us to look at ways to expand this initiative to involve all 24 LSSs. Dr. Sugai returned in July 2000, and 24 new teams were trained. Additionally, 31 "Behavior Support Coaches" were trained. Coaches facilitate the efficient implementation of PBIS

in their assigned schools and provide leadership within their respective LSS for the expansion of the PBIS initiative. MSDE also provided follow-up training for the 14 teams that were trained in July 1999. A total of 38 teams had been trained, representing 21 LSSs. Before Dr. Sugai would commit to returning to work with our schools and coaches, he asked that we agree to commit to working with PBIS for five years.

In April 2001 a second Spring forum was conducted at which LSS representatives were again provided information about PBIS. The invitees included representatives of all 24 systems, and leaders from schools who might be interested in implementing PBIS at their schools. In July 2001 the second annual PBIS Institute was held at SPHS. 37 new school teams were trained representing 22 LSS. An additional 17 Behavior Support Coaches were trained to work with the new and existing schools. And in July 2002, 53 additional teams were trained along with 35 new Behavior Support coaches.

In 2002, Johns Hopkins University's Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence joined MSDE and SPHS to support the statewide evaluation of the PBIS initiative.