

CHAPTER 5: ENCOURAGING EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

“Teacher praise has been supported as among one of the most empirically sound teacher competencies.”

Jon Maag , 2001

“I have not worked with a school that has been able to give enough feedback to students to maintain positive behavior without using a tangible item, like a Pride ticket. The tangible helps staff remember to give positive recognition to students.”

Timothy J. Lewis, 2002

“The purpose of schoolwide recognition is to acknowledge and show appreciation to students who have provided positive demonstrations of the schoolwide behavioral expectations.”

Geoff Colvin, 2007

LEARNER OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this chapter, you will be able to:

- ▶ Understand and explain to others the importance and impact of both contingent and non-contingent attention on student behavior and school climate.
- ▶ Use preferred adult behaviors to build relationships and positive school climate and effectively interact with students when talking about behavior.
- ▶ Demonstrate specific positive feedback that specifically describes behavior and uses rationales.
- ▶ Develop a tangible reinforcement system to enhance your use of specific positive feedback.
- ▶ Develop and implement an effective menu or continuum of positive reinforcement that serves to motivate all students across settings.
- ▶ Monitor staff’s use of encouragement strategies with students.

Introduction to Encouraging Expected Behavior

Much early learning is through observation and trial and error. While this can be an effective way to learn, the most efficient process for initial learning is through direct instruction. Direct instruction includes systematic demonstrations, practice followed by reinforcement when the targeted skill is demonstrated, and correction of non-desired behaviors (i.e., external regulation). This behavioral approach to teaching social skills is based on the understanding that most behavior is not, at least initially, intrinsically motivating (Ryan & Deci, 2000; see Chapter 1 for more information on human motivation).

It is typical for schools to have a variety of ways to encourage students to improve academic, artistic or athletic performance such as daily grades, quarterly and semester grades, honor roll, awards assemblies, math bowl trophies, music certificates, drama medals, athletic “letters”, etc. A schoolwide menu for encouraging appropriate social behavior is similar to encouragement for other forms of performance. Yet often this continuum of encouragement for social behavior is rarely as organized or systematized in our schools. If the schoolwide systems do exist for student of the month, citizenship awards, and the like, these are rarely tied to the schoolwide expectations and SW-PBS systems.

There are many terms associated with encouraging student behavior: “acknowledgement,” “teacher approval,” “recognition,” “encouragement,” “reinforcement,” “praise,” “reward,” and “specific positive feedback.” While there are nuances in the meaning of these terms, the most commonly used terms are reinforcement and specific positive feedback. Recall from college psychology, that in operant conditioning **reinforcement is an over-arching term for a contingently delivered consequence that is associated with an increase of future behavior** (Skinner, 1938). Reinforcement can take many forms (social attention, tangible items, and activities). Specific positive feedback is perhaps the most common term for verbal reinforcement, which provides students with social attention along with specific information on their performance. Together they increase the likelihood of students using the desired behavior again in the future. Figure 5.1 helps to clarify some of the commonly used terms. We will generally use the terms reinforcement and specific positive feedback.

As such, SW-PBS includes a component for developing a continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behavior because teaching alone is insufficient for success in learning social behavior. It is important to follow demonstrations of desired behavior with consequences that are reinforcing to most students, such as adult attention, along with other forms of reinforcement.

This chapter will focus on the practices needed to build a comprehensive system to encourage and externally motivate students, both as they are learning the expected behaviors and then to maintain those skills as students become more fluent with their use. There are four important interrelated topics we will explore to develop a comprehensive schoolwide encouragement system:

- 1) adult non-contingent and contingent attention
- 2) effective, specific positive feedback
- 3) use of a tangible reinforcement system
- 4) a menu or continuum of reinforcers.

Although these four components will be introduced separately in this chapter, all are needed for staff to be able to effectively recognize and encourage students when they display expected behaviors and to create a positive school environment where learning flourishes. Recall in Chapter 1, that fostering student self-regulation to consistently demonstrate appropriate behaviors requires those behaviors to be supported through consistent teaching and reinforcement. The amount of reinforcing necessary to reach the end goal of self-regulation will be dependent on chronological and developmental age of students, students’ prior knowledge of and experience with desired behaviors, the context or setting events and the students’ understanding that the procedural skills desired by adults will increase their overall success in the classroom, schoolwide and eventually in life outside of school.

TERMS RELATED TO ENCOURAGING EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

REINFORCEMENT—overarching term for a contingently delivered consequence associated with an increased likelihood of future behavior; reinforcement can take many forms, most commonly praise or specific positive feedback (social reinforcement), but also tangible reinforcement (tickets, tokens, coupons, etc.), and activity reinforcers. The consequence is only a reinforcer when it serves to strengthen or increase the use of the desired behavior; it is always based on the perspective of the learner, not the intentions of the adult delivering the reinforcement.

REWARD—something that reinforces a desired behavior, most often a preferred tangible/object or activity; often used interchangeably with “reinforcement,” but has acquired a controversial tone and misconstrued as bribery.

SPECIFIC POSITIVE FEEDBACK—verbal reinforcement; a form of social reinforcement that provides information on successful behavior while reinforcing or increasing the likelihood that behavior will be repeated; combines social attention, instruction, and reinforcement.

PRAISE—often used interchangeably with specific positive feedback; an expression of admiration for performance that serves to reinforce the behavior; verbal recognition.

