Support Additional Funding for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

What is PBIS?

PBIS is a framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students. Schools using a PBIS approach apply a multi-tiered continuum of positive behavioral approaches, focusing first on strategies to improve school climate and behaviors for all students, and then developing targeted supports for students who struggle to meet expectations related to behavior. Such schools also utilize ongoing staff professional development, data collection and progress monitoring, and student support teams. PBIS is part of an umbrella framework called Virginia Tiered Systems of Support (VTSS).

Does PBIS work?

Yes! Since 2010, Virginia schools implementing PBIS/VTSS experienced:

- Reduced office disciplinary referrals by 37%;
- Reduced in-school suspensions by 46%; and
- Reduced out-of-school suspensions by 21%.

Schools that implemented the model most carefully saw even bigger decreases in referrals and suspensions, as well as significant improvements in academic achievement.

How would the Governor’s budget change PBIS funding?

The Governor’s proposed 2016-budget would maintain current funding levels for VDOE and increase funding for school divisions by $500,000 per year, for a total of $1,098,000 per year. The additional funding would provide grants to an estimated 10 new divisions. Preference will be given to divisions with high levels of suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement.

How are divisions held accountable for use of the funds?

Divisions will submit an application and be selected by VDOE. Recipients will then submit reports to and undergo evaluations by VDOE.

How can I learn more about PBIS?


Legal Aid Justice Center

Angela Cioffi is the attorney responsible for this material.
123 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219 • (434) 529-1810 • angela@justice4all.org • www.justice4all.org

Examples of Strategies

| Tier III | Functional behavioral assessments |
| Tier II | Mental health services |
| Tier I | Behavioral intervention plans |
| All Students | One-on-one instruction |
| Small Groups | Increased adult supervision |
| All Students | Functional behavioral assessments |
| All Students | Mental health services |
| All Students | Functional behavioral assessments |
| Tier III | Behavioral intervention plans |
| Tier II | Mental health services |
| Tier I | Behavioral intervention plans |

Why is more money needed for PBIS?

Currently, 105 school divisions do not receive PBIS funding or services from VDOE. Localities – especially those in low-wealth areas of the Commonwealth – cannot afford to provide the funding.

Too many of our students – especially Black students and students with disabilities – are being suspended out-of-school – especially for relatively minor offenses. During 2014-15:

- 126,029 suspensions were issued, including 15,632 to students in pre-k through 3rd grade;
- More than half of suspensions were for attendance, cell phones, disruption, disrespect, and insubordination; and
- Black students and students with disabilities were 23% and 12% of the total student population, respectively, but received 58% and 28% of suspensions, respectively.

Virginia also ranks #1 in the country in the rate of school-based referrals of students to law enforcement.

These punishments not only increase the likelihood of the disciplined student experiencing academic failure and dropout, psychological problems, and delinquent and criminal activity, but also they hurt school climate, public safety, and the economy. Fortunately, the frequency of these punishments can be reduced with PBIS.