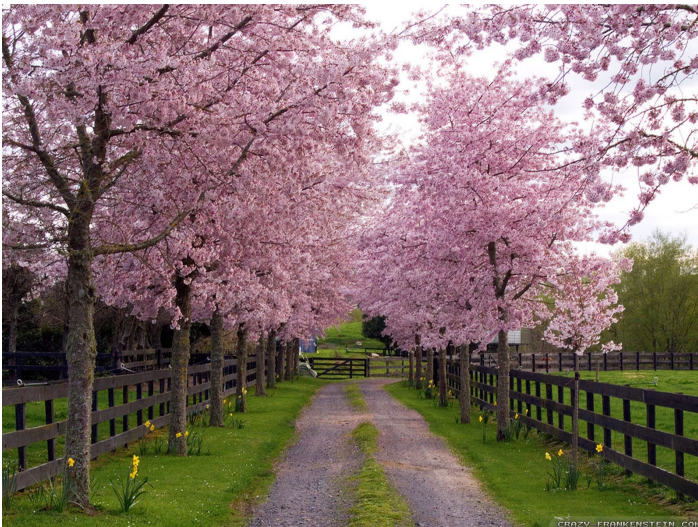




RISPA QUARTERLY



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SPRING 2014

2012-2013

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RtI Committee Chair

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The following "elected positions are currently
vacant:

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Corresponding Secretary

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Newsletter Editor

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Professional Development Committee Chair

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Educator Evaluation Committee Co-Chairs

Susan Casey Torrey

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Gina Dufresne

ginadufresne@yahoo.com



Save the Date!!

May 14th

Chelo's in Warwick

Student Consortium

There is a student consortium meeting coming up on Wednesday, May 14. The student consortium will take place at Chelo's in Warwick (on the water). We would like to invite any and all graduate students who are a member of RISPA or are interested in knowing more about RISPA to attend. At this meeting, you will be able to present any posters or papers that you have been working on this year.

For ANY and all RISPA members! Come and Join!

Food is provided and cash bar will be open





RISPA Announcement

Election for the Office of Treasurer

Nominations are currently being accepted for the **office of Treasurer** on RISPA's Executive Board. Nominations for this office will be accepted from any current Association member. **A nominee must be a current RISPA member who has attended at least three Board meetings in the past twelve (12) months.** Independent nominations must be made in writing. The signature of five current Association members is required for each independent nomination. These names will be included in the slate to the Nominating Committee of the Executive Board. **All nominations should be submitted by June 8, 2014.** The names of all nominees submitted in writing along with the slate presented to the Board by the Nominating Committee, if different, will be presented to the general membership for a vote. See timeline below.

- Nominations will be accepted through June 8, 2014. Send your nomination to Gail Mastropietro, Nominating Committee Chair, at or mail it to mastropietrol@verizon.net or Gail.Mastropietro@ppsd.org

RISPA Nominating Committee
 3 Lawnacre Drive
 Greenville, RI 02828
- On June 11, 2014 at RISPA's monthly Board meeting, the Nominating Committee will present to the Executive Board the names of all nominees submitted in writing along with the slate.
- The nominee(s) for the office of President Elect will be presented to the general membership **for a vote by mid-July 2014 (via listserv) and the end of July or early August 2014 (via electronic summer newsletter).**
- Ballots will be accepted via email or mail but must be received by August 31st.
- **The election will close on August 31, 2014.**

Eligibility for Elected Office Officers shall be elected from the Regular (Professional) or Retired categories and shall be members in good standing who have been Board members for at least one year. No more than one position may be a Retired member.

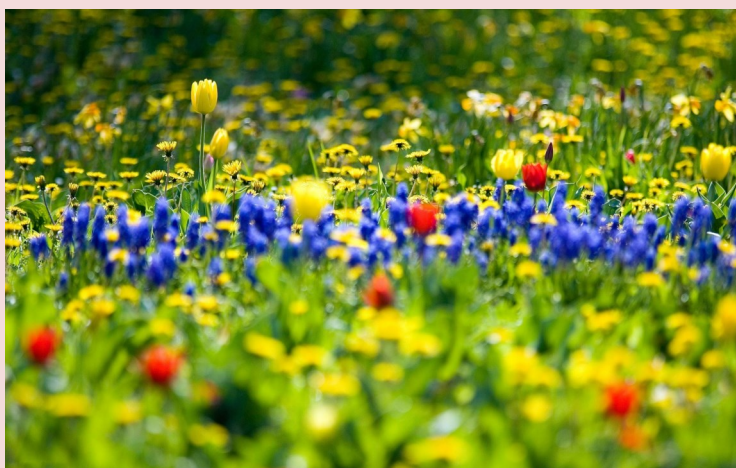
Officers' Duties

The responsibilities of the Treasurer are as follows:

1. Collect annual dues from membership
2. Handle all monies garnered from conferences
3. Provide payment for all receipts presented that have had board approval

4. Present written receipts, disbursements, income, and checking and saving balances at monthly board meetings
5. Collect dues and payments at conferences
6. Publish an annual report for the newsletter
7. Secure the services of an accountant to file a tax return

Terms Each officer shall preside for a two year term with the exception of the President-Elect, whose term shall be for one year. This term is to be served on the second year of the term of the slate of officers holding office. No officer shall hold the same office for more than one consecutive term.



Want to join the RISPA Listserv? It's quick and easy...

1. **Compose a new mail message** from the email address where you would like to receive listserv messages (note that work emails sometimes put listserv messages directly into spam, so it might be easier to use your home address)
2. In the **"To" box, type: RISPAListserv-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**
3. **Leave the rest of the email (subject and content) blank** and press send
4. Within a few minutes, you will receive an email from Yahoo Groups asking you to confirm your request.
5. **Click on the link in that email to confirm your request**, and it will be sent to Kim Pristawa to approve. You're done!

Once your request is approved, you will receive two emails: one letting you know your request was approved and the other welcoming you to yahoo Groups (the RISPA Listserv).

You DO NOT need to finish creating an account by joining Yahoo, even though it mentions that in your welcome email. As long as you have been approved, you will begin receiving Listserv messages via email.

Message from the President



Dear RISPA Members,

I hope that you have been surviving another blustery New England winter, and that this message finds you well. I have found that every school year presents its own challenges, and this year has been no exception for school psychologists in Rhode Island. One notable advantage of our position in schools is that we have an expansive skill set that is well suited to adapt to a changing educational landscape. New roles have emerged this year, such as supporting students who are struggling to meet NECAP graduation requirements, consulting with teachers regarding professional development and modifying curriculum to match common core standards, and undergoing our own support professional evaluations. Please know that one function of RISPA is to be able to support RI school psychologists through these types of changes.

As most of you are well aware, RISPA holds board meetings once per month. This year a more flexible meeting schedule was created to accommodate our membership. It has been refreshing to witness more participation from members at various career stages, and greater involvement by students from both esteemed RI graduate programs. Recent board meeting discussion has also prompted our Legislative Committee to examine the role of “high stakes” testing in RI public schools. Research into this area has repeatedly confirmed that single use tests, like the NECAP, were never intended to be used in such a manner. If you have an opinion about the role that school psychologists should have in this matter, feel free to attend an upcoming board meeting and share your thoughts with Legislative Committee members. Our next board meeting will be held March, 12th from 5-6:00 pm at Winman Junior High School in Warwick. All members are welcome to attend.

A lot of fresh ideas and perspectives have been offered at recent RISPA board meetings, and an unprecedented number of graduate students have attended or volunteered to support RISPA this year. As president, I would like to offer thanks and praise to any student who assisted with the planning, organizing, or provided volunteer service during this year's Fall Conference. The day would not have been nearly as successful without all of the collective efforts of URI and RIC school psychology graduate students. As additional thanks, RISPA will be offering another Student Consortium meeting in the upcoming months. It was originally scheduled for 2/13/14, but was canceled due to one of our many “snow” days of late. Be on the lookout for announcements on the RISPA Listserv and Facebook regarding a new date for the Student Consortium. For those unfamiliar with its purpose, these meetings are designed for graduate students who are interested in learning more about RISPA and NASP, or expanding their professional network. Thanks to RIC student liaison, Bethany Bressette, and URI student liaison, Amanda Ramirez, for their assistance in communicating this year with our student members. Once again I'd like to encourage graduate students, from first year entry level all the way through practicum and internship, to attend. If you have any questions or suggestions about the meeting, please contact RISPA's hardworking newsletter editor, Monica Mabe at monbeebe@gmail.com, or RISPA Rtl Chair, Paige Hamilton at phamilton@my.uri.edu.