TEACHER APPROVAL—used in research to assess the relationship of teacher behavior to student learning; generally verbal praise and encouragement, but may also include non-verbal attention (e.g., smiles, facial attention, touch, etc.).

Figure 5.1

Before beginning to develop practices for encouraging behavior, it is important to revisit the A-B-Cs of behavior. Up to now our work has focused on altering antecedents. We now turn to look at consequences, making adult attention contingent on the performance of the expected behavior. The consequences of behavior effect future performance of that behavior. One effect is an increase in the likelihood the behavior will recur in the future, called reinforcement. Figure 5.2 illustrates this point by using a hallway behavior example. A consequence can also decrease the likelihood the behavior will recur in the future, which is called punishment.

A - B - C

Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
<p>Events that happen immediately before and trigger the behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallway expectations and routines clarified and taught. • Teachers use prompts/pre-corrects to remind students to walk in the hallway, quiet voices, body to self, and walking on the right side. • Teachers greet, while actively supervising the hallway. 	<p>An observable act. What the student does.</p> <p>Students keep voices quiet, body to self, and walk on the right side.</p>	<p>The resulting event or outcome that occurs immediately following the behavior.</p> <p>The Media Specialist observes the students following hallway expectations and says, “Great job for keeping your voices quiet, your body to yourself, and staying to the right. You are showing respect for others and being safe.”</p>

Figure 5.2

DISCUSSION



List ways that your school reinforces students for academic performance. Now list ways your school reinforces students for social behavioral performance. How can you tie these together?

Understanding the Power of Adult Attention

One of the outcomes schools seek when deciding to implement schoolwide positive behavior support is improvement of the school climate or environment. Encouraging expected behavior is crucial to help students learn the desired expectations and shift the focus from addressing misbehavior to responding with specific positive feedback for expected social behavior. Teacher and staff attention have a powerful influence on the behavior of individuals and small and whole groups of students. Adult attention helps create a positive and safe learning environment. All staff members help set the tone or mood of the school through relationships with students and families and frequently recognizing students' efforts to meet academic and behavioral goals.

There are two types of adult attention and both have a positive impact on interactions in schools. **Non-contingent** attention is attention provided regardless of performance and includes such things as greetings, proximity, smiles, and conversations. **Contingent** attention is provided based upon student performance of an identified expectation or behavior. The attention is contingent upon the student performing a specific desirable behavior. Together, both types of attention create a positive school climate and build rapport and relationships, and help students learn social behavioral expectations.

NON-CONTINGENT ATTENTION

Given that many instances of inappropriate behavior is based in a desire for attention, if we provide sufficient non-contingent attention, the frequency of behavior problems may decrease. As teachers report that positive student–teacher interactions increase, the numbers of disciplinary referrals students receive decreases. Also, students report an increase of positive quality in the student–teacher relationship, a decrease in the number of behavior referrals they receive and an increase in the amount of time they spent on-task (Decker, Dona & Christenson 2007). Finally, non-contingent attention provides students with role models of positive social interactions. Non-contingent adult attention such as smiles, greetings, and community building activities are examples of antecedents that help establish positive relationships between students and staff and set the stage for students to display the desired academic and behavioral expectations. They also create the relationships that will help students accept correction when it is needed.

CONTINGENT ATTENTION

Contingent attention is attention given after the desired behavior takes place. The student must perform the expected behavior before a teacher responds with attention. Research shows that contingent attention increases academic performance (Good, Eller, Spangler, & Stone, 1981) and on-task behavior (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000). We also want to use specific positive attention (contingent) when students display expected social behavior. A familiar saying is “You get what you pay attention to.”

Most teachers agree it is important to provide contingent attention for students' academic work. Without this specific feedback students would not be able to discern the “right” answer from the “wrong” answer.

For example, when a student is learning to use “their” and “there” in a sentence, the teacher can say, “Great job of using “their” to show the books belong to Jake and using “there” to show where Jake put the books.” Because the feedback from the teacher is positive and specific, the likelihood the student will correctly use “their” and “there” in the future is significantly increased. Giving specific positive feedback is equally important to help students learn appropriate social behavioral skills.

Although there are no universal reinforcers that will increase the likelihood that all students will repeat the appropriate skills in the future, adult attention is reinforcing for most students, especially when adults have previously built a positive relationship with them. Positive reinforcement (e.g., positive adult attention or specific positive feedback) for most students increases the probability that they will use the desired behavior again (Maag, 2001).

LOW RATES OF TEACHER ATTENTION

In spite of the evidence that contingent attention can change the climate and learning conditions of the classroom, many teachers fail to take full advantage of this powerful tool. In her seminal article, White (1975) found that naturally occurring or typical teacher approval statements for academic responses far outweighed those for social behavior across all grade levels, with highest rates for each type of approval occurring in second grade and tapering off dramatically after that. In all grade levels, teachers responded to correct academic performance (20.36 per hour average) more frequently than disapprovals (7.56 per hour average). On the other hand, statements of disapproval for social behavior (19.20 per hour) were always more frequent than approvals (1.52 per hour). A summary of the findings is in Figure 5.3.

