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5. A photo (jpeg format)
6. Any web links related to nominee's PBS efforts. All nominations (including all required information) must be received by **July 15, 2012**. Nominations received after this date will be considered invalid. Nominations should be sent to TIM KNOSTER via email (tknoster@bloomu.edu). Questions can be addressed via email to Hank Bohanon (hbohano@luc.edu).

Nomination Application for APBS Board of Directors

Submit Electronically to: Tim Knoster (tknoster@bloomu.edu)

- **Name of Person Submitting Nomination:**
- **Name of Nominated Person:**
- **Address/Phone #/Email of Nominated Person:**
- **Experience Relevant to Positive Behavior Support** (*advocacy, education, professional roles, self-advocacy*):
- **Board of Directors Nomination Paragraph** (*to be completed by nominee; please provide up to 250 words describing your interest in serving a 3-year term on the APBS Board of Directors. This paragraph will be provided to APBS members as part of the election process*):

Using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports for Dropout Prevention: Lessons from New Hampshire

JoAnne M. Malloy, Maureen Tracey, McKenzie Harrington

For more than a decade, our nation's educators, policy makers, communities, and advocates have been concerned about the alarming number of students who drop out of high school. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, almost 1.2 million high school students fail to graduate on time in any given year, and the dropout rates are approximately 50% among African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic youth. Youth with disabilities drop out of high school at twice the rate of their non-disabled peers. The literature on high school dropouts indicates that dropping out is the culmination of a long period of disengagement fueled by academic failure, perceived irrelevance of the work, and social isolation (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008; Alexander, Entwistle, & Horsey, 1997; Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004). Zero tolerance policies have exacerbated the problem by pushing out some students, especially students of color or those

with problem behaviors, who are much more likely to be subject to punitive discipline actions at significantly higher rates than their peers (American Psychological Association, 2008; Cooley, 1995; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006). High school graduates earn an average of \$10,000 more per year than high school dropouts, and dropouts are much more likely to enter the prison system, require mental health services, abuse substances, and rely on public assistance programs (Rumberger, 2001).

Studies have provided evidence indicating that disengagement and high dropout rates are influenced by student demographic and familial variables (see Alexander et al., 1997; Kortering & Braziel, 1998; Rumberger, 1987, 2001; Wagner, 1991), as well as school-level ecological and cultural factors (i.e., teacher beliefs, school size, community socioeconomic status, school discipline policies, consistency of school norms, and a lack of academic expectations; Bryk & Thum 1989; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993; Lee & Burkam 2002; Patterson, Hale, & Stessman, 2007; Rumberger 1987, 2001). With a recognition that dropout rates are as much an attribute of the school as of the students, the emphasis of successful dropout prevention efforts must be on program improvement, early identification of at-risk students, targeted alternative programs and graduation pathways, and school-wide reforms to improve the culture and climate of the school for all students.

Implementing with fidelity a school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SW-PBIS) framework is designed to address many of the needs identified by dropout prevention experts as crucial to improving student engagement and connectedness to school (see Dynarski et al., 2008). Specifically, SW-PBIS implementation requires the use of data, creates a framework for early identification of students who need support, addresses behavior and social skills, and promotes the development of stronger, more positive connections between students and adults. Additionally, PBIS provides the framework for implementation that we now know is critical to successful reform and practice change (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Given that one of major goals of positive behavior supports is to create and maintain positive relationships between adults and students in the school through consistent teaching, reinforcement, and recognition of pro-social behaviors, we can logically conclude that developing and implementing PBIS will enhance the performance and high school completion rates of students who are disengaged and who may otherwise drop out. The comprehensive PBIS framework allows high schools to (a) systematically gather and analyze the data that predict dropout risk, (b) put into place evidence-based and evidence-informed practices, and (c) provide support and decision-making systems adults need to successfully transform the school's culture and climate.

Beginning in 2002, the state of New Hampshire, in collaboration with the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire and the New Hampshire Center on Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports, adopted PBIS as one of its primary strategies to reduce high school dropouts, with significant positive results. In 2004, the state passed legislation focused on dropout prevention that included raising the age of compulsory school attendance from 16 to 18 years, allowing for flexible pathways to graduation and credit attainment based upon competency, and providing funds for the development of alternative programs. As a result, the New Hampshire annual dropout rate fell from 3.8% in 2003–2004 to under 1% in 2009–2010, and the rate among the state's students with disabilities was reduced to .67%. The PBIS model implemented by the state, known as APEX (Achievement in dropout Prevention and Excellence), combines the traditional PBIS framework (Horner & Sugai, 2005)

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with an intensive school-to-career planning model that serves as the tertiary level intervention. Funded by two federal dropout prevention grants and a state discretionary grant, the APEX model has been implemented in 15 high schools with higher-than-state average dropout rates, and, as a group, these high schools have reduced their average annual dropout rates by more than half since 2004, from 6.3% in 2003–2004, to 2.5% in 2008–2009. While implementation has been uneven, most of the schools established systems for using data for decision-making, articulated systems and expectations for positive behavior, created greater consistency in the school response to behavior problems, and established systems and practices designed to improve the outcomes for students who require substantial behavior support and instruction. Ten years of experience with PBIS implementation in high schools has taught us about their unique challenges and concerns, including their graduation rates, diploma requirements, and the emphasis on school to career development and preparation.