At this time I'd like to take a moment to reflect back on our Fall Conference held 11/15/13. It truly was a unique PD opportunity. Rightfully titled, “Making it Work: Practical Applications for Behavior Intervention and RTI”, RISPA presented three expert speakers on the topic that was highlighted in the morning session by Dr. Howie Knoff of Project Achieve. Dr. Knoff successfully provided an overview of an evidenced based Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS). I'd like to make a special acknowledgment and thank RISPA's Rtl Committee for supplementing Dr. Knoff's presentation with useful visual aids, and giving examples of concrete ways of applying presented material within individual school districts. For those who were unable to attend, Dr. Knoff has graciously offered to share professional resources with RISPA members, and encouraged us to contact him with feedback about his presentation or requests via email at

knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net. In addition, here are 2 links that Dr. Knoff sent specifically to be shared with RISPA members:

<http://www.projectachieve.info/project-achieve-program/free-technical-assistance-papers.html>

<http://www.projectachieve.info/services/esea-improvement-planning.html>

NASP approved professional development, like our Fall Conference, is just one service offered to our members. For several years now, RISPA has been monitoring the course of the Support Professionals Evaluation Tool. Although this year has been termed a “gradual” implementation year by RIDE, I can attest to the fact that it has resembled a “real” evaluation process for those of us going through it. Thankfully there have been a number of supportive resources from RIDE that have been shared with RISPA members, including sample SLO's (Student Learning Objectives). I'm also happy to report that another member of the RIDE team, Melissa Denton, has taken over as point person for support professionals during the gradual implementation year. She has organized a focus group on Tuesday, February 25th from 4:30-6:30pm, which will provide school psychologists who are currently being evaluated using the RIDE model a chance to voice concerns. She has asked that participants bring their guidebook and a copy of their SLO or SOO with them to this session. Registration is required. Mrs. Denton has asked that RISPA members use this link to register:

<https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopReg/ViewWorkshop.aspx?workshopid=918>

Another way to make your voice heard about the evaluation is through the RIDE mid-year survey. The survey was created to gather information on how the model is working and areas for refinement. It has been created for all support professionals to take no matter what evaluation model they are currently working with. As of the beginning of the month, 44 school psychologists completed the survey. If interested, follow this link to the support professional survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/13-14MYSP>.

Finally, I'd like to remind everyone of NASP's 2014 Annual Convention being held very soon from February 18 – 21, in Washington, DC. Like in the past, this year's convention offers the most appropriate type of professional development for our discipline and includes over 1000 sessions on topics ranging from intervention and assessment, to ethics, autism, school crisis, and more. I am looking forward to it and hope to see many RI practitioners and graduate students in attendance!

For those unable to make it to the NASP convention, I'd like to wish you all a wonderful and restful February vacation. Best of luck with the remainder of your school year!

Sincerely,

Steve DeBlois

RISPA President



Transformative Leadership for Social-Emotional Learning

By Maurice J. Elias, Mary Utne O'Brien, and Roger P. Weissberg
Reprinted with permission by NASP- PL 2006

Anyone walking through the main doors of Thomas Jefferson School is greeted by a poster: "The House of Learners: Where Dreams Are Born, Respect and Responsibility Rule, Caring Is Shown, and Leaders Are Grown." These are not mere words; they are the organizing principles for the integration of social, emotional, and academic learning at each grade level. Students are encouraged to dream and empowered to act. There is a focus on the process of discovery and experimentation in science, social studies, music, art, and writing. And students are asked what kind of school they would like to have and what they are willing to do to make it happen, and then they are given the chance to develop the skills they need to get involved. The same questions are asked about their community and the wider world in which they live. There is increasing evidence that students who attend such schools as Thomas Jefferson are more social-emotionally competent, are less likely to engage in violence and related problem

behaviors, and are more academically engaged and successful (Durlak & Weissberg, 2005).

Social-Emotional Learning

When it comes to the impact of mental health on academic outcomes, the research is finally catching up with veteran teacher leaders' observations: developing social-emotional competence is key to success in school and in life.

SEL addresses the development of five key areas of social-emotional competence (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2003):

- Self-awareness: identification and recognition of one's own emotions, recognition of strengths in one's self and others, a sense of self-efficacy, and self-confidence
- Self-management: impulse control, stress management, persistence, goal setting, and motivation
- Social awareness: empathy, respect for others, and the ability to see different perspectives of the same issue

- Relationship skills: cooperation, willingness to seek and provide help, and communication
- Responsible decision making: evaluation and reflection and personal and ethical responsibility.

