

What Works in School Discipline and School Violence Prevention?

Reece L. Peterson & Courtney Miller
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Russell Skiba
Indiana University

For the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and
Community Violence

June 19-21, 2002 Monterey, CA



The Safe & Responsive Schools Project

The Safe and Responsive Schools Project was designed to develop a process for schools to implement our best knowledge of school-wide behavior planning in order to reduce the likelihood of school violence, and to diminish problems with inappropriate behavior in school.

It included:

- ◆ Three-tiered model
- ◆ Gathering a wide variety of data
- ◆ School-based team planning and decision making
- ◆ Focus on helping medium/smaller sized schools & districts

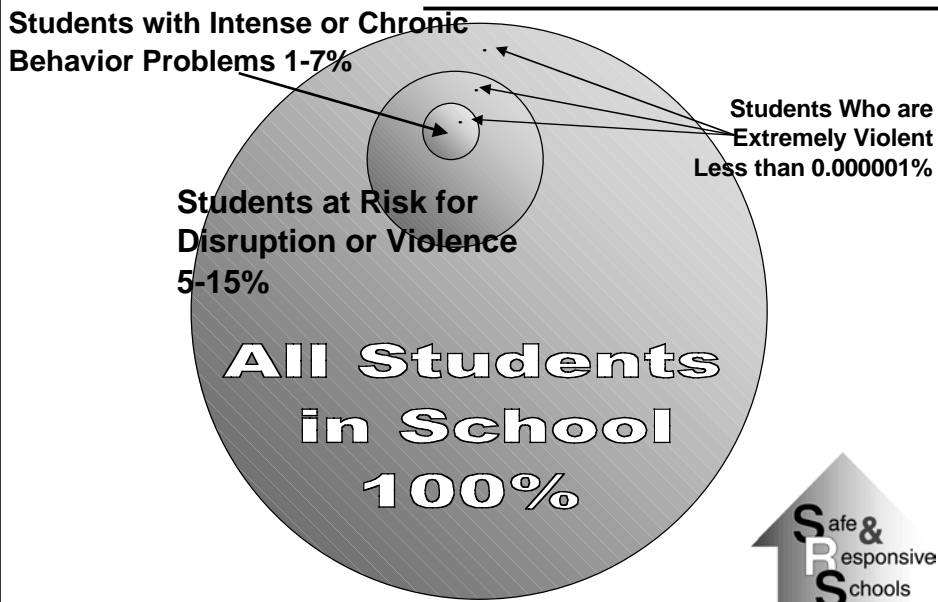


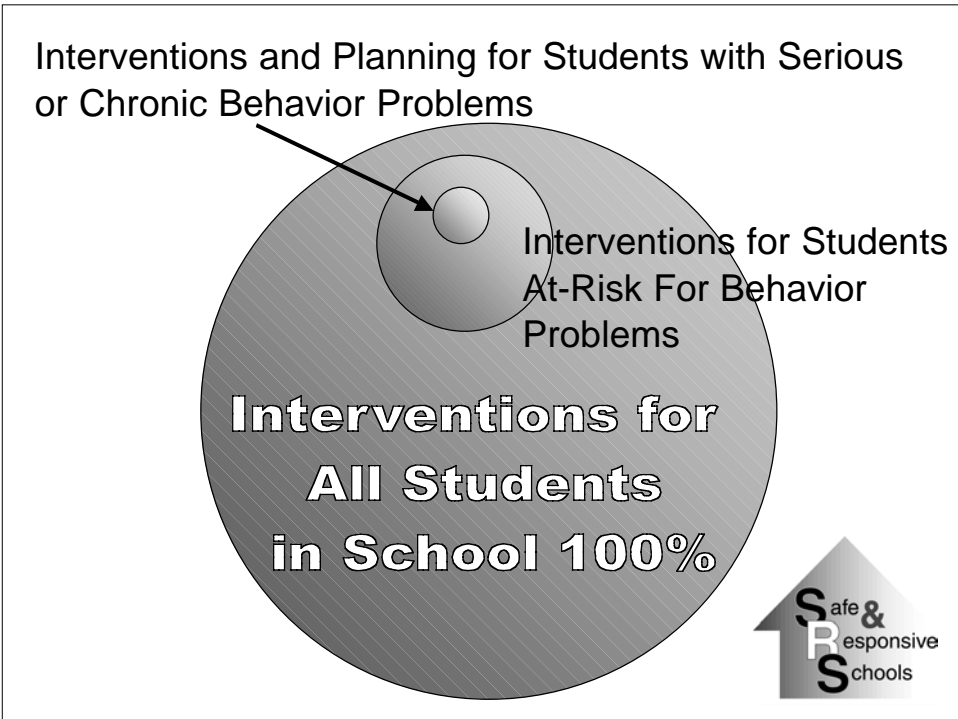
Using a Comprehensive Model

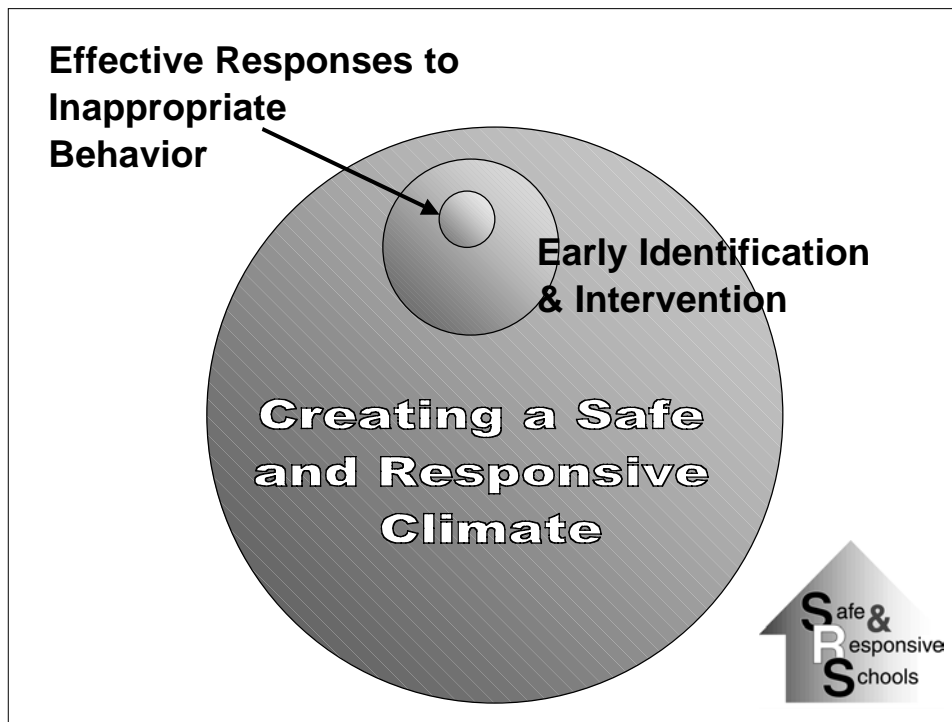
Assisting Schools to Plan Using this Model



The SRS Model







The Content-

- What can schools do to use this structure to implement strategies at each level?

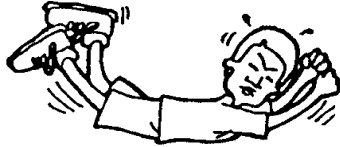
Interventions for the Three Components-

- ◆ *Creating a Safe and Responsive Climate*
- ◆ *Early Identification and Intervention*
- ◆ *Effective Responses to Inappropriate Behavior*



Optional Elements at Each Level- Resources?

- ◆ What are the programs which could be implemented?
- ◆ How much would they cost?
 - Dollars? Time? Space? Materials or Equip?
 - Staff Development time?



