

# Support a Proactive Approach to Safe and Effective Learning Environments in Schools

## Cosponsor the Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act

August 3, 2007

This legislation is endorsed by \* Advocacy Institute\* American Counseling Association \* American Music Therapy Association \* American Occupational Therapy Association \* American Psychological Association \* American School Counselor Association \* The Arc of the United States \* Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law \* Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \* Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders \* Learning Disabilities Association of America \* Mental Health America \* National Alliance on Mental Illness \* National Association for Children's Behavioral Health \* National Association of State Directors of Special Education \* National Down Syndrome Congress \* School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) \* United Cerebral Palsy

Dear Colleague:

Educators and the general public cite disciplinary problems as the greatest challenge facing schools. Often schools respond with suspensions or expulsions, or by removing persistent troublemakers from the school. But research shows that punitive approaches to discipline do not work, and further, that they disproportionately harm students of color and students with disabilities.

One effective approach now being adopted by education agencies around the country is school-wide Positive Behavior Supports (PBS). Research shows that schools implementing PBS can experience anywhere from a 20 to 60 percent reduction in disciplinary problems, an improved social climate, and increases in reading and math scores on standardized tests.

This Congress I toured Monmouth-Roseville Junior High, a PBS school in my Illinois Congressional district. I was amazed by how effectively the school decreased the number of expulsions and suspensions, and increased student attendance, classroom instructional time, and academic engagement. Even more impressive, there was an overall sense of shared responsibility for the success of the school. This experience led me to introduce the *Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act*.

This bill amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to provide the flexibility and technical assistance schools need to expand the use of positive behavior supports and other early intervening services to create a school climate that is highly conducive to learning, reduces discipline referrals, and improves academic outcomes. Specifically, this bill:

- ***Allows*** State and Local Education Agencies to use Title I funding to implement school-wide PBS.
- ***Supports*** Safe and Drug Free Schools' programs that improve the whole school climate, prevent disciplinary problems, violence, illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and that involve parents and communities in school programs and activities.
- ***Trains*** teachers in the behavioral learning of kids and in methods that improve school climate.

- ***Establishes*** an office of specialized instructional support services in the Department of Education to administer and coordinate support services in schools.

I urge you to join me in cosponsoring the ***Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act***. To add your name to this bill, please contact Janna Bergquist of my staff at 5-5905/[janna.bergquist@mail.house.gov](mailto:janna.bergquist@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

PHIL HARE

Member of Congress