Research shows that SEL has positive effects on academic performance; benefits physical health; improves citizenship; is demanded by employers; is essential for lifelong success; and reduces the risk of maladjustment, failed relationships, interpersonal violence, and substance abuse (Elias et al., 1997; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Greenberg et al. (2003) reported that well-designed and well-implemented SEL programming enhances social-emotional competencies (e.g., assertiveness and communication skills), reduces internalizing and externalizing disorders, and improves academic performance. Multiyear, structured classroom instruction that applies social-emotional skills to real-life situations and focuses on school ecology and climate has the most enduring benefits.

Durlak and Weissberg (2005) have conducted the most extensive research synthesis of school-based prevention programming to date—a meta-analysis of almost 300 studies of social-emotional development interventions in elementary, middle level, and high schools. In research with experimental and control groups, these programs significantly improved social-emotional skills, self-

Maurice J. Elias is a professor in the Department of Psychology at Rutgers University; codeveloper of the Social Decision Making-Social Problem Solving Project; and vice chair of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Mary Utne O'Brien is executive director of CASEL. Roger P. Weissberg is a professor of psychology and education at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and president of CASEL.

Student Services is produced in collaboration with the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Articles and related handouts can be downloaded at www.naspcenter.org/principals.

esteem, school bonding, and adherence to social norms; reduced disruptive behavior, school violence, and suspensions; and increased positive classroom behavior, academic achievement, and test scores. A clear pattern of results showed that mental health is affected by SEL classroom instruction and school climate, and that these factors combine to enhance academic performance.

Performing well on tests requires such social-emotional skills as self-control, cooperative interaction, appropriate assertiveness, and problem solving. These skills are required during test preparation, on the day of the event, and when engaged in the larger set of tasks associated with academic learning and homework. Because students today are faced with higher degrees of uncertainty and pressure regarding their daily lives and their futures, many feel insecure, disenfranchised, disillusioned, and even fearful. When a school is not a safe, engaging place, when it is filled with adults and youth who are in conflict or beset by expressions of disrespect, the attention and energy needed for learning is dissipated or diverted.

Although an extensive body of research has demonstrated that skills can be taught through curricula and other forms of discrete intervention programs, their internalization is a function of schoolwide opportunities for skill development, practice, and

reinforcement in multiple contexts throughout the day and an overall climate of caring, support, and high expectations (Devaney, O'Brien, Resnik, Keister, & Weissberg, 2006; see also www.casel.org). Ultimately, a reciprocal relationship exists between social-emotional skills and school climate. A positive school environment promotes SEL, and SEL facilitates a supportive climate. Because social, emotional, and academic growth are interdependent, the result of schoolwide SEL is synergistic progress in all of these areas.

This is well illustrated by some of the projects in Thomas Jefferson School in which students integrate their academic and social-emotional learning. The trust and positive expectations of adults in middle level and high schools provide the gateway for students to gain a sense of community and mutual self-worth as they plan special school events, such as dances, concerts, musicals, plays, and spirit nights.

The public nature of these activities and the cooperation required to plan them give students opportunities and strong incentives for enhancing their social-emotional skills. Participating in gift drives for needy children, working with Habitat for Humanity or another charity, or mobilizing relief efforts in response to a sudden local tragedy strengthens students' commitment to others and makes the school a source

of positive identity and service to the larger community. Academics become a means to achieve valued goals. Descriptions of these student skills and more can be found at the Web site of the Illinois State Board of Education, which has established SEL standards for early elementary through high school students (www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm).

Transformative Leadership

Accomplishing the kinds of changes needed to integrate SEL into secondary schools requires transformative leadership: leadership that is willing to realign structures and relationships to achieve genuine and sustainable change. Although there are more elements of transformational leadership than we can elaborate here, we can describe some key aspects derived from education research and stories of successes (Bencivenga & Elias, 2003; Devaney et al., 2006; Elias & Arnold, 2006; Elias, Arnold, & Hussey, 2003).

Many transformations can be identified as important, but the three that we deem to be essential are leading with vision and courage, beginning and integrating efforts schoolwide, and implementing with integrity.

Lead With Vision and Courage

Much of what we have described should make intuitive sense and resonate with

why most people entered the field of education. As we previously noted, research and practice in support of SEL and its interconnection with academics is growing, but in the environment created by the No Child Left Behind Act, acting on this knowledge is not simple at all. It requires courage. The first transformation required is to make a personal commitment to advocate for this vision of “whole education” with courageous leadership. This requires becoming aware of one’s own social-emotional strengths and shortcomings.

