Texas SB 1196 established the need for behavior management in 2001 and the Texas response was establishment of a Behavior Initiative. The Dallas Independent School District’s (Dallas ISD) Safety Initiative was launched in 2004-2005 as a five-year districtwide effort in response to the legislation. Dallas ISD adopted the procedures of the Safe & Civil Schools Series’ components for decreasing disorderly conduct incidents and classroom disruptions so that they do not take away from its primary mission of preparing students for graduation. The district’s vision was to create safe (time and energy are not wasted in everyone trying to protect themselves), civil (everyone is respectful to everyone), and productive (students are motivated and engaged in learning) learning environments at its campuses. The focus of the initiative was to provide campuses training, assistance, and support to improve student achievement by improving schoolwide discipline and positive behavior.

Programs and Budget

In 2009-2010, district staff changed the focus of the initiative to application of processes provided in the training using the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) framework. The goal of PBS is to increase the capacity of schools to provide a sustained, positive, preventative, and instructional approach for student behavior management. PBS is the district’s schoolwide behavior management approach to meet that goal. It integrates the Safe and Civil Schools’ components of Foundations (focuses on positive behavior support and schoolwide discipline improvement); START on Time! (designed to create safe transition procedures, and reduce tardiness and classroom disruptions by late arrivals); and CHAMPs which guides teachers on promoting responsible student behaviors during instruction. The components are a set of materials (curriculum) designed to guide schools in designing processes for schoolwide discipline and classroom management that result in improvement of safety and civility across school settings.

Areas of concentration are both on and off the campus and include common areas such as cafeterias, courtyards/patios, buses/bus loading areas, and hallways. Common areas are those places where large numbers of students are present at the same time.

The components share a set of beliefs that emphasize that all students are treated with dignity and respect; skills and behaviors necessary for success are taught; student misbehaviors are teaching opportunities; motivation and responsibility are encouraged through positive interactions and the building of student relationships.

Program funding of $230,000 was provided by Title II Part A, Improving Teacher Quality State Grant. One locally funded coordinator oversaw program implementation. Table 1 presents the 2009-2010 planned budget allocations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Code</th>
<th>Category Allocation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6100</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>$34,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6200</td>
<td>Contracted Services</td>
<td>$150,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6300</td>
<td>Supplies and Materials</td>
<td>$29914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6400</td>
<td>Other Operating costs</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$230,00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Implementation

The following program structure was used in 09-10:

- Campuses will be organized in a cohort system.
- Foundations school leadership teams will be trained to lead their campus schoolwide behavior management and improvement efforts.
- Campus administrator on team and attendance at training will be required.
- Campus principal’s visible active support is key for success.
- Campus will be provided two years of training with third year of follow-up support.
- All campus staff will be involved.
- Campus data will drive decision-making.
- Campuses will use an ongoing improvement cycle.
- Common areas will be structured to ensure the safety and civility of all students.
- Campuses will implement START on Time!
- Campus guidelines for success will be created and posted in all hallways throughout the building.
- Campus audits will be conducted by Foundations coaches and coordinator.
- Campuses completing training will be expected...
to continue their projects to ensure student safety.

- Campus administrators will be trained to coach classroom management.
- Campus teachers will complete CHAMPS training.

School Characteristics

In 2009-2010, 66 campuses were divided into seven cohorts (Table 2) of predominately secondary schools (Cohort 7 – all elementary).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten elementary campuses have received training to date. A phase-in of elementary schools was based on their request/willingness to participate. Some re-tiering of campuses has been necessary due to lack of implementation or a campus environment that jeopardizes the safety of the students.

Activities designed to help campuses successfully implement the Safe and Civil Schools Series (S&CS) process included but were not limited to the following:

Professional Development

Cohorts 1, 2, and 3 schools have completed the three year training plan that consists of four sessions of three modules: The Process (year one), Behavior in the Common Area (year two), and Safety, Discipline and Behavior Support (year three). Cohorts 4, 5, and 6 schools are still in the training phase.

A consultant from Teaching Strategies, Inc. conducted the trainings that included a morning presentation and an afternoon team work-session with technical assistance on improvement projects each campus identified. Projects are to be completed and implemented during the training period.

During 2009 – 2010, approximately 455 team members from Cohorts 4, 5, and 6 attended 12 Foundations training sessions. Approximately 61 percent were teachers, 13 percent were campus administrators, and the remaining 26 percent were other professional and paraprofessional campus staff team members such as counselors, community liaisons, and teacher assistants. The total represents double counts due to multiple trainings for each team.

An annual “refresher” session for Cohorts 1, 2, and 3 campuses was attended by 125 team members.

Twenty sessions on classroom management (CHAMPS) were provided to approximately 299 district staff. Of those, 87 percent were teachers, .04 percent campus administrators, and .09 percent other district staff. A team of classroom teachers supported the coordinator by conducting the majority of classroom management trainings.

