

## FROM PBIS STATE COORDINATOR JUSTIN HILL

**On May 1, 2017**

**Georgia's Gov. Nathan Deal signed the FY18 state budget which included an additional \$1.3 million** for School Climate Specialists to

convert part-time staff to full-time staff under Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) plus **\$300,000 added** for statewide Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBIS) Specialists at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). The additional PBIS support specialists will enable the RESA-DOE PBIS team to expand their support to schools.



Gov. Deal and Georgia's PBIS team

**On May 11, 2017 over 70 Georgia leaders met at Clayton State University to discuss efforts to improve mental health supports for ALL students through the PBIS framework.** This event also discussed the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and GaDOE's first ever collaboration to expand support to Georgia's early learning climates.

This event was facilitated by Heather George, PhD, a research partner with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded national technical assistance (TA) center for PBIS and Susan Barrett, an implementation partner also with the PBIS TA center.

Members of the Georgia House of Representatives and State Senate in attendance included Rep. Katie Dempsey, District 13, Rep. Randy Nix, District 69, Rep. Robert Dickey, District 140, Sen. Emanuel Jones, District 10, and Sen. Matt Brass, District 28. Presenters from GaDOE included Richard Woods, State School Superintendent, Deputy Superintendents Debbie Gay and Garry McGiboney, PhD, and Justin Hill.

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GaDOE PBIS-RESA team at the May 11, 2017 PBIS Summit at Clayton State University

## GOOD NEWS: PBIS GROWTH IN GEORGIA

**The count of U.S. schools trained in the implementation of PBIS continues to grow, approaching almost 25,000. In**

**March 2017 Georgia eclipsed the milestone of having over 1,000 schools trained in Tier 1 PBIS. Those schools are located in approximately 60% of the school districts in Georgia!**



# PBIS Updates

## SPOTLIGHT ON CSRA RESA

### DOE RESA PARTNERSHIP: REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR CSRA PBIS DISTRICTS

Deborah Keane, PBIS Regional Coordinator, CSRA

The Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) is comprised of 12 school districts, 9 of which are implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). These districts (Lincoln, Wilkes, Columbia, McDuffie, Warren, Glascock, Jefferson, Burke and Richmond) range in size from less than 650 students to over 30,000 students.



CSRA RESA located in Dearing, Georgia

CSRA RESA and the Georgia Department of Education routinely collaborate to provide support to teachers, PBIS school-based coaches, PBIS District Coordinators, School Superintendents, and PBIS School and District Leadership teams. The ultimate goal of which is to provide support for school districts in ways to improve school climate



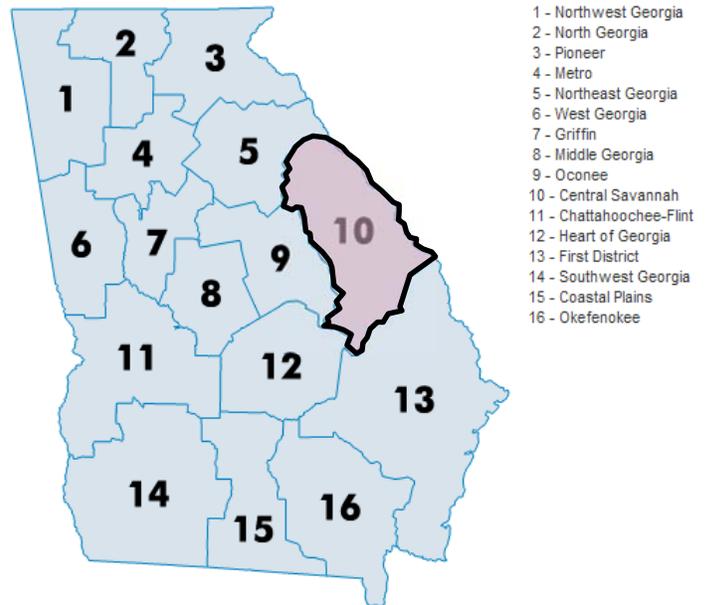
CSRA School Climate Specialist, Dr. Patty Bradshaw (L) and GaPBIS Specialist Debi Keane (R)

Dr. Patty Bradshaw, CSRA RESA School Climate Specialist and Ms. Deborah Keane, the Georgia Department of Education's PBIS Regional Coordinator for CSRA RESA, collaborate to provide regular coaching to district and school leaders on ways to improve the fidelity of their PBIS implementation.