Since White’s studies in the 1970’s, subsequent research has found one constant, academic behavior of students is more likely to attract positive teacher attention than is appropriate social behavior. In addition, teachers respond far more frequently to inappropriate social behavior than to appropriate behavior (Beaman & Wheldall, 2000). The result of teachers giving more attention to misbehavior is that their attention may be unknowingly maintaining or increasing the misbehavior.

More recent research observations in Missouri classrooms indicated that teacher use of specific praise and the ratio of positive to negative interactions was less than optimal (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013).

A schoolwide focus to ensure high rates of non-contingent and contingent attention is delivered by all staff, to all students, throughout the day is important because it can improve interactions between students and staff and therefore, improve the school climate.

	Approval Statements	Disapproval Statements	Ratio of Positive to Negative
Academic	20.36 per hour	7.56 per hour	2.7:1
Social	1.52 per hour	19.20 per hour	1:12.6

Figure 5.3

DISCUSSION



Reflect on what you have learned about adult attention, both non-contingent and contingent. Teach someone the definitions of each and their power in working with students to create a positive school environment. List as many examples as you can of both non-contingent and contingent attention that are presently in place in your school.

PREFERRED ADULT BEHAVIORS

Related to teacher attention is the student-teacher relationship and preferred adult behaviors. There is a growing body of research that indicates academic achievement and students' behavior are both influenced by the quality of teacher-student relationship (Jones & Jones, 1998 and Algozzine, Wang, & Violette, 2011). When students are asked what makes a teacher special and worthy of respect, students consistently cite three characteristics: firmness, compassion, and an interesting, engaging, and challenging teaching style (Noguera, 1995).

Given these relationships, teachers and staff need to learn simple behaviors that will positively impact relationships. Adult behaviors that build relationship include: 1) communicating privately, in close proximity with the student, 2) listening, 3) eye contact, 4) pleasant voice tone, 5) smiles, 6) appropriate professional touch and 7) use of students' names. These behaviors express warmth, care and concern for students while also communicating respect. They increase student affect (the likelihood that they will say they like school or their teacher), compliance (the likelihood that they will do as asked) and also enhance learning. Not only do these adult behaviors impact relationships, but they also set the stage for effectively interacting with students and delivering genuine feedback. Wong & Wong (2005) describes these teachers as "intentionally inviting." Their professional attitude depicts their view of students as able, valuable, and responsible.

Preferred Adult Behaviors

- Proximity
- Listening
- Eye contact
- Pleasant voice
- Smiles
- Touch
- Use of student's name

DISCUSSION



Review the list of preferred adult behaviors for building positive teacher-student relationships. What behaviors do you currently use that you want to *continue*? Which behaviors do you need to *add*? Are there behaviors, contrary to these, that you want to *eliminate*? Do the staff in your school use these preferred adult behaviors when interacting with students? How can you share what you have learned about teacher attention and preferred adult behaviors with your staff?

Specific Positive Feedback

The preferred adult behaviors and non-contingent attention we've been talking about are not sufficient to change and sustain behavior; just as we shared earlier, contingent attention or specific positive feedback is essential. With specific positive feedback you are recognizing attainment of specified performance criteria, effort, or successes at tasks that are difficult for the student. To ensure continued use, specific positive feedback is essential. General praise or commonly used phrases such as "good job," though important for a pleasant classroom, are inadequate for building and sustaining desired behavior. Students need clear, specific feedback on their use of the schoolwide expectations and any other behaviors such as acts of kindness, compassion, helpfulness, and general positive citizenship that are extended reflections of your expectations. Effective specific positive feedback: 1) specifically describes the behavior, 2) provides reasons or rationales, and 3) can include a positive consequence.

Specifically describe the behavior. Students need to know explicitly what behavior they did that was correct and earned the acknowledgement of the teacher. Teachers readily do this when giving feedback about academic work. Teachers often use a rubric when reviewing academic work that helps specifically describe the desirable behavior displayed. Davis (2007) describes this as acting "like a video camera, helping students see their own positive behavior." In effective praise we simply describe the behavior observed to make the feedback clear and specific. For example, "When I said it was time to begin your assignment, you cleared off your desk, got your materials out immediately, and began working quickly." It is a videotape replay of exactly what the student did, couched in the words of your expectations. Do not add any references to past mistakes the student has made or wishes for future behavior. Simply describe exactly what you saw that you want the student to continue doing in the future. Additionally, be cautious in adding "I'm proud of you." We want students doing the appropriate behavior because of the benefits to them rather than simply to please the teacher.

Provide a rationale. Explain the reason why the behavior is important. Rationales or reasons teach the students the benefits of their behavior and the impact it has on them and others. This often includes stating the overarching schoolwide expectation (e.g., respect, caring, cooperation, etc.) and pointing out what the student might expect could happen if they use the appropriate behavior. "Getting started right away like that shows cooperation and will help you avoid having homework."

Can include a tangible item or preferred activity. For many students, the specific positive feedback alone is sufficiently reinforcing to strengthen the behavior. However for some students, and when a behavior requires a great deal of effort, pairing the verbal feedback with tangible or activity reinforcement may be helpful. When using a tangible item or preferred activity it is imperative that you also use the complete verbal praise so that students are aware of exactly what they did that has resulted in earning the consequence. It is not the consequence that changes the behavior so much as the awareness of what is being reinforced; the consequence merely provides additional incentive. You will want to say something like, "Because you walked so quietly in the hallway, you have earned a Cardinal Card." Note that adults do not "give," instead students "earn." Careful use of these terms helps students to take ownership for their behaviors and teaches the link between appropriate behavior and positive outcomes. See more about tangibles later in this chapter.