I. Creating a Safe & Responsive Climate

Provide foundations for good behavior for all students



I. Creating a Safe & Responsive Climate

1. Programs to Improve School & Classroom Climate E.g., Caring & Community in Schools; Cooperative Learning; etc.
2. Smaller Groupings/ More Connections
3. Increased Parent Involvement
4. Improved Classroom Management & School Discipline
5. Character Education/ School Values
6. Social Skills Instruction/ Violence Prevention Curricula
7. Conflict De-Escalation and Conflict Resolution Programs
8. Service Learning Programs
9. Screening and Early Identification
10. Add After-School and Other Community Programs
11. School Security Audits/ Environmental Planning



II. Early Identification & Intervention

Identify and serve “at-risk” students



II. Early Identification & Intervention

1. Early Identification & Intervention
2. Assess “Dangerousness”
3. FBA & Individual Behavior Plans
4. School-wide Discipline Programs
5. Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programs
6. Anger Management/ Counseling
7. Bullying Intervention Programs
8. Mentoring Programs
9. Academic Support Programs



III. *Effective Responses to Inappropriate Behavior*

Preparation
and Response for
Serious Behavior Problems



III. Effective Responses to Serious Inappropriate Behavior

1. Behavior Support/ School Safety/ Student Assistance *Teams*
2. Increase Effective Discipline Alternatives
3. Involving Students in Decision Making- E.g. Teen Courts; Student disciplinary boards, etc.
4. Obtain & Manage Information; Coordinate with Agencies
5. Technology for School Security- E.g. cameras, ID badges, metal detectors, etc.
6. School Community Resource Officers; Probation Officers
7. Develop Educational Alternative Options-
8. Emergency Preparation & Crisis Planning
9. Crisis Response Following a Crisis
10. Physical Restraint
11. Wraparound



Process and Procedures

How can schools use data in a strategic planning process to implement a comprehensive model?



Planning Process

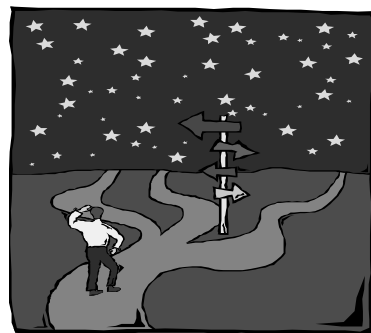


- ◆ Who plans?
 - One individual
 - A group or team
- ◆ If a group,
 - How does this tie to other plans or planning efforts?
 - How is the group picked?
 - How many?
 - Group dynamics?



SRS Strategic Planning

- ◆ Problem Solving Process
 - Gather information
 - Identify goals or needs
 - Identify possible actions
 - Evaluate potential actions
 - Choose and prioritize actions- develop plan



Coordinate to Existing Planning Process

- ◆ Is there an existing school planning process?
- ◆ Are long and short range plans created?
- ◆ How do behavioral issues fit into the school improvement planning process?
- ◆ Is there a school Safety or Security Plan?
Is it updated?
- ◆ Creating and implementing a plan?



Team Process: Developing the Plan

- At least one strategy from each dimension
 - » Creating Climate
 - » Early Identification
 - » Effective Response
- Maintain overarching focus
 - » Mission / Goal
- Evaluation
 - » What data are helpful?
 - » What do we target?
 - » How do we know if its effective?



Potential Data for Planning

- ◆ Data existing in School
 - Office Referrals
 - Absences and tardiness
 - Grades
 - Student Academic Achievement Data
 - Special Education Referrals
- ◆ Surveys
 - Climate Surveys
 - Safety Surveys
 - Focus Groups
- ◆ Needs Assessment by team or faculty
- ◆ And More



SRS Needs Assessment

- ◆ Questionnaire
 - Consisted of 24 items
 - 5 pt. Likert scale
 - Assessed schools' strengths, weaknesses & resources at each of 3 levels
- ◆ Compilation of Results
 - Discussed ratings, came to consensus
 - Calculated means



