

# Positive behavioral interventions programs found to improve student behavior and learning

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Adopting the evidence-based procedures of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) helped 21 elementary schools reduce student suspensions, office discipline referrals and improve student academic achievement, according to a study published in the July 2010 issue of the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*. SWPBIS is a rapidly expanding approach to improving educational environments that is estimated to be used in more than 9,000 schools nation-wide.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of [Youth Violence](#) (Catherine P. Bradshaw, Mary M. Mitchell, and Philip J. Leaf) randomly assigned Maryland elementary schools to either receive training in SWPBIS (21 schools) or not (16 comparison schools) and followed the schools over a five-year period.

Improving our nation's schools is a perennial challenge, yet districts often fall prey to untested and faddish approaches. Researchers found that in both the SWPBIS schools and the comparison schools, other programs were being used in the schools at the same time, including character education programs, bullying prevention and drug prevention programs (for example, D.A.R.E.). However, it was only in schools that had formal SWPBIS programs that had significant improvements in student behavior and learning.

"This study demonstrates how important it is for schools to commit to sustained implementation of SWPBIS over multiple years," said lead author Catherine Bradshaw. "We are currently examining student-level factors to identify for whom and under what conditions SWPBIS has the greatest impact."

"I'm so impressed by this research because Bradshaw and her colleagues not only documented the effectiveness of SWPBIS, they also noted that 'context matters,'" said George Sugai, the Carole J. Neag Endowed Chair and Professor of Special Education at the University of Connecticut. "Kudos to this group for conducting quality research in socially important and real contexts."

**More information:** The article "Examining the effects of school wide positive behavioral interventions and supports on student outcomes" in the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* (published by the Hammill Institute on Disabilities and SAGE) is available free for a limited time at [pbi.sagepub.com/content/12/3/180.full.pdf+html](http://pbi.sagepub.com/content/12/3/180.full.pdf+html)

Provided by SAGE

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