

NDPS Certification Program Field Project Report

Chandler Bee-haviors

conducted at

**Chandler Academy
1900 School Street
Charleston, WV 25312**

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<http://kanawha-k12.wvnet.edu/chandler/> and www.wvpbis.org.

***Key words:* Alternative Education, At-Risk Populations, Character Education, Positive Behavior and Interventions Supports (PBIS)**

Funding Sources:

Training and materials related to this project were provided through the Marshall University Autism Training Center, WVPBIS, and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE). Kanawha County Schools (KCS) provided travel related training costs to school-based team members.

Project Cost and Budget Narrative:

No money was set aside for the PBIS program in the school budget. Mrs. Burgess, the Assistant Principal and another teacher in the building visited numerous community businesses and agencies requesting donations that could be used as incentives. Donated items included meals for teachers' meetings and gift certificates.

Approximately \$500 worth of student and teacher incentives were provided by RESA 3. Items included stress balls, pencils, lanyards, notebooks, clipboards, pens, coloring books, markers, and book bags. The PBIS team searched for no or low-cost incentives to provide the bulk of the positive recognition for students. Local community businesses also made donations toward teacher and student incentives.

Project Description:

Chandler Academy is the secondary alternative learning center for Kanawha County Schools. The school serves students in grades 6-12 who have been expelled from the homeschool due to disciplinary violations. Kanawha County Schools is the largest school system in the state of West Virginia. The system includes 13 middle schools and eight high schools. KCS serves more than 26,000 students. Chandler Academy is in Charleston, which is the state capital and largest city the state with a population of 50,566.

U.S. Census Bureau (2015). *American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from *Census Reporter Profile page for Charleston, WV* at <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US5414600-charleston-wv/>.

Staffing Pattern:

Chandler Academy has one principal and one assistant principal. There are two counselors, ten high school teachers, nine middle school teachers, and five paraprofessional aides. Support staff include a school psychologist, a school nurse, and a secretary. The building houses other contracted services. The PBIS team included the following:

PBIS Coach- Patty Blake – Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) III School Support Specialist

Team Leader – Tammy Burgess – School Administrator

Behavior Expert – Dawn Page – School Psychologist

Data Specialist – Tammy Burgess – School Administrator

Recorder – Billie Walker – Counselor

Time Keeper/Snack Master – Barbie Sadolf - Counselor

Classroom Teacher/Liaisons - Julie Ulery and Joella Allen

Family Liaison – Beth McCune

Population Served:

The PBIS project was implemented school-wide and all of the 137 students enrolled in grades 6-12 participated. The student body at The Chandler Academy is in a constant state of flux. The school receives students as they are expelled and placed in the alternative setting.

The demographic data for Chandler Academy, at the end of the first semester for the 2017-2018 is illustrated in the Table 1.

Table 1

Student Enrollment for The Chandler Academy – First Semester 2017/2018

Population	Middle School	High School
Boys	37	61
Girls	8	31
Special Education	5 – 11.1%	18 – 19.6%
Total	45	92

Project Origination:

PBIS is a voluntary program. Chandler expressed interest in initiating a PBIS system within the school to help reduce discipline referrals, to facilitate successful transition from the Academy, and to increase the student completion rate. As a regional school support specialist, I was asked to provide coaching to Chandler. My professional background includes over twenty years of experience as a school counselor, including a position as a counselor at a secondary alternative center in Putnam County, West Virginia. To augment my knowledge and improve my skills, I attended the NDPC At-Risk Youth National Forum in 2016 and completed certification through Hope4wounded for Wounded Students.

There are five identified implementation steps for introducing PBIS at Chandler Academy. First, the administrator, worked to create a PBIS leadership team. Members were selected who could represent all aspects of the school. Since the school serves students in grades 6-12, there were teacher representatives selected from middle school as well as from high school. Second, the team worked to develop clear expectations for the students. Expectations were selected based on identified areas of need that emerged from data analysis. Third, the team worked to develop a plan for teaching the desired expectations. Teachers were asked to deliver lessons regularly and as needed. Different traits were selected as focus areas for each month and classroom lessons were reflective of the monthly character education trait. Additionally, the traits were uniformly defined to create a cohesive understanding of expectations. Finally, the teachers were trained and received professional development related to the PBIS program.

