

Highlight: Christa McAuliffe High School

Challenger Memorial Youth Camp (Challenger) is located in Lancaster, CA, about 70 miles north of Los Angeles, and houses approximately 200 young people. Challenger is divided into three camps: Onizuka, Jarvis, and McNair. Onizuka is the smallest of the three camps and houses young people who are repeat offenders, violent offenders or have committed felonies. Camps Jarvis and McNair house youth with 3-12 month sentences. All of the youth at Camp Challenger attend Christa McAuliffe High School, which is located on the grounds. Before the implementation of SWPBIS at McAuliffe, behavior referrals and suspensions averaged 269/month at Camp Jarvis, 105/month at Camp McNair, and 73/month at Camp Onizuka. Since implementation of PBIS at McAuliffe last year, the total average number of behavior referrals and suspensions has gone down at Camp Jarvis to 134/month, at Camp McNair to 62/month, and at Camp Onizuka to 34/month.

Why did you start SWPBIS at McAuliffe?

Principal Kimberly Humphries (Humphries):

In October 2011, as a result of a settlement agreement, we were required to change the culture and practices here at McAuliffe High School. One of our advisors for that agreement knew about SWPBIS and suggested it to us. Mike Nelson, an expert in implementing SWPBIS in juvenile facilities from Kentucky, did a pitch to the administration. We agreed that we would begin to implement SWPBIS and then put together a leadership team. The SWPBIS leadership team consisted of a school psychologist, five teachers, two para-educators, a staff person from the Department of Mental Health, a general probation staff member and one of the probation directors.

How did you roll SWPBIS out to the entire school staff and ensure buy-in?

Before we introduced SWPBIS to the entire staff, we had them complete surveys about the discipline problems they were facing in the classroom and with classroom management. After reading these surveys and distilling the information, we introduced SWPBIS to the staff as a solution. The leadership team then attended SWPBIS training. After that training, we held a training for the rest of the staff, where we explained the structure and changes that were going to take place. For instance, we told the staff about the new three expectations that we had for our students - Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe.

What obstacles to implementation did you experience?

Many of our staff members are veterans and have lived through many programs that purported to fix problems and did not. We had to explain that SWPBIS is not a coin program that comes in a box, with all the curriculum pieces and that will go with the wind; it is a framework for how we will manage everything at the site. Then we held an in-service training demonstrating what SWPBIS would look like dealing with the specific behaviors that the staff identified in their surveys. Since then, the staff has been mostly receptive. There are, however, some people who are hesitant to get on board, and they are also the people with the most discipline problems. We address that by having our SWPBIS school psychologist and our floating teacher - who is not tied to any specific classroom - do regular classroom observations and provide additional technical assistance and trainings, particular to those teachers who still have the highest number of referrals and greatest difficult with classroom management. After the observations, these peer mentors give the teacher suggestions, model how s/he should deal with behavior and continue to provide coaching and support.

What steps did you take to implement SWPBIS in your school?

After we collected and analyzed the survey and the SWPBIS leadership team finished the initial round of training, we held all-staff training in November 2011. From November to December, we developed our **Facility Wide/Expectations Matrix (Matrix)** and our **discipline response or interventions flow chart** with the staff. In January 2012, the PBIS team gave another staff

training, during which we discussed the “Matrix” and procedures and made it relevant for our site behaviors. The leadership team continues to meet weekly and move our **PBIS Implementation Plan** forward.

Starting in February 2012, we posted the behavioral expectations in classrooms and all over the school. To further reinforce the behavior expectations, a student comes into my office every morning to read the PBIS rules over the loud speaker. The student either reads all the rules or says, “I just want to remind everyone to be safe, respectful and responsible this morning.” By June, we had developed **lesson plans** about the behavior expectations and the PBIS team modeled how to teach the lessons.