It is also important that specific positive feedback be given sincerely and appropriately for student's age. This is especially important when working with older students. Staff need to find their own style to communicate sincere care and concern for the student. Use of a variety of phrases shows spontaneity and therefore credibility.

Finally there are some considerations for when and how to use specific positive feedback. Use specific positive feedback:

Contingently. Since students “earn” specific positive feedback and consequences, it is provided only when they have demonstrated the desired behavior.

Immediately. Specific positive feedback is best when it follows closely to the behavior so that students can connect what they did with the feedback they are receiving. The younger the student, the more important this is.

Frequently when trying to build a new behavior. When students are learning new skills, provide feedback on a continuous schedule. This means that every time the student displays the desired behavior, they receive specific positive feedback.

Unpredictably or Intermittently to maintain behavior. Once the skill or behavior has been learned, you can shift to use of general praise and occasional use of specific positive feedback. This intermittent use of specific positive feedback helps to maintain the behavior. We must be careful not to omit all specific positive feedback as students may not sustain the skills that they have learned.

Davis (2007) writes: “When we focus our praise on positive actions, we support a sense of competence and autonomy that helps students develop real self-esteem.” Isn’t social competence and independence a goal of education?



ACTIVITY

With a partner, role-play the examples of specific positive feedback that follow, being aware of the preferred adult behaviors along with your words. When you are comfortable with these, role-play delivering specific positive feedback spontaneously, using your school’s expectations and specific behaviors from your matrix.

“Maria, you stopped and took some time to think about your decision and then walked away from Sam. That wasn’t easy, but it can help to avoid an argument.”

“Hey Tammy, thanks for throwing your trash away. That shows cooperation and respect for our school.”

“Jack, thank you for getting your book out and getting started right away. We value our learning time here at school, and you will be more likely to get your work done here and avoid homework.”

“Sue, you stayed calm when Jill got upset with you. You were responsible for your own actions and possibly avoided hurt feelings.”

“I noticed you have been getting to class on time, Jose. That shows respect for your teachers and shows you are taking your classwork seriously.”

“Jackson, you asked Fred to play the computer game with you. That shows caring, and when you include others they will be more likely to include you.”

“Wow, Darius, you were on task; you got your journal out right away and worked the entire writing time! You should be proud of yourself. That’s being responsible.”

When we acknowledge positive student behavior as described above we help students learn behavior that will lead to success in school and adult life.

4:1 RATIO

We have discussed how to use adult attention (specific positive feedback) contingent upon student performance of a specific behavior to build or maintain that behavior. Another important point in building positive schoolwide and classroom environments is to ensure that appropriate behavior receives much more attention (at a higher ratio) than inappropriate behavior. We want students to experience predominantly positive interactions across all school settings to support their sense of connectedness and competency to increase their demonstration of desired behaviors. As we shared earlier, this is unfortunately not always a day-by-day occurrence in our schools. In his literature review of teacher praise, Brophy (1981) showed the relative frequency of academic specific positive feedback was quite low, with an average of only 5 per hour and praise for good conduct occurring only once every 2-10 hours in early grades and tapering to non-existent after that. These findings of greater teacher attention given for appropriate academic behaviors rather than positive attention to appropriate social behavior, as well as findings of more attention for inappropriate rather than appropriate behavior were corroborated by a literature review and analysis by Beaman and Wheldall (2000).

Teacher Interactions

An average ratio of 4:1 teacher interactions is recommended; four responses to desired (positive) student behavior to one response from the teacher to student misbehavior (negative).

Brophy went on to state that praise should be used contingently, with specificity and credibility, and that it should occur in the range of 3 or 4 positives to negative interactions in order to be the most encouraging to students. Reavis, Jenson, Kukic & Morgan (1993) recommend a ratio of 4:1; four comments in response to desired student behavior to one response to student misbehavior. Interactions with students are considered positive if the student behavior was desired and the intention was to reinforce the behavior. Interactions are considered negative if the student behavior is undesired and the intention was to diminish problem behavior. Again, denoting whether interactions are positive or negative is based on the behavior of the student at the time the attention is given, not the demeanor of the teacher. Figure 5.4 summarizes the benefits of specific positive feedback.

Benefits of Specific Positive Feedback

- ▶ Helps adults and students focus on positive social behaviors and actions.
- ▶ It is the most powerful behavior change tool teachers have in their repertoire.
- ▶ Increases the likelihood students will use the recognized behaviors and skills in the future.
- ▶ Decreases inappropriate behavior and therefore, reduces the need for correction.
- ▶ Enhances self-esteem and helps build internal locus of control (i.e., self-regulation).

Figure 5.4

DISCUSSION



Reflect on the power of specific positive feedback. How extensively is it being used in your school? Is there a ratio of four times more positive interactions with students than negative? What are some ways that you can share what you have learned about the role of specific positive feedback in SW-PBS with your staff?

