
TEAMING

Overview

Collaborative teaming is essential in achieving success in implementing a SWPBS program at your schools. A collaborative team may be defined as a group of people who agree to: coordinate their work to achieve at least one common, publicly agreed-upon goal (Appley & Winder, 1977) and employ a collaborative teaming process that involves face-to-face interaction: positive interdependence: the performance, monitoring and processing of interpersonal skills; and individual accountability (Johnson & Johnson, 1987a, 1987b). This section is designed to provide information about establishing effective teams.

Concepts

PBS Team Established

- Team has broad representation
- Team has administrative support
- Team has regular meetings (at least monthly)
- Team has established a clear mission/purpose

Strategies

Membership

A team should be representative of the faculty at your school. It should consist of 3 to 7 members including the principal/assistant principal, regular education teachers, special education teachers, guidance counselor, school psychologist or someone on your faculty knowledgeable of behavioral principals. On the peripheral team, you may want to include parents, students, paraprofessionals, and school staff (e.g. custodians, cafeteria workers, etc.).

Meeting Times

During initial planning, teams may need to meet more often. A team should meet at least once a month to analyze existing data, make change to the existing database, problem-solve solutions to critical issues; begin to outline actions for the development of a plan.

Consider the following when coordinating team meetings:

- a. Coordinate meeting logistics (e.g. time, location, notification, etc.)
- b. Set agenda for each meeting
- c. Team meetings should be held at least monthly
- d. Print out school graphs/data prior to the meeting
- e. Discuss graph information and problems solve
- f. Assign duties or responsibilities for next meeting
- g. Complete team meeting evaluation form after each meeting
- h. Send out meeting minutes to all members within one week of each meeting
- i. Share information regularly with the entire staff

Team Roles and Responsibilities

Team Leader – keeps team focused, starts meetings, and reviews the purpose for the meeting.

Recorder – transcribes meeting minutes

Time Keeper – monitors time available to discuss issues and cases

Data Specialist – trained in entering and analyzing data with your data management system

Behavior Specialist – competent in behavior principles and assists in analyzing data

Facilitator – district level persons who facilitates the team through the process (main contact person)

District Coordinator – liaison between the state department and the facilitator; coordinates trainings

Characteristics of Effective Teaming

- a. Mutual Respect
- b. Shared goals and objectives
- c. Established Mission Statement
- d. Open Communication
- e. Effective conflict resolution
- f. Equity of Task Distribution
- g. Consensus decision-making
- h. On-going problem solving

Methods for Assigning Roles

Assign roles and responsibilities according to team members' level of expertise and interests.

Attaining administrative support

Keep the principal abreast of all decisions made by the team and share pertinent information with the principal.

Obtaining a consensus on establishing meeting times and handling SWPBS responsibilities

Several options include a) providing stipends through grants for team members for after hour meetings; b) hire substitutes to cover classes; c) have other teachers to cover classes; and d) schedule planning periods of SWPBS team members during the same hour.

Establish equitability of task distribution

Define roles and responsibilities during the initial implementation of the program so that every team member will be aware of their duties.

Resolving conflicts among team members

When negative conflict occurs there are five accepted methods for handling it: Direct Approach, Bargaining, Enforcement, Retreat, and De-emphasis (Nelson, 1995).

- a. Direct Approach: This may be the best approach of all. It concentrates on the leader confronting the issue head-on. Though conflict is uncomfortable to deal with, it is best to look at tissues objectively and to face them as they are. This approach counts on the techniques of

problem solving and normally leaves everyone with a sense of resolution, because issues are brought to the surface and dealt with.

- b. **Bargaining:** This is an excellent technique when both parties have ideas on a solution yet cannot find common ground. Often a third party, such as a team leader, is needed to help find the compromise. Compromise involves give and take on both sides, however, and usually ends up with both walking away equally dissatisfied.
- c. **Enforcement of Team Rules:** Avoid using this method if possible; it can bring about hard feelings toward the leader and the team. This technique is only used when it is obvious that a member does not want to be a team player and refuses to work with the rest. If enforcement has to be used on an individual, it may be best for that person to find another team.
- d. **Retreat:** Only use this method when the problem isn't real to begin with. By simply avoiding it or working around it, a leader can often delay long enough for the individual to cool off. When used in the right environment by an experienced leader this technique can help to prevent minor incidents that are the result of someone having a bad day from becoming real problems that should never have occurred.
- e. **De-emphasis:** This is a form of bargaining where the emphasis is on the areas of agreement. When parties realize that there are areas where they are in agreement, they can often begin to move in a new direction.

Examples of Team Implementation

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HORSESHOE DRIVE ELEMENTARY (Pre-K – 5th)

A broad representation of stakeholders was considered in Team Building. Horseshoe Elementary has established a “PBS” Focus Team that includes professional staff members from varied assignments. The “PBS” Ancillary Team includes members who meet on abbreviated schedules. These members include parents, students, support staff, and community members. The focus of selection is on varied backgrounds, expertise, and experiences to meet the needs of our school community.

