



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Designing a Schoolwide Approach to Reduce Behavior Problems

Hidden Hills Elementary School, Arizona • May 2009

Topic: Reducing Behavior Problems

Practice: Schoolwide Approach

Highlights

- Staff at Hidden Hills elementary conducted a thorough analysis of what, where, and when problem behaviors were occurring in order to determine a schoolwide discipline plan.
- It is important for children to receive a consistent message about behavior rules in all areas of the school (e.g., classrooms, buses, libraries, and cafeterias).
- Behavior expectations should be positively stated, and good behavior should be positively rewarded.

About the Site

Hidden Hills Elementary School

Phoenix, AZ

Demographics

70% White

19% Hispanic

5% Black

3% Asian

2% Native American

35% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

8% English Language Learners

Hidden Hills Elementary uses a comprehensive schoolwide approach to provide a safe learning environment and promote students' social and emotional skills and positive character values. The unique strategies used by the school are:

- A schoolwide approach that focuses on positive behavior support and is led and guided by a core team of five to six staff including the principal, social worker, and several teachers;
- Monday class meetings conducted by every teacher to talk about bullying prevention, social-emotional skills, and character values;
- Clear communication and reminders of behavior expectations;
- A web-based system and detailed referral forms to record characteristics of problem behavior, hypothesized motives for behavior, and actions taken; and
- A multi-level positive reinforcement system to acknowledge positive and caring behavior of students and teachers.

Full Transcript

I'm Lynette Geake, and I'm the Principal of Hidden Hills Elementary in Paradise Valley Unified School District in Phoenix, AZ.

I was trained by the State of Arizona to attend a solutions team training, which is a team of evaluators to go into an underperforming school and see whether they're actually implementing their plan for change, thinking that we would use that as a tool for making positive change in our environment. Hidden Hills is a highly-performing school, but there's always room for improvement. So, I thought by bringing the solutions team information back, using the rubric not only with my staff but also all my stakeholders, including district people, including parents, getting their input as to what we could do better, and that was where we started from. It was identified very easily that we had a good discipline plan, but the kids had no consistency. Each teacher had their own little plan of how to do discipline, and there was no cohesive plan, making it very difficult for the children who went to special area, when they went to the cafeteria, when they were riding in the buses, when they were going to the reading teacher. There was always something different, some different expectations for them to meet. Coming together makes it one cohesive plan for all the students to be able to follow.

The first thing we did was narrow down our choices of areas for improvement, and we identified the schoolwide discipline plan. We did a lot of research as a staff as to all the different approaches, the different options that we had out there. And as a staff, we put those pieces together and came up with

actually two final choices.

Probably the most frustrating thing was the first year was simply data collection, and we were ready to instill this new program. We wanted to jump on the bandwagon, but the data collection proved to be so invaluable because we had to know where our problems were occurring, we had to know what time they were occurring, and we had to know what behaviors we really wanted to see at those locations. The data showed us that. So we used the data to determine or to create our behavior matrix. And then, we started teaching the staff what this looks like. We would get the staff together. We would get parents together. We got our student council together. What does it look like if you're behaving during an assembly? What does it look like to be safe? What does it look like to be respectful? What does it look like to be responsible? Give us those things that are positively stated. We brought it altogether, and then, with the help of the Arizona State University, we were able to narrow it down to three to five expectations for each rule for each location, and that result was the behavior matrix.

Data's probably the top priority with looking at our staff training because we want to be able to identify areas that need a little tweaking to be better for the population we are dealing with now because we are always in continual change. We hold monthly staff meetings where we look at the data and determine if change is necessary. We also look at how can we even more positively reward the students. I do a lot of training with my classified staff, with the bus drivers, teaching them so that there is a common language across the board. And what we are noticing is that because we are being positive and forthright with the expectations, directly, explicitly teaching the expectations to the children, we are actually having much more time for academics in the classroom because the children know what our expectations are.

When we are planning, then, for the next year, we always make sure and look at the data, look at where we are and where we need to be. One of the problems that we used the data for this year was we had the children coming up from recess for five minutes, sitting in a line, getting drinks, going to the restroom before their teacher picked them up after lunch, and we realized we have quite a high number of referrals coming during that five-minute period. We gave the children two extra minutes on the playground. That shortened the time to three minutes, and we haven't had a referral since. So, using our data to make positive changes for the children.

The most positive outcome of this entire project has been that our students are really learning what it means to be respectful, to be responsible, and to be safe. You're not going to see it only in the classroom. You're going to see it on campus wide. You're going to see it on our school buses, and you're going to see it in the home. When the kids say they're a Hidden Hills kid, they know what it means to be responsible, safe, and respectful.