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School-Based Mental Health, School Climate, and PBIS

Dimple Desai1, Chidinma Ogojiaku1, Ani Whitmore1, Russell Carleton1, Ann DiGirolamo1, Layla Fitzgerald2, Danté McKay2, Stephanie Pearson2

1Center of Excellence for Children’s Behavioral Health, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University 2Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

INTRODUCTION

School-based mental health (SBMH) programs are a proven strategy for minimizing barriers to accessing services and to help address behavioral health concerns that negatively influence a student’s ability to thrive in school and life.1

Universal prevention delivered through Tier I engagement includes activities utilizing social-emotional curricula, mental health awareness and education that have been shown to have a positive impact on overall school climate.2

The simultaneous implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) provides a framework for improving the school environment, which may also further support school-related outcomes associated with positive school climate.

This poster presents results from a longitudinal analysis of changes in school-related outcomes for these groups of schools in Georgia. Students attending Apex only; schools implementing Apex and PBIS; and all other public schools.

THE GEORGIA APEX PROGRAM

The Georgia Apex Program, funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health andDevelopmental Disabilities (DBHDD), is a SBMH program that supports building infrastructure and the placement of providers in schools to provide therapeutic supports. Figure 1: Apex Programmatic Goals

METHODS

This poster uses results from mixed-methods research combining qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with provider agency staff and school partners conducted during year 3 of the program and quantitative data derived from the 2015 and 2018 School Climate Star Ratings collected by the Georgia Department of Education.

Schools were grouped by the following provider agency perspective: Apex Schools Only, Apex with PBIS, GSHS 2.0 Middle School/High School (unexcused absences)

Table 1: School-Related Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Out-of-School Suspension Rate</td>
<td>GOSA K-12 Discipline Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Student Attendance</td>
<td>Student Attendance Record (unexcused/absences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School climate</td>
<td>School Climate Final Score</td>
<td>GSIS 2.0 for Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School partner/ provider agency perspective</td>
<td>Protocol Practice changes</td>
<td>School Climate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The authors then examined the change in score over time for statewide schools (n = 1980) and all Apex schools (n= 112), (see Table 2). The authors then examined the change in score over time for Apex schools with and without PBIS. The largest mean score difference over time was observed for schools implementing Apex with PBIS, F (2, 55242) = 2235.05, p<.05 (see Table 3).

RESULTS

The results from the analysis showed a statistically significant increase in star rating final score from 2015-2018, t (1, 2062) = 15.29, p < .05 for statewide schools (n = 1980) and all Apex schools (n= 112), (see Table 2). The authors then examined the change in score over time separately for Apex schools with and without PBIS. The largest mean score difference over time was observed for schools implementing Apex with PBIS, F (2, 55242) = 2235.05, p<.05 (see Table 3).

CONCLUSIONS

Our research supports that SBMH programming can contribute to a positive impact on overall school climate. These results demonstrate that fostering a strong partnership between local mental health providers and school systems to address mental health awareness and concerns may contribute to an overall positive school climate. Additionally, the simultaneous implementation of PBIS seems to positively influence school climate in a manner that boosts the impact of SBMH service availability; however, further research and data analysis must be done to understand those connections.

REFERENCES


2. Table 2. The authors then examined the change in score over time for statewide schools (n = 1980) and all Apex schools (n= 112), (see Table 2). The authors then examined the change in score over time separately for Apex schools with and without PBIS. The largest mean score difference over time was observed for schools implementing Apex with PBIS, F (2, 55242) = 2235.05, p<.05 (see Table 3).