These interactive monthly meetings provide an opportunity for PBIS District Coordinators to come together as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to evaluate data around school climate which includes discipline, disproportionality, dropout, College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), and attendance. This PBIS PLC has become a cohesive unit who can rely on one another to assist in joint problem-solving and provide support to their schools.



CSRA RESA training room



By holding these professional learning events at CSRA RESA, the DOE and RESA can support many systems at one time. This joint collaboration is an example of a best practice to improve outcomes for Georgia students.

# PBIS Updates

## EARLY LEARNING AND PBIS

### START WITH THE HEART: BUILDING WELCOMING EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS BIRTH-THIRD GRADE

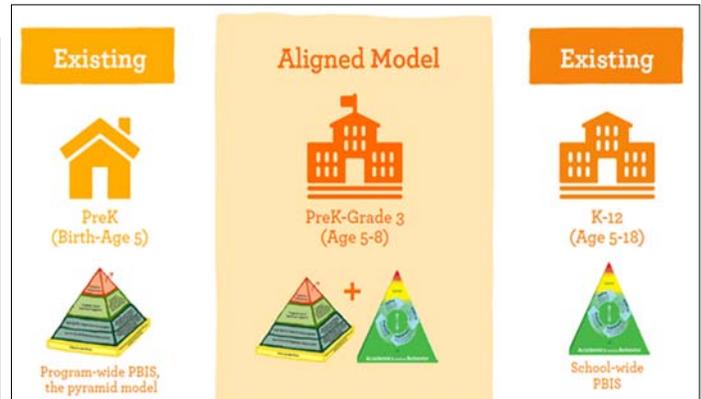
Michelle Sandrock, Metro RESA

Last year in Georgia 15,079 children aged 5 – 8 years old received out of school suspensions (Georgia Department of Education, 2015). Past research has shown that preschool children are three times more likely to be expelled than their school aged peers (Gilliam, 2005). Do these numbers alarm you? They should. There is a common belief that young children are no longer early learners by age 5. However, research shows the early brain development continues beyond to age 8. Currently, learning climates age zero to five are developmentally appropriate, however there is a stark contrast between early child care environments (preschool and Pre-K) and primary grades (kindergarten, first, and second grade) in school environments.

In response to these findings, select elementary schools (Pre-K – 5th grade) in Atlanta Public Schools, DeKalb County Schools and Fulton County Schools have been implementing an aligned PBIS framework. This aligned framework utilizes the social-emotional, developmentally appropriate practices found in the Program-wide PBIS (PWPBIS) framework, also known as the Pyramid Model used in birth – five environments, and infuses them into the SWPBIS framework used in K-12 schools. By aligning these two PBIS frameworks in our elementary schools, school staff become more aware that certain challenging behaviors are expected with our early learners in Pre-K through second grade, as they now see many behaviors as developmentally appropriate. And, most importantly, teachers become equipped with a toolkit of strategies to support the whole child and in turn, help teachers better manage behaviors inside the classroom.

Metro RESA is the implementing agency supporting the current implementation of the aligned PBIS framework in the elementary schools, but are in partnership with the Get Georgia Reading Campaign, Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

Together all partners are learning what works and what needs to be refined before scaling to other elementary school across the state.