Issues Addressed:

After an analysis of data, the school administration recognized as need for improvement and opted to begin with a transformation of the school climate.

In order to build a more positive school climate, the school volunteered to participate in the PBIS program. The goal was to improve the climate for students and for teachers. Teachers are care-givers and like nurses and other professionals in the human service fields, they can become prone to compassion fatigue (Sizemore, 2016). Teachers who consistently work with at-risk students may be more likely than teachers in traditional settings to suffer from compassion fatigue. Every classroom has students who have become victims of trauma including abuse, neglect, violence, and poverty. In an alternative setting, the percentage of students who have been or are victims of trauma is increased.

Due to the very nature of the school, all students at Chandler Academy are students at-risk for dropping out. Ed (2014) argues that a lack of social engagement as one of the major predictors for students at risk. The school recognized this likelihood as well as the increased chance for poor behavior and low self-esteem. To combat these factors, the school wanted to develop a school-wide plan that would provide pro-social interventions and teach positive behaviors. It was hoped that school engagement would increase with a school-wide behavioral program that consistently rewarded expected behaviors. The team selected a bee as the mascot for the program and identified expected student “bee-haviors” that were to be taught and consistently reinforced. Bees were posted throughout the building as reminders of the expectations as well as a unifying symbol for the student body.

Ed. M. (2014, June 14). Identifying at-risk students before it's too late. In *Pearson Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.pearsoned.com/identifying-at-risk-students-before-its-too-late/>.

Sizemore, C.B. (2016, May 26). Compassion fatigue: The silent thief in our schools. In *ASCD Express*. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol11/1118-sizemoe.aspx>.

Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:

The desired outcome for the project was an improvement in school climate. For this project, the standard of an improved climate is measured by:

- a reduction in the number of student discipline referrals.
- an increase in the number of student completions.
- an increase in the number of students who successfully transition back to the homeschool.

Strategies and/or Interventions:

The PBIS team discussed and planned the program for a year before it was implemented. Careful consideration was given to all aspects of the program. After input from the faculty and staff, the team agreed to implement the following strategies and interventions:

- After a review of West Virginia Policy 4373, Title 126CSR99 which outlines expected behaviors, classroom-managed behaviors were defined.
- A discipline flow chart was developed to assist teachers in responding to behaviors in a consistent manner.
- A list of character traits was developed, defined, and assigned to be taught monthly.
- The “bee-haviors” were identified as: 1) Be Respectful, 2) Be responsible, and 3) Be ready to learn.
- Behavior Matrices were developed for classroom, hallway, cafeteria, bathroom, bus, and office.
- A behavioral reward system was developed.
- A PBIS Newsletter was distributed to parents, students, and staff on a bi-monthly basis.
- A “Positive Friday” practice scheduled all teachers to meet early on Friday mornings to report a positive observation or experience with a coworker and a student.

Expected behavior in safe and supportive schools (2011, December 16). In *West Virginia Department of Education*. Retrieved from <https://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/documents/Policy4373-new.pdf>.

Project Timeline:

The project began in September 2016. The first four months were dedicated to establishing and training a school team. The team attended three separate training conferences sponsored by WVDE, WVPBIS, and the Autism Training Center located at Marshall University. Additionally, the team met monthly for data analysis and collaborative discussions related to school needs. Members of the school team developed a PowerPoint for use in introducing the staff to PBIS in January. Additionally, the staff completed a “readiness survey”. Results from the survey were shared with representatives from WVPBIS who used the data to address specific areas of need during a staff training in May 2017. The team coach and school administrators attended a PBIS Coaches Conference in July 2017. The program was fine-tuned in the summer and Tier I was implemented at the beginning of the school year in August 2017. This report is based on data collected at the end of the first semester in December 2017. Data will be collected and analyzed again at the end of the school year. Full implementation of the program requires a commitment of three to five years. Revisions and adjustments will be made as necessary.

