

Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions

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EDITORS

Robert Koegel

Clinical, Counseling, & School
Psychology Program
Gevirtz Graduate School of
Education
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9490

V. Mark Durand

University of South Florida–
St. Petersburg
Dept. of Psychology
140 Seventh Avenue South,
TER 404
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5016

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

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University of Oregon

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Autism Spectrum Therapies

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Arizona State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SWPBS: *Semper Fidelis*?

ST. PETERSBURG, FL. (October 13, 2010) *Semper fidelis* is Latin for "always faithful" and is most frequently recognized as the motto used by the U.S. Marine Corps. Over the past few years, the question of fidelity has also been high on the list of concerns for researchers implementing school-wide positive support (SWPBS) programs. These programs are designed to improve the behavior problems of children in schools and are in use in over 9,000 in the United States today. Research in this field is just beginning ask a variety of questions about efforts on a state-wide level; including, "Are schools implementing all or most of the procedures thought to be important for school and student success?" "What is the impact of less than full implementation?"

In the October 2010 issue of the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, researchers from the University of South Florida (Karen Childs, Don Kincaid and Heather George) provide a comprehensive model for the state-wide evaluation of SWPBS. Through their work in the state of Florida they are providing a template for other states to assess their success. According to leading author Karen Childs (Research and Evaluation Coordinator for Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project), "Everything we do as a project from building infrastructure to technical assistance is designed to increase fidelity of implementation. We find it imperative to consider implementation level even in conjunction with reporting outcomes." Part of their study found that elementary schools in Florida performed the best, followed next by middle schools and then high schools.

Childs also noted that, "We are now expanding our evaluation system to include fidelity of implementation at tiers 2 and 3 with the development of the Benchmarks for Advanced Tiers and an accompanying progress monitoring tool (PBS Implementation Checklist). Studies are currently in place to assess the validity of these important instruments designed to guide teams in the implementation process as they scale up across the tiers."

Rob Horner, the Alumni-Knight Professor of Special Education at the University of Oregon and one of the developers of SWPBS, told us that, "Accountability" has always been associated with measuring if we are making a difference (e.g. student outcomes). A major advance in the past few years has been the added focus on accountability to "do what we say we do." Childs and her colleagues provide a superb example of measuring if we are implementing the behavior support practices we claim to be implementing. They show that taking the time to ask this question both improves implementation, and improves educational outcomes for students. This paper models a level of accountability that will likely become standard for all practices (e.g. reading programs, math programs, writing programs)."

About the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*

The *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* is the premier journal publishing research-based strategies for improving the lives of persons with severe behavior challenges. These approaches are used in homes, communities and in schools throughout the world. Regular features include empirical research; discussion, literature reviews, and conceptual papers; and programs, practices, and innovations. It is available electronically on SAGE Journals Online at <http://jpbis.sagepub.com>

Contact:

Marly Sadou, Research Support Specialist
(727) 873-4055
msadou@mail.usf.edu
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