However, the basic PBIS alignment framework principles are:

- A school-wide focus with extra supports provided to PreK-3rd grade students and teachers through Pyramid Practice training
- PBIS leadership includes a Pre-K teacher and a Classroom Practices Coach (to coach teachers on the implementation of the pyramid practices in the classroom) as well as an Internal Coach (for school-wide PBIS fidelity)
- Implementation focused on social, emotional and behavioral development strategies coupled with preventative and proactive practices to improve school climate
- Simultaneous school-wide implementation and classroom coaching of PreK-3rd grade teachers
- Implementation with fidelity relies on combination of 10 critical SWPBIS elements, select early learning critical elements, and classroom practice-based coaching observations
- School staff and teachers are trained on classroom management strategies for all students as well as social emotional, developmentally appropriate pyramid practice to assist early learners
- Tiers 1 and 2 of PW-PBIS are implemented within tier one of the SW-PBIS framework to address individual needs of early learners and climate
- Acknowledgment system takes root in positive descriptive feedback and group or classroom rewards; individual rewards may take place for 1st-5th grade children

# PBIS Updates

## AROUND THE DISTRICTS: SOUTH GEORGIA

### Tift High to focus on improving academics, attendance

By Eve Guevara (reprinted with permission)

TIFTON — Principal Kim Seigler presented Tift County High School's improvement plan to the Board of Education at the April 4 workshop.

The first item on the school's improvement plan is improving academic achievement. Math, science and English/language arts scores are lower than the state average, but the gap between TCHS's scores and the state average is narrowing.

The percentage of students who completed a CTAE pathway and earned a nationally recognized industry credential was 31.6 percent. The low percentage was due in part to the state tests not teaching everything that was on the national test, said Seigler.

Improving attendance is also a goal of the school's improvement plan; 45.7 percent of students missed more than six days of school in 2016.

The last item on the school's improvement plan is to improve school climate and increase family engagement.

TCHS' score on the Georgia Parent Survey was a 73.8, slightly below their goal of 74 or higher. A high score indicates that more parents strongly agree with positive statements about the school.

Parent attendance at school meetings is low as well.

Only 48 parents voted in the school governance team elections. It is estimated that 40 percent of families have an Infinite Campus Parent Portal account, which allows parents to monitor student progress from home, and that even fewer actually access their account.

Seigler led with the school's accomplishments from 2016.

**According to Seigler, the 2016 College and Career Readiness Progress Index score, at**



**83.6, was the highest it had ever been, and the Climate Star Rating, which rates the atmosphere of the**

**school, was 87.3, which gave the school a four star rating.** Seigler said that it is almost unheard of for a high school to have a four star climate rating.

The 2016 graduation rate was 83.97 percent, and Seigler said that each subgroup met their graduation target. TCHS had 502 graduates for the 2016 class.

TCHS had scores that exceeded the state average in both U.S. History and Economics, and the number of students scoring on or above the target level increased in every subject area except Algebra I.

Also in 2016, 85 percent of students completed a Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE), Advanced Academic, World Language or Fine Arts pathway.

**TCHS has seen a steady decline in discipline referrals and suspensions since implementing the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports program, from 7,498 in 2013, before implementing PBIS, to 4,890 in 2016. The school has**

**been recognized as an emergent PBIS school by the Georgia Department of Education, which has referred TCHS to other school systems as a model secondary PBIS school.**



Mimi Gudenrath, GaPBIS (L), Michael Beeman, TCHS (C), and Sandy DeMuth, GaPBIS (R)

# PBIS Updates

## AROUND THE DISTRICTS: NORTH GEORGIA

### Ridgeland High's Strategy to Reduce "Skipping" Incidents

By Cory Lee, PBIS Coach Ridgeland High School, Rossville, Georgia

Located in Rossville, Georgia, approximately ten miles from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ridgeland High School (RHS), Walker County Schools, serves a diverse



Ridgeland High School, Walker County Schools, Georgia

student body comprised of 1,357 students.