MEET THE "PBS" TEAM



Barriers of the Teaming Process:

“Meet the TEAM” can be displayed on a school bulletin board or sent home in a brochure.

- Establishing meeting times that are conducive to the schedules of all team members. (Focus Team and Ancillary Team)

Successes of the Teaming Process:

- We have a wide range of experiences and expertise that give us a lot of input into the process.
- Each faction; faculty, staff, students, parents, and community feel they have ownership in the process making it more effective.
- Publishing the “Meet the PBS Team” has opened communication because it puts a face to the process. Parents and community members know whom to contact if they have questions or suggestions.

Questions and Answers:

Q. What type of representation should be included on the Team?

A. You should include all stakeholders and members from the school community.

Q. How often should the TEAM meet?

A. Initially they should meet frequently. Once the process is established, the TEAM should meet at least once a month. It would be helpful to establish meeting times at the beginning of the school year and have calendars marked early.

Q. Does each member have a specific job?

A. Jobs should rotate giving each member leadership responsibility. The assignments should be noted on each “Meeting Log.”

LULING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Pre-K -5th)

Careful selection of the members on the PBS team is vital to implementation. Luling's team consists of educators who hold a variety of positions at the school and district level. Currently, the PBS team consists of two administrators, one central office staff member, two special education teachers, one school psychologist, one enrichment teacher, 6 teachers, one paraprofessional and 2 parents. It is important to note that the administrator's participation, input and full support was crucial in making the implementation of PBS initiatives a success. There are other people who are not a part of the team; however, they offer full support of the teams' efforts.

After receiving the PBS Leadership training from the state, the team set out to complete our school's discipline plan. Although we already had a discipline plan in place, by completing the critical elements suggested through PBS, we were able to craft consistent school-wide structures that would assist in creating the environment that we visualized.

Originally, the team consisted of faculty and staff from two different schools, so the only available time to meet was after school. The team met weekly to get the intended goals completed. Although we were able to get things accomplished, the pace was very slow and not continuous. We hoped to be finished with enough time to train the other faculty members on PBS during a February faculty study and begin implementation shortly after that. Therefore, it was decided that the team members be given 2 school days to complete the necessary tasks. During this time, teachers were given subs to cover their classes so that the team members could have continuous time to work on getting the discipline plan completed.

Initially, the team put in long hours and a great deal of hard work. Having input from members with a variety of perspectives helped the team craft a discipline plan that would best reflect the interests of all stakeholders. However, the team and faculty always bear in mind that our discipline is a work in progress. As the needs of the school change, so will the some of the structures that are in place.

Barriers

- After school team meetings were challenging during the initial year of implementation

Successes

- Team Commitment
- Broad representation of team members: school administrators, district psychologist, special education teachers, guidance counselor, teachers, and central office staff offering a variety of views when making decisions
- Inclusion of team members from both merging schools

Questions and Answers

Q: How did you keep everyone motivated to come to the meetings each week?

A: The team was well selected made up of those who really wanted to see a difference in the discipline at the schools. By the end of each meeting, team members felt as though something was accomplished and we were one step closer to meeting the goal. Additionally, stipends were given each month for attending these meetings.

GEORGE COX ELEMENTARY (Pre-K – 6th)

Our original implementation team consisted of a variety of adults from our school. The team leader, who was chosen by the principal, sat down with the principal and discussed possibilities for the team. It was decided that we would try to represent most grade levels across the entire school. Our school is set up as four mini schools within the larger framework. Each mini school consists of one first through sixth grade section. Therefore, it was decided that we would have one representative from each mini school. We did not necessarily choose people that we knew would definitely buy into the program but are sometimes “nay sayers”. Taking this into consideration, sometimes these people will be supportive of a program if they are part of the development. The administrative assistant, who was chiefly in charge of handling discipline, and the school social worker also served on our team. The team leader was an extension teacher that already worked with fourth grade teachers in all of the mini schools. Another team member was our HOSTS (mentoring program) teacher.

The principal and school team leader invited these teachers in to discuss being on a team and some possibilities that he already had for implementing positive behavior support into our school. As a team, we then went through the four days of training by the state. We realized that in order to implement this program into our school we needed to come up with a plan that would require a minimal amount of work for our teachers and be meaningful for our students. Our principal hired substitutes right away for two days. As a team, we came up with our plan. We distributed responsibilities to get this program off to a jump-start. One group worked on the rules and expectations, another worked on incentives, another on rotation stations and yet another worked on all of the documents that we needed to present our plan. We presented it to the faculty and staff and got input. We went back and revised our plan and presented it again. We strongly feel that because of the minimal amount of work on the teachers, and this being a win-win situation we had and still have a successful buy in and strong implementation.

We still meet weekly for approximately twenty minutes. During this time we consider concerns that we are having and problem solve to fix them. We use our data to make decisions on how to improve. We also decide on rewards for the students at this time and the responsibilities team members have.

Barriers in Establishing Teaming:

- Be careful when choosing your team. Make sure that you have members that will work with you on the team and not sabotage what you are trying to do. Some people will work well with the team when they know they are a part of it.