Tangible Reinforcers

One of the hallmarks of schoolwide positive behavior support is the development and implementation of a menu of positive consequences. This menu or continuum of reinforcement can include tangible reinforcers. The tangible is typically in the form of a ticket or coupon (e.g., Compliment Cards, Bulldog Bucks, Braggin' Dragon Cards, Bee Tickets, etc.). These tangibles are often reinforcing in and of themselves as they are a reminder for teachers to have frequent, positive interactions with students which includes delivery of positive and specific feedback on social behaviors. This process mirrors the use of grading and provision written formative feedback on student academic work.

Recall that many activities that fill a typical school day are not in and of themselves intrinsically motivating (Ryan & Deci, 2000; see Chapter 1 for more information on human motivation). It is often not until a student builds fluency of skills or depth of knowledge (competence), which are valued by the schoolwide community (relatedness), and that allow the student to independently learn new skills and knowledge of their choosing (autonomy). It is typically not until a stage where all 3 needs, competence, relatedness and autonomy, are met that school tasks and activities are integrated by a student to the point of being fully, intrinsically motivated behaviors. As such, feedback is needed as part of planned system to support (i.e., externally regulate) student behavior. **The purpose of tangibles in the positive consequence continuum is to prompt adults to provide feedback at rates or ratios that are likely to support consistent student demonstration of desired academic or social behaviors.**

Tickets can have further reinforcing value if they are used within a token economy. This might include a personally selected reinforcer from a menu, to help meet a jointly set goal, purchase of an item from a school store, a raffle opportunity, etc. Some examples of the many creative ways “tickets” have been used in schools are in Figure 5.5.

CREATIVE WAYS TO USE “TICKETS”

- ▶ Set class or school goals
- ▶ Write name on ticket and drop in a raffle box
- ▶ Competition between grade levels
- ▶ “Golden Tray” award for class receiving most tickets during lunch
- ▶ Chart and graphs of tickets earned (math)
- ▶ Roaming trophy for the most tickets each month; current class prepares celebration for the next class who receives
- ▶ Display tickets in hallway, outside classroom door
- ▶ Tickets traded for piece of string and made into a giant string ball for the entire school
- ▶ Post tickets on a bulletin board
- ▶ Trade ticket for paper strip to make paper chain around the school
- ▶ Set a destination to “travel” to and learn about; each ticket equals a mile toward the destination on a map



Figure 5.5

Remember, tangibles serve as a visual reminder for staff to watch for desired behaviors and then deliver specific positive feedback. Some schools replenish the teachers' supply of tickets daily, thus reminding them to frequently catch students demonstrating desired behaviors. In addition, the proximity required to deliver the ticket helps to ensure the effectiveness of the teacher's social attention and feedback. Looking at the student, saying "You followed directions; that helped you complete your assignment quickly and accurately. Because you followed directions you have earned a Tiger Ticket," can enhance the relationship between the student and teacher.

Teacher delivery of tangibles creates a ready signal to all students, both to the ones who earn them as well as others nearby who witness it. When the tangible item is used to count toward a classroom, grade level or schoolwide goal, they work doubly to provide the immediate reinforcement as the student earns the ticket, and then again as the ticket goes into the class bucket toward the class goal. When all students contribute to a class, grade or schoolwide goal, it builds a sense of community. Once the goal is achieved everyone celebrates together.

It is critical to note, once a ticket or other tangible recognition has been earned, it should not be taken away. Rather, another one should not be awarded until the student next earns it.

There are some practical things to consider when developing your schoolwide tangible system. First, make them easy to distribute to students. Consider formatting them so that minimal writing is required at the time they are awarded. The easier to award tickets to students displaying the expected behavior, the better.

You will also want to build a system to sustain your use of the tangible, considering such things as:

- 1) Who will reproduce the tickets and supply teachers?
- 2) Who will be in charge of raffle items or other items of exchange?
- 3) If tickets are to be counted for awards or data collection, who will handle the counting?

Be sure to think through all details to sustain your tangible system. Recall that the tangibles also serve as a support (i.e., external regulation) to prompt teachers to deliver positive, specific feedback at a desired ratio of 4:1. If the tangible item such as a ticket had both teacher and student names, and the drawing of tickets was paired with recognition in the form of public acknowledgment or a prize for both recipient and the individual who bestowed the ticket, the student and teacher will both be more likely to do the desired behavior in the future.

Some staff might be concerned that using a tangible item might be bribing students to behave. Bribes are by definition offered to persuade an individual to act in one's own favor, typically illegally or dishonestly, by a gift of money or other inducement. Bribes are offered **before** the desired behavior occurs. Tangibles

"Using a reward system is not the same as bribing a student to behave appropriately. A bribe is something offered or given to a person in a position of trust to influence or corrupt that person's views or conduct. SW-PBS acknowledges and rewards students for following schoolwide expectations and rules. Appropriate behavior is acknowledged after it occurs. Rewards are earned, not offered as payoff in exchange for good behavior."

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are delivered as a consequence, **after** desired behavior is demonstrated. Tangibles are not given to induce individuals to act dishonestly or illegally, so comparing them to a bribe is inaccurate.

Teachers sometimes feel that delivery of a tangible will diminish intrinsic motivation. A meta-analysis conducted in 2001, indicated no evidence for detrimental effects of rewards on measures of intrinsic motivation (Cameron, Banko, & Pierce, 2001). The reality is that schools award students many tangible items for success in academics, sports, music, theater, etc. in the form of grades, trophies, medals, etc. We continue to struggle, however, with the idea of awarding tangible items or specific positive feedback for success in social behavior skills. School teams that desire to implement efficient and effective systems and practices to support (or regulate) student behavior are prudent in leveraging the factor of external motivation to facilitate student movement towards eventual self-regulation.