One of the advantages of having a diverse population is that, individually and collectively, students are equipped to be appreciative of and sensitive to the various needs, strengths, gifts, and challenges that arise from a multicultural perspective. This perspective fits well within the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. Ridgeland High School began implementing PBIS during the 2015-16 school year and since then **RHS has seen a steady decline of disciplinary referrals from 1,425 to 659** (a 33% reduction from 2015-16, and a 31% decrease from 2016-17). This reduction equates to approximately 48 days of added instructional time.

The discipline reductions are a result of RHS's focus on Tier 1 PBIS problem-solving. An initial analysis of the school's disciplinary referral data indicated that "skipping" and other attendance-related infractions were the most frequent disciplinary violations. Data suggested that for RHS, the month of March regularly yielded more referrals than any other month. Ridgeland's PBIS Committee decided to strategically focus on this behavior, with the belief that this would curb the school's overall disciplinary referral count.

Among the strategies used were the addition of hallway coaches, the production of student-made videos, and incentive rewards. Hallway coaches were appointed from among all teachers during their planning periods and were assigned to monitor the hallways of certain

areas of the school for the first five minutes following tardy bells.

All students not in their classes and without a hallway pass were stopped, retaught the "getting to class on time" rule, and then were instructed to report to a central commons area to conference with an administrator, to have their tardies documented, and to receive a tardy pass to class.

Anecdotally, multiple teachers remarked that this systematic process created a sense of urgency amongst most students to get class on time; it relieved teachers of some of the burden of documenting tardies; and it inconvenienced many students to the extent that they were incentivized to get to class on time in the future.

Students in Ridgeland's Video Technology classes, in conjunction with the PBIS Committee, produced multiple public service commercials aligned with the school's behavior code, the Panther Creed. A separate commercial was produced to highlight each of the four individual stanza's of the Panther Creed. Because attendance-related infractions were most frequent, a commercial was produced that focused specifically on attendance. The video, entitled *Skippen* (a parody of the film *Taken*) was published on Vimeo and was shown in all Ridgeland High School homerooms. Student and teacher feedback suggested that the video was well received and tremendously popular. Many students have, in fact, asked about the possible production of sequels.

During the month of March, teachers, PBIS Committee members, and administrators heavily promoted a special incentive in which students, who received no office referrals and missed fewer than two class days for the month, would be permitted to leave class early on a designated day and celebrate their achievement by watching or participating in a staff vs. student dodge ball tournament.

In March 2016, Ridgeland documented 157 disciplinary referrals, 17 of them for skipping class. In March 2017, as a result of the various intervention strategies used, Ridgeland documented only 77 disciplinary referrals (a 49% decrease), 6 of them for skipping (a 65% decrease).

Ridgeland's leadership is enthusiastic about such results and have encouraged the PBIS Committee to develop additional strategies for implementation in the 2017-18 school year.

# PBIS Updates

## SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES

### Top Tweet: May 13, 2017

Great PBIS news story about Howard Middle School, Bibb County Schools, Macon, GA

Impressions: 2,342  
Engagements: 80

As of June 21, 2017



**If you would like us to promote your PBIS efforts email us at [gabis@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:gabis@doe.k12.ga.us) with your text of 140 characters or less, preferred #, a picture and we will Tweet/post to Facebook.**

**The 2017 PBIS Film Festival Winner: Inman Intermediate, Nixa Public Schools, Nixa, Missouri**



If your school is interested in participating in the 9th Annual PBIS Film Festival at the APBS 2018 Conference, the **deadline** to submit a film is **January 19, 2018**.

The film festival will occur during the 2018 APBS conference in San Diego. Please consult the *2018 PBIS Film Festival Flyer* for more details, including **links to past winners** and the **rubric** used to judge submissions.

See: <https://new.apbs.org/conference/film-festival>

## CONTACT US



For more information about how to join our PBIS statewide network please contact:

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Have a good  
Summer!

