

# Rome City Schools Recognized for Excellence in PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports)



All Rome City Schools were recognized at advanced levels for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) on Wednesday, September 5th, by the Georgia Department of Education.

“PBIS is a framework that is designed to help schools use data to be proactive in their approach to student discipline. This includes establishing the behavioral supports and social culture needed for all students in a school to achieve social, emotional and academic success,” said Dr. Robbie Vincent, District Coordinator of PBIS and Student Support.

There are traditionally three levels of recognition that measures a school’s implementation of PBIS: Installing, Emerging and Operational. This past year, the Distinguished level was added to mark schools that have been Operational for over 10 years.

Originally developed in 2008, Rome City Schools began implementing this positive-focused framework in their schools in 2015. Now in their third official year of PBIS in every Rome City School, for the 2017-2018 school year, one school was considered Installing: Rome High School. Three schools were deemed Emerging: North Heights Elementary School, Rome Middle School and West Central Elementary School. And five schools were esteemed

Operational: Anna K. Davie Elementary, East Central Elementary School, Elm Street Elementary, Rome Transitional Academy and West End Elementary School.

This means that at this time, “all schools within RCS have been named as an advanced PBIS school for either 2016-2017 or 2017-2018,” said Vincent.

One of the ways that PBIS is implemented into schools is through “the task of developing three to five clearly defined behavioral expectations for each school,” explained Vincent. For example, because Vincent served as Assistant Principal at Rome Middle school when they first started PBIS in 2015, they came up with the motto ‘Be RMS’ which stands for ‘be respectful, motivated and safe.’ Vincent said that these main expectations help guide all other behavior expectations for students at Rome Middle School, and “each school within Rome City has their individual PBIS logo and motto that goes along with it.”

Another way to insure PBIS is effective is making sure there is a PBIS coach for each school, who is either the principal or assistant principal; as well as a PBIS team, built of faculty who lead their peers in PBIS initiatives.

As a team, they first “teach the expectations of behavior with lesson plans, just as you would for academics,” said Vincent. Everyone is involved in this teaching, including teachers, administrators and even cafeteria staff. “We also focus on celebrating the positive behaviors of students,” she said. For instance, incentives are given to students who have exemplary behavior in the form of points.

These positive points can add up to buy students access into special celebrations and events, such as an ice cream social or a party at CiCi's Pizza.

"Focusing on the positive behavior of students, rather than spending the majority of time disciplining the negative has been a game-changer for Rome City Schools," said Vincent. "It's not only the staff recognizing kids, now the students are starting to recognize and encourage each other to practice positive behavior."

To track the students' behavior, each school uses a research-based data portal, developed at the University of Oregon, called School Wide Information System (SWIS). "We use SWIS to track behavior data, and then we use the data to problem solve," Vincent explained. "We track discipline referrals, including factors such as the time of day and location of that referral. So, if our PBIS team find that the majority of our referrals occur at 1 p.m. outside the cafeteria, then our team can be proactive, and problem solve, maybe by changing the schedule of when students exit the lunch room," shared Vincent.

The PBIS requirements are not only for the students. To be a PBIS school, the school staff has to meet certain criteria as well. Besides attending special trainings, there is a walk-through of each school twice a year, which is a fidelity check of the PBIS program in the schools. Vincent and other representatives from the district have the opportunity to check in on the schools' product books, which shows their routines for PBIS, their lesson plans for behavior, their SWIS data and their incentives.

"We also interview both teachers and students in the school for the sake of finding out the school's climate. Since implementing PBIS, each of our schools has seen a rise in their star school climate ratings, which is a measurement that the state has to measure quality and character of school life," Vincent said.

Overall, Vincent believes the focus on positivity changes the perspective of students and teachers alike. "I'm a believer in positives; I think we all need positives, and I think PBIS allows teachers and administrators to spend the majority of their time focusing on what students are doing right."

As for their recent national recognition, Vincent said: "Of course we are always looking for ways to improve, but it's always nice to be recognized for all the hard work you've put in. Our schools have done such a great job."