Also required is a commitment to develop the social-emotional skills of staff members and to improve the relationships among and between adults and students in the school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Sometimes the transformation begins with the adults. Beyond becoming familiar with SEL theory, research, practice, and pedagogy, some administrators lead themselves and their staff members in exploration of their individual and collective social-emotional assets and areas in need of improvement. This is followed by an ongoing process of continuous improvement. Many resources support such approaches (e.g., Devaney et al., 2006; Patti & Tobin, 2003).

Caring and moral behavior must be modeled. Transformational leaders understand that for a student to reach social, emotional, and academic goals, the school, the parents, and the community must act in consonant ways. All students and adults thrive when administrators, teachers, and other education support staff members trust and respect students and exude boundless optimism. In such a culture, the classrooms, schools, and communities are safe havens for children and engaging sources of partnership for parents.

Begin and Integrate Schoolwide

Different schools have used different starting points for bringing in SEL and connecting it with academics. The common denominator is that their leader recognized the necessity to start, persist, extend, and coordinate the work. Among these starting points are:

1. Create organizing and unifying themes, values, and visions for your school. Thomas Jefferson High School is a clear example of this approach and where it can lead. Many other examples can be found among schools designated by the Character Education Partnership as National Schools of Character (www.character.org).

2. Involve students in integrative service-related projects. From an SEL point of view, secondary schools should require all students to be engaged in some kind of service-related activity. This requirement brings with it the necessity of preparing the students with the skills needed to participate in these projects and integrate them with academic subject areas (Fredericks, 2003). More can be found on the integration of SEL and service learning at www.casel.org/projects_products/servicelearning.php.

3. Implement skill-building curricula that are linked to existing school subject areas. Some evidence-based examples include Facing History and Ourselves (social studies and literature), Teenage Health Teaching Modules (health), Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving and Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence (guidance or advisories), and Lions-Quest Skills for Action (civics and social studies). What is equally important is the collaborative, community-building process by which the need for a curriculum is determined and a specific

approach is selected and implemented (see CASEL, 2003).

4. Infuse SEL into existing academic subjects. Pasi (2001) and Zins et al. (2004) point out that numerous opportunities exist for integrating SEL into academics, including using SEL problem-solving and critical-thinking activities in regular academic curricula (e.g., literacy, history, and performing arts); using collaborative strategies to involve students in improving school and classroom climates; altering instructional processes to foster more cooperative learning and project-based learning; and reflecting SEL in behavior management and discipline practices and policies by including positive behavior and contributions to the school.

Implement With Integrity

There is a proven framework to guide the process of selecting a particular starting point, getting it going, expanding it, linking it with other potential starting points, and continuing to deepen and grow the process in a spirit of continuous improvement. (See figure 1.) The process, which typically takes from two to five years to carry out in a sustainable way, should be familiar to administrators as a general road map to foster adoption of any comprehensive, innovative effort. (See Elias et al., 2003, and Devaney et al., 2006, which include strategies and tools to assist in all these activities.)

Transforming Schools

School administrators now see that schools must be renewing, exciting places for both students and adults—places in which academic and social-emotional learning are brought together. Accomplishing this requires

transformative leadership. Transformative leaders recognize the roles of students, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders in making schools current and meaningful. The many tasks of transformative leadership are beyond any single individual. Leadership must be distributed, and ideally each staff member will see that the mantle of leadership touches everyone who is entrusted with the care of the students. Principals have special roles in setting the agenda for leadership and inspiring others to share and elaborate their vision. That vision includes helping everyone understand the relationship between social-emotional well-being and success in school and life. Perhaps the greatest transformation of all will come when visionary and courageous education leaders are supported by policies and accountability systems that emphasize that achievement in schools involves developing the caring, character, and academic success of all children. **PL**

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Figure 1

Implementing SEL in Your School

Ten Steps in the Implementation Cycle

1. Commit to schoolwide SEL. Be a champion for SEL.
2. Engage stakeholders and form a steering committee. Invest them with genuine authority and responsibility for the work.
3. Develop and articulate a shared vision. The high hopes and dreams for students bring energy and a positive focus to the work.
4. Conduct a needs and resources assessment. Identify specific issues to address; build from what's already in place and working well.
5. Develop an action plan. Include the goals and objectives as well as a plan for attaining them.
6. Select evidence-based programs and strategies. The resulting shared framework and vocabulary creates consistency and coherence for the students.
7. Conduct initial staff development. Ensure that staff members understand SEL theory and practices.
8. Launch social-emotional skills instruction in classrooms. Help staff members become familiar with and experienced in SEL.
9. Expand instruction and integrate SEL schoolwide. Build a consistent environment and experiences for students.
10. Revisit activities; adjust for continuous improvement. Check on progress to catch problems early.