I. Creating a Positive Climate

To what extent does your school have:

1. Programs for students who are struggling academically?

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-estab school-wide

Documentation:

2. One or more programs that focus on building a sense of community or a sense of belonging for students in your school?

1	2	3	4	5
No awareness	Know of, but not used	Good awareness Beginning to use	Frequently used	Well-estab school-wide

Documentation:

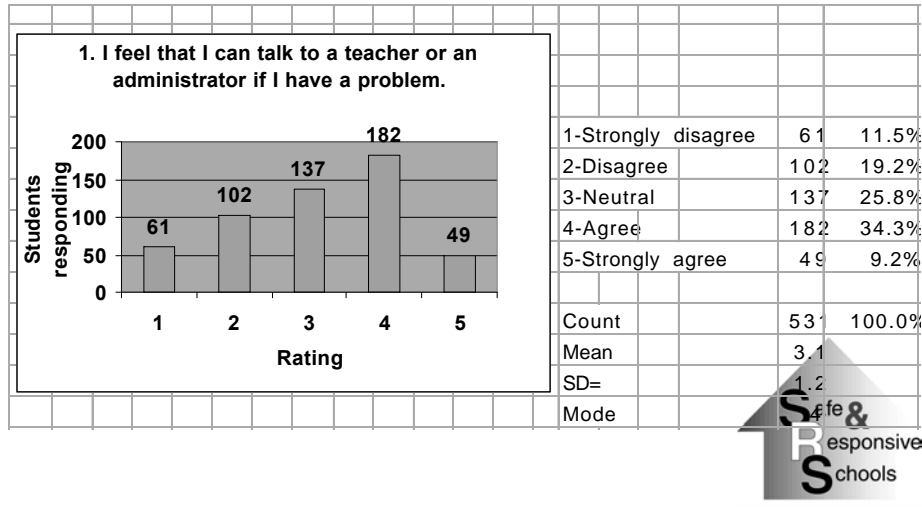


SRS School Safety / Climate Survey

- ◆ Developed from a combination of conflict resolution, school climate, bullying, and violence prevention surveys
- ◆ Three versions
 - Student
 - Elementary (25 items)
 - Secondary (45 items)
 - Staff (40 items)
 - Parent (27 items)
- ◆ Items overlap across versions



Sample Secondary Student Response -SRS Safety Survey Item



SRS Survey Subscales

Scale	Elementary Student	Secondary Student	Staff	Parents
Personal safety	X	X	X	X
Belongingness	X	X	X	X
Effective learning and general climate	X	X	X	X
Personal school experience		X		X
Major safety issues	X	X	X	X
Drugs/ alcohol		X	X	
Incivility/ disruption	X	X	X	X
Lie scale		X		

Safe & **R**esponsive **S**chools

Use Discussion to Identify Gaps & to Create a Plan

- ◆ Use data about existing activities to identify gaps
- ◆ Understand the possible programs to fill those gaps
 - For example, See SRS Project Fact Sheets



- ◆ Identify new elements to be added
- ◆ Identify existing elements to be expanded or rejuvenated
- ◆ Develop an implementation plan



SRS School Plans

- ◆ Plans varied by school
 - Built upon preexisting programs
 - Created new programs
 - Used commercially available programs
 - Examples
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Social Skills Training
 - After School Education
 - Out of Classroom Intervention
 - Community Connections



Some Factors Impacting Team Decision Making

- ◆ Purpose of team
- ◆ Duration of team
- ◆ Availability of resources
- ◆ Team size & composition
- ◆ Leadership of team
- ◆ Administration support
- ◆ Commitment & motivation of members



Project Outcome Data



School Team Evaluation--Process

	IN	NE	Total
Kickoff	4.03	4.17	4.09
Fact Sheets	3.78	4.04	3.89
NdsAsses Proc	4.21	4.06	4.15
NdAsses Res	4.16	3.95	4.07
Survey	4.29	4.00	4.17
Other data	3.88	3.86	3.87
SRS Staff	4.32	4.25	4.29
Plan	4.42	4.32	4.38
Team Discuss	4.45	4.05	4.28
Focus on Beh. issues	4.33	3.92	4.16