Tangible Reinforcers...

- ▶ Help staff be accountable for recognizing student behavior and providing specific positive feedback.
- ▶ Provide all staff with an efficient and always available system for providing feedback and a reinforcer to any and all students.
- ▶ Give faculty and support staff a tool to engage in a positive way with any student in the school.
- ▶ Can create a more positive culture in school where we are “all in this together.”
- ▶ Can give us a gross measure of the frequency of specific positive feedback statements given and can help to guide staff to use higher rates of specific positive feedback.
- ▶ Are a universal sign to students that they have performed the expected behaviors.
- ▶ Should be easy to distribute with minimal, if any, writing required. The easier and quicker to award to students displaying the expected behavior, the better.
- ▶ Tangible “tickets” can be turned in and counted toward class, grade or school goals, activities or tangible items on the schoolwide menu.

Figure 5.6

DISCUSSION



Explain the parallels between reinforcement for academic, artistic, or athletic performance and social behavior.

- ▶ Make a list of tangible reinforcement that students currently receive for academic, athletic or artistic performance.
- ▶ What are some ideas for a creative schoolwide tangible system in your school?
- ▶ How might you incorporate your school mascot or other school themes or slogans?
- ▶ How can you use the work group process to engage all staff in the development of a schoolwide tangible system for your school?

EXAMPLE

Missouri Middle School Cardinal Card Procedures Respectful • Responsible • Ready • Safe

Why is Missouri Middle School Focusing on Having Students Earn Cardinal Cards?

- To increase student use of respectful, responsible, ready, and safe behaviors.
- To focus on positive social interactions between staff and students.
- To help us all be more positive this school year.

Who Awards Cardinal Cards?

- *All* staff will be supplied with Cardinal Cards each day to award any student who is being Respectful, Responsible, Ready and Safe.

Who Can Receive a Cardinal Card?

- Cardinal Cards are earned by individual students who are using behaviors that reflect being Respectful, Responsible, Ready and Safe.
- Cardinal Cards can be earned for being Respectful, Responsible, Ready and Safe *anywhere* in the building and at any time.

What Do Staff Say When They Award a Cardinal Cards?

- The most important thing to remember about the Cardinal Cards is to provide the student specific, positive feedback about how they are being Respectful, Responsible, Ready, Safe learners. For example: “Wow, Fred, you are being respectful of others by walking quietly in the hall. Because you are using our hallway expectations, you have earned a Cardinal Card.” “Ethel, thanks for remembering to push in your chair and clear off your table. You are showing respect for the cafeteria help as well as students that will follow you. You’ve earned a Cardinal Card for respect.”

What Do Students Do When They Receive a Cardinal Card?

- Students write their name and grade on the back of the Cardinal Card.
- Students take their Cardinal Cards to their class office and put in the bucket.

What Will Happen With the Cardinal Cards?

- At the end of the month, office helpers will count the Cardinal Cards from each class office and post the number earned on a main office bulletin board.
- Every month there will be a drawing from all Cardinal Cards earned that month for individual prizes as well as privileges for each class. Names will be posted near each class office.
- Students whose Cardinal Card is posted can take it down and turn it into the secretary for their prize.

What Are Some Other Things to Consider About Cardinal Cards?

- Cardinal Cards can be earned but not lost. This is a positive system. Once earned they are the student’s property. If correction is needed, do so; but do not take cards away.
- If students ask for a Cardinal Cards kindly say something like: “I know you will get a Cardinal Cards soon. *All* students can earn them. Staff determine when to award.”
- If you suspect “forgery” of Cardinal Cards, contact your Schoolwide PBS team representative.
- If you need more Cardinal Cards, contact Suzy Cue.

Who Will Answer My Questions About Cardinal Cards?

- Your SW-PBS Team representative or any member of the SW-PBS Team.

A Menu of Reinforcers

While a “ticket” or tangible schoolwide system for encouraging expected behavior will cover many or your reinforcement needs, it is important to remember:

- ▶ Not all students are encouraged by the same thing or in the same ways
- ▶ As students are learning new skills they need immediate and frequent reinforcement
- ▶ As students demonstrate mastery they respond to intermittent to long-term reinforcement to maintain their social behavioral efforts.
- ▶ Many students try to get or seek social attention while others try to avoid it.
- ▶ Students who avoid social attention may be reinforced by activities, privileges or tangibles.
- ▶ Many young students are motivated by adult attention while older students typically are more motivated by peer attention, activities, privileges or freedom.

Therefore, it is recommended that a menu of ways to encourage students include social attention, activities, or tangible items that appeal to all student needs in your school (Lane, Kahberg & Menzies, 2009).