Source: Devaney, E., O'Brien, M. U., Resnik, H., Keister, S., & Weissberg, R. P. (2006). *Sustainable schoolwide social and emotional learning (SEL): Implementation guide and toolkit*. Chicago, IL: CASEL.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF School Psychologists

Helping Children Thrive • In School • At Home • In Life

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is delighted to share some exciting news. After more than 40 years, we are unveiling a new logo. Our new look offers a fresh, dynamic melding of our unique expertise in both psychology and learning. The Psi Tree is deeply rooted in our long history as the psychologists who know the most about schools and the educators who know most about psychology. The growth achieved through learning and mental wellness also reflects our vision that "all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and throughout life."

Why a new look now?

NASP is in the midst of implementing our [strategic plan](#), based on extensive input from members and leaders. We are updating and enhancing a number of our resources and services to better support your work. This includes making more effective use of technology to improve access to content and professional development across a number of platforms. While the current logo has served us well, it does not work effectively in many modern contexts.

Our [goals](#) with the new logo are to:

- Retain our strong roots and connections to psychology with the Psi
- Better reflect the idea of learning and growth with the tree
- Reinforce the concept of thriving
- Emphasize school psychologists with use of the full name of the organization
- Project a more modern, attractive, and accessible image
- Be more flexible, usable in many digital and print contexts



Northeast PBIS Network Leadership Forum

Attend the third Northeast PBIS Network Leadership Forum, and join us to develop a professional PBIS network that will enhance our capacity to work smarter and more effectively on PBIS framework implementation in the northeast states.


SAVE THE DATE

MAY 22-23, 2014

Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa
625 North Road (Rte 117)
Groton, CT 06340

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 @NortheastPBIS

 Northeast PBIS
Network

Content Strands:

- School-wide PBIS (Tier 1)
- Class-wide PBIS (Tier 1)
- Advanced Tiers (2 & 3)
- PBIS Implementation
- Special Settings
- Academic Systems
- Special Topics

Featured Keynotes:

- Kent McIntosh, University of Oregon
- Lucille Eber, IL PBIS



Additional registration information will be available at www.cber.org.

Sponsored by the OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions

[REGISTER NOW](#)

3rd Annual
Northeast PBIS Network Leadership Forum

May 22-23, 2014
Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa
625 North Road Groton, CT 06340

Conference schedule:

Thursday sessions 8a-4p; Poster session 4-6p

Friday sessions 8a-1p

Continental breakfast provided both days; boxed lunch on Thursday

Attend the 3rd Annual Northeast PBIS Network Leadership Forum,

and join us to develop a professional PBIS network that will enhance our capacity to work smarter and more effectively on PBIS framework implementation in the northeast states. Featured Keynotes:

- Kent McIntosh, University of Oregon: “Sustaining Effective School Practices Amidst a Sea of Change”
 - Lucille Eber, IL PBIS: “Integrating Mental Health & Other Community Partners into the PBIS Framework”
- Content Strands: See link below for a full list of sessions and presenters. Anticipated session topics include:

- School-wide PBIS (Tier 1) Introduction to SWPBIS, High School Implementation, and Engaging Families
- Class-wide PBIS (Tier 1) Administrator’s Toolkit for Classroom Management, Supporting Teachers’ Classroom Management, and Function-Based Classroom Supports
- Advanced Tiers (2 & 3) Linking Tier2/Tier3 Systems, Data, and Practices to Core Behavior Curriculum, Middle School Demonstration of CICO, Project RENEW, and Implementation of the Continuum of Tier2/ Tier 3 Supports from Targeted to Wraparound
- PBIS Implementation Action Planning for Sustainability, Practical applications of Implementation Science, SWIS Facilitator Updates, and Implementation of PBIS in Urban Settings
- Special Settings Program-Wide Data-Based Decision Making in Early Childhood Settings, Implementation of PBIS in Rural Districts, Collaboration and Consultation in Alternative Settings, and Current Trends in Seclusion and Restraint: Policy and Guidelines for Ethical Use
- Academic Systems Linking PBIS with College and Career Readiness, Integrating Academic and Behavioral Needs within an MTSS Framework, Supporting K-3 Reading in Underperforming Schools Implementing a Multi-Tiered Instructional Model
- Special Topics Addressing Racial Disproportionality in School Discipline: Concepts and Strategies, Do’s and Don’ts of Classroom Consequence Systems, Integrating Technology into PBIS Implementation, Managing Stress for School Success, Implementing Second Step within MTSS