Special Conditions and/or Expertise Required to Carry Out the Project:

In order for this program to be successful, the school was charged with satisfying a number of crucial circumstances and elements. The biggest element for success was placed squarely on the shoulder of the administration. In this situation, Mrs. Tammy Burgess, the Assistant Principal over the PBIS program, rose to the occasion. Her strong leadership was the driving force behind the program and contributed significantly to its successful implementation. Mrs. Burgess is heavily committed to the program and works diligently and tirelessly to implement a quality program at Chandler. Teachers, who witnessed her investment and dedication to the program

became more willing to jump on board and show support. Other necessary conditions required to propel this project was a level of expertise in dealing with alternative populations and the possession of a growth-mindset. The majority of faculty and staff at The Chandler Academy embodied both traits

Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates:

Table 2 sets baseline data for the successful transition of students from The Chandler Academy to the homeschool. Goals for improving the rate of transition will be discussed at PBIS meetings later this year. Table 2 further notes the number of students who complete their appointed term.

Table 2

Transition Data for The Chandler Academy – First Semester 2017-2018

Grade Level	Number of Students	Number of Students Returned to Home School	Number of Students Who Returned to Chandler	Percentage of Students Successfully Transitioned
Middle School	101	25	4	84%
High School	172	101	11	89%

A comparison of disciplinary data shows promising results. In Table 3, the number of discipline referrals from last year are compared to the number of referrals for the first half of this year. For the 2017 school year, the total number of referrals was 890. At the midyear point of the 2018 school year, the number of discipline referrals totaled 296. Should the trend continue, the projected number for the end of the year would be 592. This would be a reduction of almost 300 referrals which represents an approximate decrease of 34%. In terms of out-of-school suspensions, the total for 2017 was 239. At the midpoint for this year, the number was 77. Again, if the trend continues, the projected number of out-of-school suspensions for 2018 would be 154. This would be a decrease of 85 suspensions or approximately 36%.

The Cost Analysis Tool available through PBIS shows the loss of instructional time due to disciplinary actions. If the student and administrator lost 15 minutes of instructional time due to a discipline referral, a decrease of 298 referrals would yield a gain of approximately nine full days of instruction. Fifteen minutes is a very modest estimate. The savings of instructional time due to the implementation of a school-wide PBIS program could be significantly higher.

Table 3

Summary of Disciplinary Data for The Chandler Academy

GRADE	Year	Number of Discipline Referrals		Number of Out of School Suspension	
		2017	2018	2017	2018
			First Semester		First Semester
6 th Grade		113	77	25	19
7 th Grade		196	76	52	17
8 th Grade		247	33	50	6
TOTAL		754	186	127	42
9 th Grade		203	71	71	23
10 th Grade		65	26	24	7
11 th Grade		43	12	11	4
12 th Grade		22	1	6	1
TOTAL		333	110	112	35
YEARLY TOTAL		890	296	239	77

Data related to the type and location of behavioral infraction is found in Table 4. Again we are able to compare the data from last year with the data collected from the first semester of this year. At the midyear point we see decreases in insubordination, inappropriate language, profane language, and physical fights without injury. Behaviors were improved in the classroom, the hallway, and the cafeteria. Analysis of data will help the PBIS team set goals and make decisions for the coming year.

Table 4

Disciplinary Data by Offense and Location

		Percentage		Percentage of Change
		2017	2018- First Semester	
OFFENSE				
	Disruptive/Disrespectful	36%	42%	+6
	Insubordination	19%	13%	-6
	Inappropriate Language	8%	3%	-5
	Skipping Class	6%	7%	+1
	Habitual Violations	5%	5%	0
	Profane Language	5%	2%	-3
	Threat of Injury	4%	4%	0
	Harassment	3%	3%	0
	Battery Against Student	3%	4%	+1
	Physical Fight Without Injury	2%	1%	-1
LOCATION	Classroom	66%	65%	-1
	Hallway	10%	7%	-3
	Cafeteria	10%	4%	-6
	Bus	5%	8%	+3

Common indicators for dropping out of school include behavior, and course completion rates. One study from the West Virginia Department of Education (Whisman & Hammer, 2014) notes that a student with even one disciplinary contact at the secondary level was twice as likely to repeat a grade or dropout as a student with no disciplinary referrals. By focusing on teaching expected behaviors, the goal is to reduce disciplinary infractions and reduce the odds of a student dropping out of school.