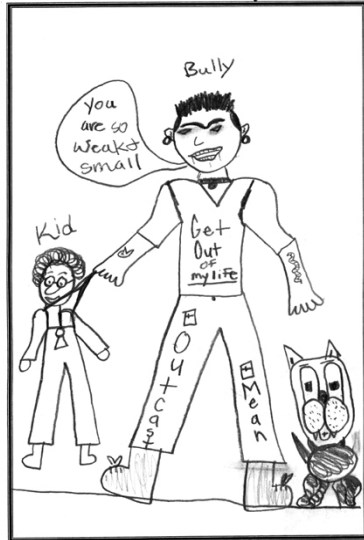
School Team Evaluation--Results

	IN	NE	Total
Clear on Purpose?	4.57	4.12	4.38
Clear on Role?	4.31	3.96	4.16
Time Commitment Compared to Other Teams	3.06	2.57	2.85
Team Meeting Its Goals?	3.76	3.22	3.53
Overall Value to School	3.99	3.78	3.90
How Many Hrs. Per Month?	8.2	2.0	5.6
Ideal Size of Team	7	8.5	7.7



Greater awareness of options:

Draw A Bully



As a teacher I have some options now to work with kids, either the victim or the aggressor. Where before I didn't feel like it was really a valid issue that anybody was willing to talk about.. "Well you know if they didn't throw a punch there is nothing we can do" I mean that was the kind of response that we would get and that's not the only kind of bullying. So I feel like now we are making valid the comments that kids are making to each other and realizing the effect that just comments can have on a person.

Elementary Teacher



Different views of students and problems:

We thought it was physical safety. We had several conversations about it, especially as it started. "What really are we doing here?" And I think shortly thereafter we kind of started making connections between those subtle behaviors that go on in the school and explosive school violence. It's not the one whose doing the picking on who's in danger to the school's outright safety, but it's more of who is receiving the brunt of all that. And I don't think we recognized that before we formally started, and I can guarantee you that I watch those kids who were being pushed outside of the social circles more now than I ever would have thought of before.

Junior High Teacher



Increased Ownership:

I failed to grasp the power that we had to change behavior. I am from the old school, you know, "it's a privilege for you to be here with me"; and it is amazing when people come together, as this committee has, and worked towards a common goal that has been well understood and well-defined, changes that we can enable to happen.

HS Teacher

I am much more conscious about the process of trying to help students solve the problems within my own setting. I tap into counseling services occasionally use the intervention room. But again the heightened awareness has made me much more conscious about making that effort first.

HS Teacher



Changes in student behavior and attitudes:

Kids ...come into my office with a totally different way of behaving when somebody has started a rumor about them. I mean last year they physically got into fisticuffs. This year they have another way in approaching it and a lot of times it is to say "We need to talk to you".

Elementary School Principal

I like it when I hear kids referring to the "code" and they call their friends or classmates on some of their behaviors as not being in line with the code.

Junior High Teacher

I don't think the kids are as unsettled as they were when we started this three years ago.

Junior High Teacher



More options to keep kids in school:

I just think that we work harder with individual students towards keeping them in school, and keeping them from dropping out or being expelled. I think that there are other options now that we look at and there's a longer range of opportunities for them to remain in school.
HS Teacher

I really believe that there will be more options and therefore a greater awareness too through the Safe and Responsive School program that kids were better off in school.
HS Teacher



Owen Valley High School: Changes in Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR-) YEAR TO YEAR
Total Number of Suspensions	397	171	-56.9%
Number of In School Suspensions	115	13	-88.6%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	282	158	-43.9%
Number of Expulsions	27	7	-74.0%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	94.3	57.1	-39.4%
Number of Dropouts	15	12	-20.0%
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended	113	31	-72.5%
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	5	0	-100%

Note: These numbers are based on figures reported to the state of Indiana.