Then, we had our first summer, which was chaotic, because the primary teachers were off, and we weren’t prepared for what to do with the kids. In September, when the teachers returned, we had another whole-staff training with **Dr. Jeffrey Sprague**, an expert from the University of Oregon. Since we instituted SWPBIS here, the staff has had about three trainings with Dr. Sprague, and the SWPBIS leadership team has had about six trainings. Dr. Sprague’s trainings are free to us, because he has a grant to put SWPBIS in place in schools in juvenile facilities.

We have also instituted many different incentives for the students in keeping with the SWPBIS framework. Students can be awarded 12 points every day for positive conduct at the school. If they receive 70% of their points, then probation will have an incentive or reward for them at 5pm every day. There is also a student of the month assembly at the end of the month where two students from each camp who are picked by their teachers are honored in front of the whole school.

We also contracted with It’s Time for Kids (Time for Kids) to bring rewards to our students and there is an entertainment incentive twice a month. For instance, today, Time for Kids is sponsoring a magic show and luncheon for students who have excelled academically and behaviorally. Probation has a merit ladder and

some students from the top are selected to attend. Our SWPBIS points are factored into merit ladder calculations. Additionally, there is a literacy contest, and the students who write essays that are chosen by the school staff to be the best get to attend, as well as students who have performed well on reading (Achieve 3000) and math (Think through Math) assessments.

What climate changes have you experienced since implementing SWPBIS at McAuliffe?

Before SWPBIS, I could sit in this office and constantly hear teachers, on the radios, saying, “I need a restructure,” meaning that they needed security to remove a student from their classroom. That was the only tool that they had. Now it is clear which behaviors should be dealt with at the classroom level without a restructure because of the **discipline response or interventions flow chart**. If a student continues to have difficulties, there are other steps in place like a student planning team meeting or, if the student has an Individualized Education Program, a behavior support plan meeting. Additionally, for students who need even more support, Probation and mental health collaborate to create a Tier 2, specialized, supervision plan where the student will check in with school administration to develop behavior goals and check out, at the end of the day, to evaluate whether those goals were achieved and what extra steps the student needs to take. Since everything is very punitive at juvenile facilities, we’re trying to change that culture. So now a suspension or restructure is the last resort after the teacher has taken all the steps they can take.

When I walked through campus before SWPBIS, there would be kids sitting outside because they had been kicked out of class. You don’t see that anymore. And when you go into classrooms, the kids are more respectful. If you ask what SWPBIS is or the expectations, they can tell you and they know they will be rewarded for appropriate behavior. You’ll hear them saying at the end of the class, “Can I get my points for today?” Additionally, we now have a united

front with Probation because they give the students “Caught You Doing Good” tickets, the PBIS points that we give contribute to Probation’s merit ladder, and many of Probation’s structures and procedures are influenced by PBIS.

Since starting SWPBIS at McAuliffe, office referrals and suspensions from class have decreased significantly.

What next steps are you taking to ensure that SWPBIS continues to be effective at Challenger?

Currently, we are honing things and moving our **PBIS agenda** forward. For instance, we are considering a new database right now that will allow us to separate our office referrals from restructures. Right now, the two things are the same. Additionally, Dr. Sprague and his team are doing studies on SWPBIS in juvenile facilities so he works with our team monthly. He meets with the whole staff then the leadership team and a research assistant helps us trouble shoot. We are also working on increasing parent involvement. We have been able to get student involvement up; the youth have been making suggestions about the incentives they would like to see and suggested a SWPBIS logo drawing contest. On the other hand, we held an open house for parents and only eight parents of our 200 students attended. We really, really need to focus on parents and families and cultivate more buy-in.

What advice do you have for other educators or juvenile facility administrators?

Humphries: You shouldn’t assume that any kids magically know how to exhibit appropriate behavior. They don’t. We have to teach them what our expectations are and reward them when they meet them and set up consistent structures and clear expectations that all staff and students understand and consistently work on together.

Feel free to contact us:

Principal Kim Humphries

Office: [\(661\) 940-4227](tel:6619404227)

Email: Humphries_Kimberly@lacoedu.edu