Cohort 7 training, follow-up, on-site training, violence intervention and prevention trainings for students and parents were facilitated or provided by the coordinator. The coordinator attended cross-functional meetings on safety to access violence data.

Foundations Coaches

Thirty-six coaches served as implementation and audit liaisons at 57 of the 66 Foundations campuses. Their main responsibility was to promote schoolwide acceptance of the program, attend the trainings with the teams, and assist with audits and surveys. Coaches were from the departments of psychological services and safe and drug free schools. They were assigned as follows: 18 served one campus, 10 served two campuses, one served four campuses, and the remainder served from .5 to three campuses. Ten campuses were not assigned a coach and a “vacancy” was reported for two campuses.

Implementation Rubric/Action Plans

A Foundations Implementation Rubric was submitted for 36 schools by the Foundations coaches during the year. The rubric was used by campus teams to rate their perceptions of the current phase of implementation for eight areas at their school using the following scale: 1 = Preparing; 2 = Getting started; 3 = Moving Along; 4 = In Place. Scores for this section ranged from 0 to 6. Approximately 10 forms did not indicate the total score. Teams were also to rate the implementation phase of the Common Areas. The majority did so. The areas on both parts of the rubric were the same as the strategies listed in the CIP with the exception of the Team Effectiveness category. Inconsistencies in the completion of the instrument were observed as well as the use of two different forms. Twenty-one of the forms had nine areas to be scored. The remaining 15 had one additional area to be scored. For this reason, data on the overall level of implementation cannot be reported.

Eighteen cohort-specific Action Plans for “re-implementation” in the following school year were submitted. Ideally, these should be based on the results of the implementation rubric and used in the development of the 2010-2011 CIP.

Safety Surveys
A total of 11 schools (seven elementary, two high, and two middle schools) administered safety surveys designed to measure perceptions of students and staff on safety issues, student-to-student interactions, student attitudes about school, school rules and expectations, and school problems. Approximately 1,747 students and 348 staff members completed the 2009-2010 survey.

Survey results reveal that students generally felt safe in the school with the exception of the same two common areas as last year: the restrooms and the parking lot. These are two areas that tend to have less direct staff supervision. They felt safer in the more supervised areas: the classroom and cafeteria. Both agreed that students have been taught the rules and expectations for behavior in the classroom. Only 69 percent of students, however, agreed that students were taught the rules regarding appropriate conduct in the restrooms.

Overall, higher percentages of staff (50% - 70%) agreed that students treated each other with respect in comparison to only 40 to 50 percent of students. Less than 50 percent of students agreed that students respected each other in three common areas: the cafeteria, hallways, and courtyard. Staff rated themselves much higher than students on the level of respect and support of students (ranging from 20 to 30 percentage points).

Both students and staff were fairly positive in their attitudes about coming to school or work most of the time. Approximately 74 percent of staff, in comparison to 82 percent of students, believed the work they did at school was important. Similar proportions of staff and students indicated that they were proud to be part of the school.

The staff survey included the three additional categories of school rules and standards, staff interactions and school policies, and school-family relationships. Only 60 percent of staff respondents agreed that their school had a consistent approach to behavior management. All respondents indicated that they knew how and when to respond to student misbehavior and encourage students to do their best. Staff agreed that excessive tardiness and absences were problems.

Campus Discipline Management Plan

As a federal and state requirement, schools must develop an individual campus discipline plan based on a needs assessment as a component of their Campus Improvement Plan (CIP). The district’s CIP format included a template in Targets 3 (Safe, Secure, and Orderly Environment) and 6 (Discipline Management Plan) based on the principles and procedures of the Safe and Civil Schools Series’ (S&CS) components. Campuses used the template to develop campus specific strategies. A review of 10 CIPs found that all addressed discipline management. Some campuses developed campus specific strategies while the majority used the generic format as provided with no changes in the strategies for their campus.

Disciplinary Offenses

As required by Chapter 37, Safe Schools Act and Texas Education Code, the district’s Student Code of Conduct defined and communicated student behavioral expectations to students and parents for the various kinds of misconduct that may result in disciplinary consequences. The four levels of infractions and 2009-2010 offenses reported for each (First Level, Discretionary, Mandatory, and Expellable) are displayed in Figure 1. The district’s Student Discipline Office reported a total of 52,919 offenses for 2009-2010, a decrease of 10,375 from 2008-2009 (63,294). As shown in Figure 1, decreases were reported for First Level, the less serious offenses, (8,812), Discretionary (1,518), and Expellable (58), the most serious offenses. An increase of 185 infractions for the Mandatory level was reported.

The top four offenses were as follows (numbers for 2008 – 2009 are in parenthesis).

