

Highlight: Napa Valley Unified School District

Why did Napa Valley Unified School District decide to implement School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS)?

Dr. Laura Ryan, Administrator Interventions: In 2002, the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD) was awarded a Federal Elementary Counseling Grant. We used grant funds to provide small group and individual mental health counseling. When the grant ended, the services ended. In 2006, the NVUSD cabinet and Board of Education agreed upon a non-negotiable goal of insuring that all students who require academic and/or behavioral interventions receive them. In an effort to meet this goal we sought another Elementary Counseling Grant, but we realized our model needed both a strong universal component and to be sustainable. Thus our proposal was based on a SWPBIS model designed to truly address all three Tiers of our RtI Pyramid. Our pilot efforts were so successful that we quickly implemented a District Wide rollout.

When did you first decide to implement SWPBIS?

Three elementary schools in our district began to implement SWPBIS in 2007. The learning and results from these three schools were included in the 2008-2011 Federal Grant application. The grant writing team included the Administrator for Interventions and the district Behavioral Management Specialist (BMS). The BMS was a social worker who was a part of the California Department of Education Diagnostic Center PENT organization (Positive Environments, Network of Trainers). Both the BMS & our then Director of Special Education were certified by Dr. Jeffrey Sprague to be “trainers of trainers” for the BEST Program, a form of SWPBIS. Dr. Sprague wrote a letter of support for our grant and continues to provide regular, differentiated training for district BEST teams from all of our schools. Dr. Sprague’s work and the BEST program were written into the grant for four elementary schools as well as the Second Step SEL Curriculum and subsequently the Steps to Respect Bullying Prevention Program. Two of the grant mental health professionals were ultimately trained to be “trainers of trainers” for these two programs.

Our grant originally called for BEST for Tier 1, Second Step for Tier 2 small group counseling, and individual support and/or referral for Tier 3. However, during the first year one of our experienced counselors made it clear that we really needed to provide Second Step and Steps to Respect school-wide if we were to sustain the positive effects of the grant. The grant was modified to try this at two of the four schools. The practice has continued in our elementary schools and the district has hired a one-day a week counselor to coach and support this portion of our PBIS implementation. In 2009 the district hired a full time PBIS Program Specialist, Laura Mooiman. Dr. Stephen Perry, the lead mental health professional with the federal grant has written and led subsequent grants to augment our implementation of SWPBIS.

Is SWPBIS full implemented in all of your schools or are their different levels of implementation?

SWPBIS is implemented in all of our 30 schools. Schools are in one of three Phases of implementation based on the CalSTAT rubric for implementation which measures the functioning of the PBIS site team in 10 areas: team based implementation, school-wide implementation, behavioral expectations defined, behavioral expectations taught, reinforcement of appropriate behavior, problem behaviors defined, monitor and correct behavioral errors, data based decision making, planning process, and documented policies.

How did you roll out SWPBIS, i.e., what is your model for training individuals schools and school leadership teams?

Dr. Jeff Sprague was the inspiration for our implementation. Early on in our Federal Elementary Counseling Grant we realized the value he was bringing to our district. His presentations were essential in providing the “why” and he was able to provide a clear step-by-step path and process for implementation. Hence, when he presented we simply got a bigger room and invited teams from each of our schools. It did not hurt that the superintendent was quite clear that participation was mandatory.

The District BEST lead team (Laura Ryan, Ed.D., Stephen Perry, Ph.D., Ron Goldberg, PPS, and Rich Whittall, PPS) grew to include Laura Mooiman, MSW. In 2009 Laura became the new Program Specialist for PBIS and district “BEST” coach. She worked with the grant leadership team to develop an annual plan of professional development. Each Fall, Ms. Mooiman provides a, “Phase 1 - BEST Content Training” as there are always new players. Additionally each year we host a “Phase 2 & 3 – BEST Booster Training” with Dr. Sprague for existing teams on various topics such as Restorative Practices and Tier 2 Interventions. Additionally, we offered quarterly professional development opportunities on mental health related topics (classroom management, anxiety, eating disorders,

working with adolescents, child development, LGBTQ issues, etc). These presentations were originally offered only to grant schools but they became district wide based on “popular demand”. Occasionally regional experts were available, but generally presenters included experts from the District, community agencies, and private practitioners. An example of the latter is Dr. Daniel Peters who presented on “Taming the Worry Monster” and “The Characteristics of Gifted Learners.” These quarterly trainings were offered to teachers and other staff members on “PD Wednesdays” which are shortened days for teacher collaboration. Principals supported the process by giving up one of their monthly staff meetings. These quarterly trainings became so successful that other district administrators now provide monthly PD Wednesdays and there is always a PBIS related presentation. Lastly, each year through CalSTAT funding we have had Jeffrey Sprague (or other staff from the University of Oregon’s Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior) come to particular schools and consult with site personnel on their specific needs.

How do you assess whether implementation is actually happening?