**Owen Valley Middle School: Changes in
Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001**

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR -)
Total Number of Suspensions	1015	687	-32.3% YEAR TO YEAR
Number of In School Suspensions	828	571	-31%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	187	116	-37.9%
Number of Expulsions	11	5	-54.5%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	43	57.6	+33.9%
Number of Dropouts	0	0	
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended*	39	20	—
Number of Students with an IEP	95	112	—
Percentage of Students with an IEP Suspended	41%	17%	—

Note: These numbers are based on figures reported to the state of Indiana.
*OVM consisted of grades 6, 7, & 8 in the year 1999/2000 but only grades 7 and 8 for the year 2000/2001.
Thus the appropriate comparison figure for OVM to avoid compounding numbers of suspensions and
numbers of suspensions is the last row, Percentage of Students with an IEP Suspended



**Edgewood Junior High School: Changes in
Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001**

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR -)
Total Number of Suspensions	577	421	-27% YEAR TO YEAR
Number of In School Suspensions	425	360	-15.3%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	152	61	-59.9%
Number of Expulsions	6	1	-83.3%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	38.1	16	-58%
Number of Dropouts	0	0	No change
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended	28	12	-57.1%
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	1	0	100%



**Edgewood High School: Changes in Disciplinary
Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001**

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR-) YEAR TO YEAR
Total Number of Suspensions	205	179	-12.7%
Number of In School Suspensions	114	125	+9.6%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	91	54	-40.7%
Number of Expulsions	14	6	-57.1%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	55.2	116.1	+110.3%
Number of Dropouts	12	4	-66.7%
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended	4	6	+50%
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	0	0	No change



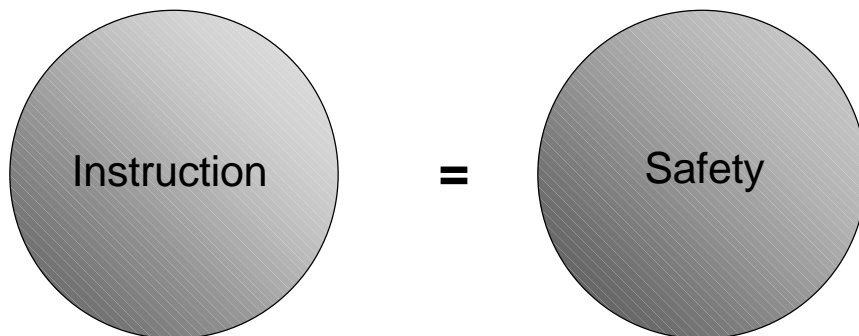
Lessons Learned

- ◆ Respect teachers' time
- ◆ Student perspectives must be involved
- ◆ Process more important than content for front line staff
- ◆ Effective schools specialize



Conclusions

- ◆ A team-based, needs assessment approach fits school needs
- ◆ A team-based approach can change perspectives
- ◆ The process can impact important outcomes
- ◆ Is it creating real & central change?



Resources from Safe & Responsive Schools Project:

◆ Process Guide

- Detailed procedures
- Safe & Responsive Schools Surveys

◆ Resource Guide

- Fact sheets
- Other resources based on comprehensive model

◆ Websites

- Access to materials when available
- Samples of school produced products

◆ Consultation



Safe and Responsive Schools Project



Websites:

- ◆ <http://www.unl.edu/srs>
- ◆ <http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/>



**Reece L. Peterson &
Courtney Miller**

202A & 204L Barkley Center
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68583-0732
402-472-5480 / 402-472-0274
rpeterson1@unl.edu
cjmiller_1@excite.com

Russell Skiba

Indiana Education Policy Center
100 Smith Research
2805 E. 10th St.
Bloomington, IN 47408
812-855-5549
skiba@indiana.edu