- Single acts of disruptive behavior – 24,733 (32,529),
- Fighting – 6,219 (6,961),
- Dress and grooming code violations – 3,668 (3,156),
- Profanity/obscene gesture toward personnel – 2,527 (3,091).

Increases were reported for fighting and use of profanity/obscenity. Overall, the First Level offenses of single acts of disruptive behavior and dress and grooming violations accounted for 58 percent of the total number of offenses.

Site Visits

The consultant, coordinator, and Foundations coaches conducted 24 campus audits. Expected outcomes included successful structuring of school settings; student behavior that indicated that responsible behavior expectations were taught; active and positive supervision of student behavior; and immediate and consistent corrections by staff. Findings indicated that at least three campuses did not have a functioning
team. All campuses received feedback on observations, and recommendations were made for enhancing or improving the effectiveness of implementation of the campus strategies. The visiting team expressed concern for the civility and safety at two campuses and recommended immediate intervention by district leadership.

The majority of the concerns included the lack of implementation of START on Time! which is meant to be a positive and proactive system for ensuring safety and civility in the hallways as students transition from one period to the next. Additionally, concerns included lack of evidence that students were taught hallway expectations, immediate corrections for misbehaviors, and follow-up to corrections. The team was pleased to observe evidence of restructuring of common areas and the visibility and active participation of administrators at some campuses. The team was impressed with evidence that students in an alternative school setting have been taught social skills and expressed hope for continuance of reinforcement at the home school.

Summary and Recommendations

The district’s focus on increasing academic achievement is lost when campus staff must devote time to deal with misbehavior and tardiness. There is a need for renewed prioritization by district leadership for implementation of its safety initiative if it is to decrease the disorderly conduct incidents and classroom disruptions that take away from its primary mission of preparing students for graduation. At a Bullying Prevention Summit on August 11, 2010, Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan addressed the need for schools to do more to keep children safe. He shared the following beliefs about school safety: “no school can be a great school until it is a safe school first; the lack of safety interferes with the ability of students to learn; implementation of effective prevention programs can improve school environment and safety; a positive school climate is foundational to start academic achievement.” To the question of “What does a safe school look like?”, he identified some elements such as “a safe school is one where students feel like they belong; have little tolerance for disruptiveness; teachers are primarily engaged in helping students learn and grow; and all the building staff pitches in to create a culture of respect among others.”

In reviewing results of the implementation activities, it appears that campuses were not aware that strategies for implementation of Foundations, START, and CHAMPS were part of their Campus Improvement Plan. (There is a need to address this with non Foundations campuses.) Because strategies in the action plans for Targets 3 and 6 have been provided in a “template” format, the majority of campuses do not modify the procedures to make them campus specific.

By including these in their plan, campuses have committed to improvement at their campus through implementation as is; thus, expectations are that they are being implemented.

Implementation of the program structure will produce the desired results. Campuses can maintain safe, secure and orderly environments (CIP Target 3) and improve student performance and student behavior through development and implementation of their campus discipline management plan strategies (CIP Target 6).

Based on review of the results of the implementation activities, the following recommendations are made:

Assist principals by developing and annually providing campuses (including those that have completed the training) a program information and guidance document with the required implementation activities, any program changes, and timelines. Principals cannot lead their campuses to help the district attain its vision of safe, civil, and productive environments if they are not knowledgeable of the actions required.

Establish and publish the requirement for implementation of START on Time! In reviewing the implementation rubrics, CIPs, and site visit results, it was noted that not all campuses implemented START. If it is a requirement, campuses need to be notified.

Correlate, at a minimum, the Level I student discipline offenses with S&CS procedures so that campuses know which procedures help to reduce which infractions.

Consider having all schools administer the student and staff safety surveys annually. It provides valuable data (staff and student perceptions) that would be helpful to campuses in developing their improvement projects and CIP action plans.

Review the CIP template to establish how to assist campuses with implementation of Targets 3 and 6. Program fidelity is critical, therefore, an overview (for all schools) through the CILT training to keep the initiative in the forefront is recommended. Make campuses aware that Foundations, START, and CHAMPS strategies are embedded in the CIP. (Have campuses bring their CIP, and led by the consultant, review their action plan strategies.) Ensure that campuses know of this correlation to eliminate duplication of effort. Development of the CIP requires data driven decision making for strategies as does the Foundations improvement cycle.

Improvement processes take time to develop and demonstrate effectiveness; therefore, district leadership should ensure continued implementation when administrators are assigned or reassigned to campuses.
The focus of the *Foundations* process is to improve student performance by improving student behavior. *Foundations* can assist campuses meet the expectations set forth in the superintendent’s *Great Expectations Framework*. The *Foundations*’ staff development is based on best practices that are embedded in the Campus Improvement Plan. The goal to create positive school and staff climates that will reduce student safety fears and negative behaviors of both adults and students can be met by full program implementation.

For more information contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.