

Summary of Involvement for Beatrice Public Schools
Beatrice, Nebraska
Safe & Responsive Schools Project
2000-2001

Four schools in the Beatrice Public School district continued their participation in the Safe & Responsive Schools project during the 2000-2001 school year. These participating schools include four elementary schools and the high school. Although the Beatrice Middle School is not currently involved in the project, there is a standing invitation to re-join the project at any time.

Throughout the summer and the current school year, the SRS teams began the process of implementing the plans that had been developed the previous school year. These plans were designed to address the core areas of the project including creating a positive climate, early identification and intervention, and effective responses.

Cedar & Lincoln Elementary Schools. The Cedar-Lincoln SRS team has focused primarily this year on the issue of “bullying” in the school. The SRS team invited Dr. Susan Swearer, assistant professor of School Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to present several workshops on the topic of bullying. Dr. Swearer conducted two focus groups with fourth & fifth grade students at Cedar & Lincoln Elementary schools, which allowed students to discuss their perceptions of bullying including what they thought a bully looks like, why bullying happens, and what to do about it. Dr. Swearer also conducted two workshops, one for all interested Beatrice Public Schools teachers and one for parents and community members (e.g. daycare providers). In these workshops, Dr. Swearer defined bullying, discussed factors that contribute to bullying behavior, and offered suggestions for dealing with & addressing bullying behavior. The Cedar-Lincoln SRS team distributed a 14-question survey to students in 2nd through 5th grade in order to assess their perceptions of bullying at their schools. The Cedar-Lincoln SRS team plans to conduct a “bullying awareness & prevention” week at each of their buildings this spring. Activities will include projects, discussions, and videos. The SRS team is looking at possibilities of implementing school-wide bullying prevention programs at their schools next fall.

The Cedar-Lincoln team is also interested in increasing parental involvement at their schools and is coordinating efforts with each building’s parent-teacher organization. The team also hopes to use parent comments and suggestions obtained on the SRS survey distributed to parents at conferences this spring.