Universal Systems, Data, and Practices

PBIS implementation at the universal school-wide level is concerned with preventing problem behavior, reducing inconsistencies in disciplinary responses, and creating a more predictable environment for everyone in the school. We have discovered that while most of the high schools have numerous specialized interventions for students with particular academic or social/emotional needs, these interventions are typically not always organized or systemized in a way to produce significant positive outcomes. The schoolwide PBIS framework helps to organize the many interventions, programs, and supports in a school. As a result, time devoted to developing a school-wide leadership team and data have proven to be valuable.

The most prevalent behavior problems among the high schools in the APEX projects tend to be skipping classes, truancy, class tardiness, and disrespectful behavior. Freshmen tend to contribute to the highest rates of infractions. Given the push to keep students on track to graduate, high school Universal Teams rely on attendance data, class progress reports, and office discipline referrals to identify the major problem behaviors that will eventually lead to disengagement and school dropout. Peer-to-peer behavior data through student school climate surveys also help each high school assess the extent of its harassment or bullying problems. Teams develop their behavior matrices with input from the students, and roll-outs are often focused on attendance, timeliness in getting to class, and respectful behavior. Students play a significant role in the design, implementation, and assessment of roll outs. Many of the high school Universal Teams have also looked at the numbers of students who are (a) failing one or more class and (b) at risk for not advancing a grade level, indicators of risk for falling behind and eventually dropping out. Often the group of students who are off-track for graduation is large enough (e.g., 30% of freshmen) to be considered a “universal level” problem that requires a schoolwide remedy. Most high schools issue mid-semester or mid-term progress reports that allow for this type of analysis. By addressing the needs of a large percentage of students who have fallen behind while there is still time to obtain credit, schools can avoid overutilization, and the costs, of resource-intensive options such as credit recovery or repeating a class. Schoolwide prevention tends to increase student engagement and decrease the number of students who need more intensive interventions.

Tier 2 Systems, Data, and Practices

New Hampshire’s experience with the APEX projects has also taught us a great deal about how to work within the unique struc-

tures and challenges of high schools, including how instruction is organized around separate content areas, students are often “sorted” into academic instructional groups, credit requirements determine whether a student is on- or off-track for graduation and whether a student is promoted to the next grade level, and specialized programs (e.g., alternative classes) for students who are failing to respond to typical classroom instruction. In the first two APEX projects, only two high schools achieved a level of PBIS implementation at Tier 2; however, the current APEX project has focused on the development of Tier 2 systems, with an emphasis on Check In/Check Out and simple functional behavioral assessment and behavior support plans. By addressing the needs of students who are not responding to Universal level behavior expectations before they fall further behind, Tier 2 teams are seeking to prevent these students from needing time-intensive and often expensive Tier 3 supports. The results have been promising, as the data have shown that more students are (a) attending classes with greater regularity and (b) passing their classes, and the teams have been learning about the function of behavior.

Most high schools in the APEX project have specialized programs and alternative school options for students who do not respond as expected to Universal academic and social/emotional expectations. We have recently been working with the Tier 2 teams to assess the effectiveness of those programs, given that most are not based upon evidence-supported practices or curricula and do not systematically match the intervention to student need. We are recommending that schools adopt more structured, time-limited, and research-supported interventions, such as the High School Behavior Education Program (Swain-Bradway, Kerner, & Morrison, 2007).

We have found that many high school teachers and administrators feel caught between policies that require punishment-only responses to problem behaviors and the needs of students who have poor academic skills and are disengaged from school staff and the academic processes. While most staff want students to succeed, learning how to adjust the adult response based upon student need takes time for team members.

Tier 3 Systems, Data, and Practices

In New Hampshire, APEX projects promote an evidence-supported school-to-career planning model, RENEW (Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural supports, Education, and Work) that has been effective with numerous cohorts of youth who have significant emotional and behavior support needs (Hagner et al., 1999; Malloy, Drake, et al., 2010; Malloy, Sundar, et al., 2010). Designed to re-engage youth who are significantly at risk of dropping out of high school and have significant emotional or behavioral support needs, RENEW is focused on several school-to-adult life transition outcomes, including high school completion, employment, community inclusion, and postsecondary activities. Of the 15 high schools that participated in APEX projects, 8 have adopted the RENEW model, identifying teachers, school counselors, and special education staff who want to become RENEW facilitators. With extensive training and coaching from university staff, these facilitators help students develop personal futures plans and individualized teams. Students direct the process, learn how to set goals, problem-solve, self-advocate, navigate school requirements, and articulate their strengths and needs. Family members are asked to participate to help the student reach his or her goals. Data have shown that many youth who were off-track for graduation and highly disengaged from the school find a pathway to graduation and re-engage with school staff, successfully completing high school and making new social connections. Students

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enrolled in RENEW often tell the RENEW counselor that they want to graduate and to succeed; however, they usually give up trying by October. More often than not, these students have been failing since Grade 7, if not longer, and at the first sign of failure they give up. Often these students have a learning disability that affects not only classroom learning but also behavior in social situations and navigation of everyday routines (e.g., asking the teacher for help, getting a lunch card, signing up for driver education). When these students are taught these "small skills" they begin to feel more successful and engaged in their high school experience.