Successes in Establishing Teaming:

- We did choose a member that we were not sure would buy into the process. However, once a part of the team that member felt wanted and needed and worked well on the team.

Questions and Answers:**Q. How did you choose your team?**

A. The principal appointed a team leader. Then, the principal and team leader discussed possible other team members. We made sure that we had a wide representation of grade levels. We also included the assistant principal and the school social worker.

LINWOOD MIDDLE (6th-8th)

A nine-person team from Linwood Middle School was initially trained by Heather Peshak George, Ph.D. and Donald Kincaid, Ph. D. from the University of South Florida. The team consisted of the principal, assistant principal, behavior strategist, two general education teachers, one special education teacher, and one paraprofessional from the school. A previously trained SWPBS facilitator from the parish professional development department and a behavior intervention specialist from the special education department were also members of the team. These persons attended four full days of training during the 2003-2004 school year. The team members met twice a month, once during the day and once after school to implement the various critical elements throughout the year. Most of the first year was spent developing the products necessary for implementation. This initial team provided faculty training and gained faculty buy-in. This team was also able to present faculty training during two days of professional development so that all pieces were put in place by the end of the school year. The team was paid a stipend to work on two Saturdays in order to complete all phases of the training.

At the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year Linwood was ready to begin full implementation. At this time the team members changed for various reasons. The professional development specialist moved to the school as assistant principal, this member continued to serve on the team, just fulfilling a different role. A school-based specialist replaced the special education department behavior intervention specialist so all members are now site-based. More teachers were added to the team reflecting a general education teacher from each grade level. A parent joined the team as well. A change in the school's schedule made it impossible to meet during the day so all meetings are now held immediately after school. At the beginning of the year a portion of the team met every Tuesday. At this point the full team is scheduled to meet twice a month.

Linwood is fortunate to have a school-based team leader who has SWPBS as a large part of his work assignment. The team leader is responsible for all reminder notices, setting the agenda, obtaining the SWISS data for review, and keeping minutes from all meetings. The team leader attends the weekly administrative team meetings to report on SWPBS. There is a SWPBS report given at all faculty meetings. At times, based on what the faculty hears that the team is considering or discussing, other persons ask to attend. These people are always welcome and

frequently bring in excellent ideas and new perspectives. The grade level team members are able to discuss SWPBS during job imbedded academic team planning time and serve as liaisons between both teams. This has proven to be very effective.

Barriers

- Time commitment for all members of the team.
- Assuring that all stakeholders have an equal voice in decision making

Successes

- Having an agenda and data ready and minutes taken at every meeting
- Adhering to scheduled meeting times.

Questions and Answers

Q. How do you select team members that represent the total school and keep the number low enough to be an effective team size?

A. In order to work smarter rather than harder, we looked at groups that were already meeting at the school and chose a representative from those groups.

Q. What if a team member chooses not to continue membership?

A. It is important that team membership is voluntary. If someone expresses a desire to be removed from the team it is important for that to happen so the group can remain cohesive.

DENHAM SPRINGS FRESHMAN HIGH (9th grade)

The SWPBS leadership team for your school is the most critical component. This team is the driving force behind the program. These people are the PR people organizing and selling the program to the other stakeholders. At DSF our SWPBS team consists of one administrator, one guidance counselor, five teachers, one parent, and one behavior intervention specialist.

The team attended the training at the state department in October and November of 2003. Once trained, the team had to find a common time to meet. The common time for our team was during the second lunch shift. The SWPBS team met every other week during their lunchtime to plan out the details of the program during November and December of 2003. In addition to our lunch meetings, the team met after school. The key to our SWPBS team planning was hiring substitutes for the team to work on the program all day without interruptions. The team had one full day of planning in November and other in December. The team subdivided into specialist areas. The three areas were expectations, incentives, and consequences. Each subgroup work on their components during the morning session, then shared their information during lunch and the afternoon session.

The SWPBS team presented the program to the faculty and staff in Spring 2004. During the Spring 2004, the team still met once a month for an hour to discuss concerns, problems, and successes of the program. In order to make revisions to current plan and have it ready for the follow school year, the SWPBS team had another one day planning session in April 2004. The SWPBS still meet monthly to discuss the components of the program and ways to make it even better. The key to successful teaming and team meeting is a specific agenda with time allocation for each component. Each team member needs to hold a specific role, timekeeper, recorder, and facilitator. The initial time and dedication to creating SWPBS for our school has coming back to us in ten folds the following year.

Barriers:

- Having family member representation on our SWPBS is more difficult being a one-year school.
- Finding a common time for the team to meet and plan is always an issue.

Successes:

- The collaboration and teamwork has been wonderful as SWPBS was created.
- Your faculty is your best resource, use them wisely.

Questions and Answers:**Q. How long did it take your core SWPBS to establish the foundation of SWPBS?**

A. After the team was trained, the team met every week for thirty minutes at lunch. This time was not enough time to accomplish many tasks. Substitutes were hired to cover the teacher's classes for two days and the foundation of SWPBS was established. The key is to provide them time and they can do anything!