The grant schools were initially monitored by the grant lead team. We have significantly evolved. Now Site BEST leadership teams and the district BEST coach calibrate the school’s Phase of Implementation using the Cal Stat Rubric (displayed above). In addition, discipline data, especially suspension and expulsion data, is regularly analyzed. Almost all NVUSD schools use the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) database, which greatly simplifies analysis of discipline data. The district BEST coach became a formal SWIS Facilitator to support implementation of SWIS. Finally, all site administrators have included PBIS goals as part of their evaluations. This insures that implementation remains a high priority of District leaders. Schools experiencing difficulty with implementation have received additional district level support along with a clear message that PBIS and compassionate leadership are true values of our district.

What changes in your schools and/or District have you seen since you began implementing SWPBIS?

Suspensions and expulsions have dramatically decreased. In 2007-2008 we had 58 expulsions; in 2011-12 we had 26. This resulted in an estimated increase in ADA revenue of \$190,000. Further, in 2009-2010 we spent \$146,000 on lost ADA for suspensions but last year just \$62,580.

Our school climates have significantly improved. On the 2012 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), NVUSD student report a 23% higher level of school connectedness than they did in 2007. Our 9th graders report feeling 57% safer than in 2007. Our CHKS results are also much higher than state averages.

These positive climates translate into better attendance. For the 2008-09 school year NVUSD’s ADA was 95.3%. Last year (2011-12) it improved to 96.1. For a district our size (18,000 students) this increased attendance results in approximately \$720,000 additional revenue annually. It is worth noting that the improvements are particularly pronounced in the four grant schools and a 5th school which has been the recipient of a Health & Human Services Prevention, Education, Intervention grant, led by Dr. Stephen Perry, whose intent was to fully implement SWPBIS.

Of course, the ultimate accountability measure is academic performance. From 2007-08 to 2011-12 the average NVUSD API score increased 19 points from 765 to 784. The API of the four grant schools has increased more than twice as fast. Their scores increased on average 45 points, from 777 to 822. It is also worth noting that in 2012 the API of the elementary school which received the county funds to fully implement SWPBIS increased 12 points, twice the NVUSD average of 6.

What advice would you give to other school districts and schools who want to implement a research-based alternative, like SWPBIS?

1. Encourage your superintendent to lead the way. Their voice is essential. We were fortunate (and perhaps persuasive) that although we experienced a change in superintendents (August, 2010) the message from this office was steadfast, strong, and supportive.
2. Make sure that there is alignment from the Board of Education, through cabinet, and to site level administrators. Create &/or align your policies for behavior, suspensions, and expulsions. See our Student Behavior Expectations handbook and our Positive School Climate Board Policy for examples.
3. Our most successful district-wide initiatives are led by credible, knowledgeable, passionate “champions” who will do whatever it takes to make things happen. Find these people and nurture them. Then nurture their disciples.
4. Provide *on-site* coaching. Another essential.
5. Provide a thoughtful multi-year plan of professional development. Balance the desire to keep things fresh with the need to ensure that the implementation is not a “mile wide & an inch deep”.
6. Provide professional development for *all* of your stake holders: i.e. bus drivers, food service workers, instructional assistants, yard supervisors, local law enforcement, fire departments, the faith community, and community agencies.
7. There will always be pockets of resistance. “Go with the goers”, then support the next most ready schools, and finally, require the schools that “prefer to go last.” All significant initiatives must be phased in.
8. Have a business plan. There will be connected costs.

9. Share results with the management team, teachers, parents & the community. Regularly.
10. Learn about Restorative Practices.
11. Write grants and leverage the dollars.

How is your District funding SWPBIS and how much is it costing for the District as a whole and/or per school?

1. Our initial grant provided 1.2 million dollars - \$400,000 for each of three years. While a large portion of the grant provided specific sites with mental health professionals we also included all sites to hear granted funded speakers.
2. Health & Human Services Prevention, Education & Intervention grant - \$160,000 per year.
3. CalStat Grant - \$47,000 for two years \$27,000 for one year.
4. District .8 BEST coach & .2 Second Step/Steps to Respect Coach
5. Substitutes – 2 per school x 3 days per year for district training. Funding by school sites or grants as necessary.
6. Materials, 2nd Step Curriculum– provided by our Napa County Office of Education and grants
7. Additional 2nd Step kits, Steps to Respect kits, Systematic Supervision videos, other reference materials – costs dependent on school size. A school with 18 teachers might spend \$8,000 for materials.

Are there any tools that you can share with other schools and districts who would like to implement SWPBIS and how are those tools used by your districts?

We have many resources on our PBIS webpage.

-<http://www.nvusd.k12.ca.us/PBIS>

-IRIS Media – we own many of their excellent training DVDs and check them out to schools regularly

-https://irised.com/k_12

Feel Free to Contact Us:

Laura Ryan, Ed.D., Administrator Interventions

707-253-3500 lryan@nvusd.k12.ca.us

Laura Mooiman, MSW, Program Specialist

707-259-8447, lmooiman@nvusd.k12.ca.us

Stephen Perry, Ph.D., SAP Coordinator

707-738-4611, srperry@nvusd.k12.ca.us