Lesson Learned, Moving Forward

The acknowledgement that PBIS is the manifestation of response to intervention (RtI) for behavior support provides a framework for effective and systematic implementation of schoolwide reform that can be organized around improving graduation rates (thereby reducing dropout rates). The past 10 years of APEX projects implementation in New Hampshire has taught us how to talk about PBIS and RtI in a way that is more relevant to the challenges faced by high schools, particularly in the context of graduation requirements, content area "silos" and specializations, preparation for college and career activities, and social pressures unique to developing adolescents. Each school has different needs, strengths, and weaknesses. An important part of team building and implementation processes includes meeting schools where they are and building off of their strengths. Knowing that the data that predict greater risk of high school failure include poor attendance (truancy and skipping classes), behavior problems, office discipline referrals and suspensions, history of academic failure, and emotional and learning disabilities (Belfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007), New Hampshire high school teams incorporate school and classroom attendance information, academic progress reports, grade promotions, and credits earned into the mix of data that were entirely focused on office discipline referrals in the early years of implementation. We are also emphasizing implementation of targeted small-group interventions (particularly Check In/Check Out) to increase coverage and efficiency, and emphasize prevention, especially in larger schools. At the high school level we have found that adolescents are looking for positive social connections with adults and peers and that it is not enough to try to keep engaged or re-engage students to attend classes. The work must be of value, be relevant, and be interesting. The classroom teacher is the key. As one teacher who worked as a RENEW facilitator in her school said, "It is when we help others that we help ourselves . . . to become better teachers."

The National High School Center (2007) and the National Dropout Prevention Center have recognized that a three-tiered model or continuum of supports is an effective strategy for improving graduation rates and, most important, helping adolescents who are at risk of being lost in the critical transition from high school to adult life (Malloy & Hawkins, 2010). We believe that the RtI and PBIS frameworks can, within local contexts, directly address the root causes of student disengagement and high school failure, and create welcoming, engaging school environments.

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ASSOCIATION FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Newsletter

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Association for Positive Behavior Support

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APBS President's Update

Congratulations to the newly elected board members for 2012. We welcome them and look forward to working with all.

Susan Barrett

Susan Barrett is the director of the PBIS Regional Training and Technical Assistance Center at Sheppard Pratt Health System. She assists with large-scale implementation of schoolwide positive behavior support (SW-PBS) by providing training and technical assistance in Maryland; South Carolina; Washington, DC; Virginia; Vermont; New Mexico; and Tennessee. Susan is a returning board member who has been working on the launch of the APBS school-wide training network.

Kelley Gordham

Kelley Gordham has been serving as an Ex-officio on the APBS board and has worked hard to evaluate the different stakeholder groups within APBS. Kelley co-facilitates the Home and Community Network, which promotes positive behavior support nationally for individuals across the lifespan. It currently has more than 100 members.

Don Kincaid

Don Kincaid is in his third term on the APBS Board and has been serving as the Vice-President. Don has chaired the Conference Committee for at least three years and is now the chair of the newly formed General Operations Committee (GOC). The GOC keeps track of the progress being made by each of the APBS committees, work groups, and other initiatives.

Satish Moorthy

Satish Moorthy is a new Board member who has been active as an APBS member. His interest is in cultural issues that relate to APBS and the policies that are needed to ensure that the Association is actively engaging the international members. Satish is the director of the New York

City Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center.

Heather Peshak George

Heather George has been serving on the APBS Board of Directors since 2009 and participating as the secretary of the Executive Committee for the past three years and the co-chair of the APBS Conference Committee for many years. Heather has been providing training and technical assistance in PBS for over 20 years, including coordinating systems change efforts at local, state, and national levels to support the implementation of PBS.

APBS 2013 Board Elections: Nominations Requested

Nominations are being solicited from the APBS membership for five open seats on the full Board of Directors. Any member in good standing may nominate another member (or himself/herself) to run for the board. Terms run for 3 years. The APBS Nominations Committee will establish a slate of candidates who meet the needs of APBS based upon the information provided with each nomination. The following items are requested for a nomination submission (required items are indicated with an asterisk):

1. The Nomination Application form for APBS Full Board of Directors*
2. A letter or email from the nominee agreeing to run for the board*
3. A professional vita or personal description of the nominee*
4. A nomination paragraph (no more than 250 words) that will appear on the ballot to be submitted to the membership for the final vote*

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