Social Behavior

Frequent	Intermittent	Occasional
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal Praise• Stickers• Rubber Stamps• Thumbs up• Notes Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone Calls• Post Cards• Special Privileges• Extra Computer Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Projects• Recognition to the Principal• Student of the Week

Schoolwide Recognition System Plan High School Example

Adapted from Colvin, G. (2007). 7 Steps for Developing a Proactive Schoolwide Discipline Plan. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

	Name	Resources	Description & Criteria	When & Where Presented	Information to Staff	Goal(s)	Celebrations	Coord.
Frequent	Cardinal Cards	Cards, box in office, Susie to draw weekly & give names to student announcers, \$50 for prizes	Staff give high rates of verbal specific feedback, using the Cardinal Code language to all students and give Cardinal Card.	Any staff to any student following expectation & rules, any location. Students sign & put in box in office.	Staff: more Cardinal Cards in mailbox weekly	100 Cards in office box per week.	Draw 25 names from box weekly; names read in announcements, small prizes.	Susie Q.
Intermittent	Cardinal Tweet (Phone calls); OR Special Privileges	List of privileges generated and agreed upon by all staff located in Student Handbook & SW-PBS Notebook	Staff record the names of students who have consistently demonstrated specific behaviors for 1 or more weeks	Any staff to any student who has consistently demonstrated specific behaviors for 1 or more weeks	Record the names of students who qualify; Randomly select from qualifiers	90% of students qualify	Teacher will individually speak to students who qualify	Dolly
Occasional	Cardinal All-Star	Gift certificates	For every student who met goal for specific behaviors for at least 4 weeks.	Any staff to any student who has consistently demonstrated specific behaviors for at least 4 weeks	Record the names of students who qualify and submit to SW-PBS Data Manager and to School Store Manager	90% of students each month	Each student will get free gift certificate for items at school store	Billy Bob

CAUTIONS WHEN DEVELOPING A MENU OR CONTINUUM OF REINFORCERS

When creating your menu or continuum of reinforcers to encourage expected behavior, it is important that you have a range of options to meet all students needs. Make sure there are ways to encourage improved behavior for all students, from those who struggle to behave as well as those who regularly demonstrate desired behavior. Be cautious if your system:

Is so difficult or cumbersome that staff will not use consistently. Keep the system simple, doable and yet effective.

Is based on an “all or nothing” criteria. A “No Tardy Party” reinforces only a certain portion of your school and may be demotivating to others. If I am tardy the first day of the month, why try? While you may want to keep this reinforcer for the few it serves (it is a bit like the Honor Roll), you could also celebrate improved on time behavior, thus encouraging all to improve or strive to meet the expectation.

Requires students to prolong their efforts for long extended periods of time. Again, some occasional or long-term reinforcement is okay if other immediate and frequent reinforcers are also available. With long-term reinforcers, there will be some students who see them as unobtainable.

Fails to motivate the at-risk students or consistently recognizes those student who need it the least. What activities are interesting and motivating to the at-risk students whose behavior you most desire to improve? Involving students in the planning of the schoolwide reinforcement system may be a very effective way to hear their voice.

Becomes boring and predictable. A schoolwide system to encourage will need to be “tweaked” and kept fresh for students and staff.

DISCUSSION



Begin brainstorming a menu or continuum of reinforcers for your school using the template provided. Be sure to include short-term immediate reinforcers, as well as those that require more sustained effort. Be sure that you meet the needs of “seekers” as well as “avoiders.” How will you engage staff in the creation of your continuum?

EXAMPLE

Missouri Middle School Menu of Reinforcers

The below list of reinforcers includes those that can be used immediately in response to student appropriate behavior as well as some that are used periodically or are more long-term in nature. Select the reinforcer that best matches the effort required by the student and their individual interests. Also consider if they are “seekers” or “avoiders.”

- ▶ Winks, thumbs up, smiles, etc. (individuals and groups)
- ▶ Specific positive feedback (individuals and groups)
- ▶ Schoolwide ticket–Cardinal Card (individuals; see guidelines for use)
- ▶ Special activities or privileges: (individuals or groups, where appropriate, for worthy effort)
 - Preferential seating
 - Lunch with adult of choice
 - Free time
 - Computer time
 - “Fast Pass” for lunch line
 - Tardy pass
 - Homework pass (only one per quarter)
 - 5 minute early dismissal
- ▶ Coupon for 25% off at school store (individuals for worthy effort)
- ▶ Positive phone call, note, or email home (individuals; significant improvement)
- ▶ Class party (popcorn or treat; spontaneous celebration for group improvement, e.g. no tardies for a week, all homework turned in on time, etc.)
- ▶ Goal Achieved certificate (improvement in difficult personal social behavior)
- ▶ Progress Report (individuals for improved attendance, on time to class; turned into office for inclusion in announcements and grade reports)
- ▶ Quarterly letter for perfect attendance (sent to parents)

Continuum of Schoolwide Procedures for Encouraging Social Behavior

Adapted from Colvin, G. (2007). 7 Steps for Developing a Proactive Schoolwide Discipline Plan. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

	Name	Resources	Description & Criteria	When & Where Presented	Information to Staff	Goal(s)	Celebrations	Coord.
Frequent								
Intermittent								
Occasional								

Encouragement for Staff and Families

As schools create exciting ways to encourage students, you may also want to consider a menu of reinforcers to encourage the staff who are actively teaching and encouraging students. In addition, some schools consider ways they can “share the good news” about student behavior with families and therefore, reinforce their efforts at home to support your work. Some ideas follow.