The Northeast PBIS Network Forum is a new and exciting regional opportunity for PBIS leaders and implementers in the northeast states (CT, DE, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT) to learn, share, refine, and discuss their implementation experiences. An advisory board of state level implementers provides guidance on the selection, content, and focus of program sessions. Support from the OSEP National Center on PBIS permits the forum planning team to focus on presenters who are teachers, administrators, researchers, parents, and students and who are interested in the free sharing of ideas, materials, practices, and systems.

Happy March! I hope everything is going well on your end as we “march” towards spring. Read on for the most recent goings-on at NASP.

NASP, the American School Counselor Association, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and the Trevor Project recently released a new Model School District Policy for Suicide Prevention. We are pleased to let you know that the complete model policy, a fact sheet, and a recorded webinar on the model policy are now available at www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/modelschoolpolicy.

Thousands of NASP 2014 Annual Convention attendees visited or sent letters to their representatives on Capitol Hill to advocate for the profession. Be a part of the action by visiting the NASP Advocacy Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/naspweb/home/> and sending your own letter to your elected officials. They’re there to listen, but we need to let them know the value of school psychologists and the importance of comprehensive school psychological services.

Thinking about how to get the most from what’s left in your resource budget? NASP has resources, including handouts for parents, information on how to incorporate counseling into the IEP process, and more! Stock up at <https://iweb.nasponline.org/iweb/Purchase/SearchCatalog.aspx>.

I’d like to let you know about two learning opportunities:

-Take advantage of the chance to hear from experts from across the nation with the NASP 2014 Annual Convention Session Recording Packages! These packages provide documented NASP-, APA-, and NBCC-approved CPD credit. Purchase your package at <http://nasp.inreachce.com/Search?category=6bf3ce65-f4a3-4a64-88d5-a2f4a8a317c4>.

-The Summer Conferences are also an excellent opportunity to stay current in your training. Learn more at www.nasponline.org/summer and plan to come to Pittsburgh, PA, July 7–9 or Las Vegas, NV, July 21–23.

That’s all for now. Thank you for your service to children, parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as your membership in NASP. It’s my pleasure to work with you, and I look forward to corresponding again soon.

Sincerely,

Kim Pristawa
NASP State Delegate - RI

Zero Tolerance and Alternative Discipline Strategies

BY RUSSELL SKIBA, PHD, Indiana University, Bloomington

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Schools have a responsibility to use research-based, effective means to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. Teachers cannot teach, and students cannot learn, in a climate marked by chaos and disruption. There is controversy, however, over how best to achieve that goal. Since the early 1990s, increasing incidence of campus violence led many schools to adopt the disciplinary philosophy of zero tolerance.

Originally used primarily for drug enforcement, the term became widely adopted in schools as a policy that mandates severe consequences regardless of the seriousness of the behavior or differences in circumstances. In 1994, the Gun Free Schools Act introduced a national policy of zero tolerance for weapons in schools through a mandatory calendar year expulsion for possession of firearms. Some states, board of education agencies, and schools have expanded zero tolerance considerably beyond federal law, suspending and expelling students for drug and alcohol abuse, threats, fighting, and even failure to complete homework.

• OVERVIEW OF ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Zero tolerance policies assume that removing students who engage in disruptive behavior will maintain a safe learning environment as well as deter others from disruption.

• Characteristics of Zero Tolerance Policies

Although there is no single accepted definition of the term zero tolerance, the approach is characterized by the use of more severe penalties, primarily suspension and expulsion, for both major and minor violations of the school disciplinary code, in order to send a message that certain behaviors will not be tolerated. While most schools use zero tolerance for more egregious behaviors, media accounts have described hundreds of cases in which students are suspended or expelled for what appear to be relatively trivial infractions, including possession of squirt guns, guns cut out of paper, paper clips, plastic knives brought in a lunch box to cut chicken, aspirin, or organic cough drops.