The Chandler Academy, as an alternative center, is charged with providing education in both academic and social or behavioral contexts. The inclusion of the PBIS program as a school-wide intervention was designed to supplement the student’s behavioral and social skills. Program completion (remaining at Chandler for the full duration of the expulsion) was encouraged through the building of safe and supportive school climate. In the mid-year student survey, 29% of high school students “strongly agreed” that they felt safe at Chandler and 47% “agreed” to this statement. At the middle school level, 40% “strongly agreed” and 30% “agreed”. The numbers suggest a safe environment and will be used as benchmarks in setting future goals.

Finally, the PBIS program at Chandler targeted teaching skills that would assist a student in the successful transition back to his or her homeschool. Those character traits, or skills were a monthly focus and included topics such as perseverance, kindness, tolerance, and integrity. Students were encouraged to practice new skills such as decision-making and goal-setting.

Whisman, A., & Hammer, P.C. (2014, September). The association between school discipline and academic performance: A case for positive discipline approaches. In West Virginia Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/research/Reports>

2014/TheAssociationBetweenSchoolDisciplineandMathematicsPerformance2014.pdf.

Current Status of Project:

The “Bee-havior” program is currently in its second semester of full-implementation. Data will be collected again at the end of the second semester and will be used to measure program success. The program is a work in progress and as such is subject to revision as dictated by data.

Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:

I served as the off-site PBIS Coach for the Chandler Academy. I worked with the team to complete the Tier 1 Fidelity Tool and then to develop a plan based on identified areas of need or weakness within the school. I worked very closely with the assistant principal and provided support in terms of professional development, materials, and information. I assumed responsibility for the PBIS newsletters and designed a parent brochure. I was present at meetings, conducted surveys and walk-throughs, and ensured that all forms were completed on time. I also reviewed data with the team.

Lessons Learned:

I entered into this project filled with enthusiasm and energy. The team seemed to reflect my mood and I optimistically believed that this euphoria would remain throughout the year. It did not. Soon, teachers were faced with the day-to-day tasks required of designing instruction while managing behaviors and classroom discipline. The enthusiasm for PBIS diminished and the program seemed to lose some steam. I learned that the program needs consistent reinforcement and focus. Like most endeavors, success does not come overnight but instead reveals itself over time and after consistent practice. I learned too, that buy-in for the program needs to be high! Even with significant buy-in, it was difficult to find the time to correctly and consistently teach and model the expected behaviors. It was important to build a climate that supported the teachers as well as the students. One of the activities implemented by the administrator was Positive Friday. Every Friday morning the staff would come together and each person was expected to report a positive experience that occurred in school that week. This was great way to help teachers maintain optimism and a positive focus.

Staff were encouraged to support one another. The program goals were continuously stressed and reviewed. “The bee-haviors” were announced each morning on the public address system and reminders of expectations were present throughout the building. A significant piece of learning to occur is the understanding that PBIS is a schoolwide project that requires team effort.

Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:

My biggest piece of advice to others would be not to rush the process. The PBIS program at The Chandler Academy is a dynamic intervention. Much of the strength of the program comes from building positive relationships with the students and the community. This cannot be rushed. It is

important to include all stakeholders in conversations and to consider the consequences of actions. We hope to review the program at the end of the year and make adjustments that will improve our goals.

Additional information not previously addressed:

Students and teachers deserve a safe and supportive school climate. The PBIS program supports building a nurturing environment where students can learn appropriate behaviors that will help them become successful in school and in the world. The program further supports teachers in their efforts to reach help students meet academic, social, and behavioral goals.

Some things in life defy measurement. Ironically, it often the important things like courage, morale, dedication, and atmosphere. While we can assign measurable variables to climate in an effort to undertake a quantitative measure, capturing the more qualitative essence is vastly more challenging. A walk through The Chandler Academy is as revealing as the data in the tables. Bright and encouraging words fill the hallways, statements and quotes related to optimism and hope are prominently placed throughout the building. Although the physical building is immaculately clean and orderly, it does not project a sterile environment. The office staff welcome visitors with a smile. Students are engaged. They seem relaxed and content. The climate projects a family atmosphere of hope, nurturing, and protection. You can feel it even if you cannot measure it.