Ideas for Encouraging Staff and Families	
<p>STAFF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award or recognition for efforts given during faculty meeting • Recognition during an assembly • Featured in SW-PBS video/skit • Ticket to school event (play, sporting event) • Preferential parking spot • School t-shirt • Gift cards • Lunch delivered • Special dessert • Restaurant coupon • Positive note from peer or administrator • Free yearbook • Car wash coupon • Movie pass • Released from duty (bus, recess, lunchroom, hallway) • Principal teaches class for one hour • Pass to leave work early or arrive late 	<p>FAMILIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their student featured in newsletter, bulletin board, website • Positive phone call or note from school • Featured in SW-PBS video/skit • Ticket to school event (play, sporting event) • Bumper sticker for car • Postcard sent home regarding student’s exemplary behavior • School t-shirt

DISCUSSION



What are some of the things you could do to encourage staff to regularly use SW-PBS practices? How might you reinforce parents?

Monitoring the Use of Specific Positive Feedback

It is important to check on the use of feedback in classroom and non-classroom settings, both for fidelity of implementation and to determine if the rate of specific positive feedback students are earning is optimal for the environment you desire. Fidelity checks will determine if the majority of staff are effectively using contingent specific positive feedback for student behavior as described earlier in the chapter. In addition, the goal is always to maintain an average 4 to 1 ratio of positive responses to correction. Checks can also determine if this optimal ratio is being met. Both a fidelity check and a ratio check will provide information for the SW-PBS Leadership Team to determine how to support staff to effectively encourage student behavior. There are a number of ways to do this monitoring:

MONITORING USE OF SCHOOLWIDE TANGIBLES. If a schoolwide raffle is used, tickets can simply be counted prior to the raffle. If student and staff names are on tickets, that data can be collected as well as the overall number. Classroom teachers can submit weekly counts to a designated person in the building who can then create regular reports of the number of tickets earned per class, grade level, or for the building as a whole. A visual graph of tickets earned per week or month can serve as a reminder to staff to focus on giving students feedback for expected behavior.

SELF-MONITORING. It's important that all staff get information about their personal efforts to respond to students who are displaying expected behavior, especially as staff are first learning how to effectively give specific, contingent feedback. Individual self-monitoring is one way to do this. Remember this data collection does not need to occur for the duration of an entire day. Rather, pick a 5–10 minute period and consistently collect over a few days each week. There are a number of easy ways to collect the rate of responses to positive student behavior compared to corrections, such as:

- ▶ Move pennies or paperclips from one pocket to another when positive student behavior is recognized.
- ▶ Tear an index card to collect the number of positive responses to corrections.
- ▶ Make tally marks on a piece of tape on your arm or post-it note on clipboard.
- ▶ Move popsicle sticks into cans.

OBSERVATION. Do a simple observation and tally staff interactions with students. This observation can be done by tallying the **teacher responses** to desired (positive) student behavior and **teacher responses** to student misbehavior (negative). Periodically observe and record occurrences of teacher responses and use of specific positive feedback for a short time duration (5-10 minutes) and compare like settings and situations (e.g. classroom to classroom, cafeteria, etc.). These observations can be done by pairing teachers to do peer observations, or having the SW-PBS Leadership Team members observe in non-classroom settings. For example, frequency of interactions in each hallway might be compared or during whole group lessons in all classrooms. If this tallying is done periodically throughout the year, the ratio can be compared over time. A simple format for tallying staff interactions with students follows in Figure 5.7.

Remember as you are observing or self-monitoring, it is the *student behavior* that is occurring at the time of the interaction, not the tone of the interaction, which determines whether an interaction is positive or negative.

Also refer to Chapter 6, *Discouraging Inappropriate Behavior*, to effectively respond to student misbehavior.

Frequency and Type of Student Interactions

Teacher: _____ Observer: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Activity: _____

Attention to Positive, Appropriate Student Behavior		Attention to Negative, Inappropriate Student Behavior
<i>Non-Contingent</i>	<i>Specific Positive Feedback</i>	
Ratio of Teacher Interactions: _____ attention to positive student behavior: _____ attention to inappropriate, negative student behavior		
Notes:		

Adapted from Sprick, R., Knight, J. Reinke, W., & McKale, T. (2006)

Figure 5.7

DISCUSSION



How might you monitor and ensure staff are using high rates of encouragement with students?

Next Steps

Your tasks for developing a comprehensive system to encourage expected behavior for your school are listed below. While a general sequence of completion may be implied, the tasks may be completed in any order or may be interrelated. Some activities require planning and a written product; all involve some professional learning and engagement of all staff. You are encouraged to complete these tasks prior to your next SW-PBS training session. Please bring completed action plans and products with you to share and discuss.



1. Plan and provide professional learning activities to teach all staff the importance of adult attention and how to use effective specific positive feedback through examples and practice.

- Power of attention, both non-contingent and contingent
- Referred adult behaviors for relationship-building
- How to use Effective Specific Positive Feedback
- Monitoring use of feedback



2. Develop a schoolwide tangible reinforcement system.

- Creative, tied to school mascot, slogan, etc.
- System for use and maintenance by staff as well as what students do with the tangible; easily used
- Full staff input or work group process; obtain consensus
- Describe system in writing; included in staff and student handbook and substitute teacher folders



3. Create a menu or continuum of reinforcement for your students, families and school.

- A full continuum of immediate, short-term and long-term reinforcers to meet the needs of all students including social, activity or privileges, and tangible items
- Full staff input; obtain consensus
- In writing; included staff handbook