• Outcomes of Zero Tolerance Policies

Although widely accepted as a no-nonsense approach to violence prevention, there is little or no evidence that strict zero tolerance policies have contributed to reducing student misbehavior or improving school safety (e.g., Skiba & Nesting, 2002; Skiba et al., 2006). Studies of suspension have consistently documented that at-risk students do not change their behavior as a result of suspension, that suspension is associated with school dropout and juvenile incarceration, and that schools with higher rates of suspension and expulsion tend to have lower test scores and a less satisfactory school climate. In short, there are no data that zero tolerance contributes in any way to school safety or improved student behavior.

Although the causal link is unclear, there is some correlational evidence that zero tolerance is associated with increased suspensions and expulsions for students of color. African American students have consistently been found to be suspended two to three times as often as other students, and similarly overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punishment, and school expulsion. This overrepresentation has not been found to be due to poverty, nor is there evidence that African Americans receive more suspensions due to increased rates or intensity of misbehavior (Skiba & Rausch, 2006).

• ALTERNATIVES TO ZERO TOLERANCE: TEACH, DON'T JUST PUNISH

As concerns about the fairness and effectiveness of zero tolerance discipline have mounted, and because the 2001 No Child Left Behind regulations have required schools to decrease use of suspension and expulsion, many schools and school districts are examining alternative strategies that can prevent and deter school violence without sacrificing students' educational opportunity. Such alternatives include the following practices:

Graduated Discipline

Many districts ensure that consequences are matched with the seriousness of the offense (sometimes termed "common sense discipline"). Serious incidents that truly threaten the safety of other students and staff continue to receive more severe consequences, but less serious behaviors are met with graduated responses, such as reprimands, restitution,

Using Office Referrals and Suspension Data

Many districts already keep sophisticated data about office referrals and disciplinary actions. This information can be used to identify students with problematic behaviors who would benefit from a step-wise intervention plan involving school, home, and community resources, and to monitor the fairness of school discipline for low income and minority students.

Preventive and Instructional Strategies

Many of the disruptive incidents that lead students to be suspended or expelled can be avoided by teaching students alternatives to violence and disruption, through strategies such as conflict resolution, school-wide bullying prevention, drug and alcohol abuse programs, gang prevention strategies, or improved staff training in classroom behavior management. Prevention also involves addressing academic deficits that put students at risk not only for school failure but for chronic behavior problems.

Expand Available Options

Schools that decrease their use of suspension and expulsion often put in place a large variety of options to respond to potential disruptions, such as peer mediation, teen courts, restitution, anger management training, and school-wide positive behavior supports (see the National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in Recommended Resources).

SUMMARY

The root of the word discipline comes from the Greek *discipere*, to teach or comprehend. All schools must seek to prevent violence, but those schools that are the most effective in handling disruption have found that removing students from school is at best a short-term solution. In the long run we can best ensure both the fairness and effectiveness of disciplinary systems by seeking solutions that teach students alternatives to violence.

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- Skiba, R. J., & Knesting, K. (2002). Zero tolerance, zero evidence: An analysis of school disciplinary practice. *New directions for youth development*, 92, 17–43.
- Skiba, R. J., & Rausch, M. K. (2006). Zero tolerance, suspension, and expulsion: Questions of equity and effectiveness. In C. M. Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook for classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp.1063–1089). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Skiba, R. J., Reynolds, C. R., Graham, S., Sheras, P., Conoley, J. C., & Garcia-Vazquez, E. (2006). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations. Report by the American Psychological Association of the Zero Tolerance Task Force. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved on October 2, 2009, from: <http://www.apa.org/ed/cpse/zttfreport>. Pdf

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Reyes, A. H. (Ed.). (2006). *Discipline, achievement, and race: Is zero tolerance the answer?* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

This book provides an analysis of the policy, the practice, and effects of zero tolerance, and recommendations for change, with a particular focus on the consequences of racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline.

- Skiba, R. J., & Noam, G. G. (Eds.). (2002). *Zero tolerance: Can suspension and expulsion keep schools safe?* [New Directions for Youth Development, 92]. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This special journal issue is devoted to examining data from research and law on zero tolerance. Articles in the issue critique the effectiveness of zero tolerance, and explore disciplinary alternatives and models that make a positive contribution to school safety and youth development.

- Skiba, R. J., & Rausch, M. K. (2006). School disciplinary systems: Alternatives to suspension and expulsion. In G. G. Bear & K. M. Minke (Eds.), *Children's needs III: Development, prevention, and intervention* (pp. 87–102). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

An overview of the research regarding zero tolerance and effective alternatives.



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