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April 29, 2009

### **Concern**

Seclusion and restraint refer to safety procedures in which a student is isolated from others (seclusion) or physically held (restraint) in response to serious problem behavior that places the student or others at risk of injury or harm. Concern exists that these procedures are prone to misapplication and abuse placing students at equal or more risk than their problem behavior. Concerns include the following:

1. Seclusion and restraint procedures are inappropriately selected and implemented as “treatment” or “behavioral intervention,” rather than as a safety procedure.
2. Seclusion and restraint are inappropriately used for behaviors that do not place the student or others at risk of harm or injury (e.g., noncompliance, threats, disruption).
3. Students, peers, and/or staff may be physically hurt or injured during attempts to conduct seclusion and restraint procedures.
4. Risk of injury and harm is increased because seclusion and restraint are implemented by staff who are not adequately trained.
5. Use of seclusion and restraint may inadvertently result in reinforcement or strengthening of the problem behavior.
6. Seclusion and restraint are implemented independent of comprehensive, function-based behavioral intervention plans.

### **Toward Effective Policy**

1. The majority of problem behaviors that are used to justify seclusion and restraint could be prevented with early identification and intensive early intervention. The need for seclusion and restraint procedures is in part a result of insufficient investment in prevention efforts.
2. Seclusion and restraint can be included as a safety response, but should not be included in a behavior support plan without a formal functional behavioral assessment (a process used to identify why the problem behavior continues to occur).
3. Seclusion and restraint should only be implemented (a) as safety measures (b) within a comprehensive behavior support plan, (c) by highly trained personnel, and (d) with public, accurate, and continuous data related to (1) fidelity of implementation and (2) impact on behavioral outcomes (both increasing desired and decreasing problem behaviors).

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<sup>1</sup> The development of this paper was supported in part by a grant from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education (H029D40055). Opinions expressed herein are the author’s and do not reflect necessarily the position of the US Department of Education, and such endorsements should not be inferred. Contact: Rob Horner (Robh@uoregon.edu), OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)), University of Oregon, Eugene.

4. School-wide positive behavior support may be an effective approach for (a) decreasing problem behaviors that may otherwise require seclusion and restraint, (b) improving the fidelity with which intensive individual behavior support plans are implemented, and (c) improving the maintenance of behavioral gains achieved through intensive individual support plans.

### **School-wide Positive Behavior Support**

School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) is a systems approach to establishing the whole-school social culture and intensive individual behavior supports needed for schools to achieve social and academic gains while minimizing problem behavior for all students. SWPBS is NOT a specific curriculum, intervention, or practice, but a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of scientifically-based academic and behavioral practices for improving academic and behavior outcomes for all students. A central feature of SWPBS is implementation of behavioral practices throughout the entire school. SWPBS defines practices that all students experience in all parts of the school and at all times of day.

SWPBS emphasizes four integrated elements: (a) socially valued and measurable outcomes, (b) empirically validated and practical practices, (c) systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices, and (d) continuous collection and use of data for decision-making.

These four elements are operationalized by five guiding principles:

- Invest first in prevention to establish a foundation intervention that is empirically validated to be effective, efficient and sustainable.
- Teach and acknowledge appropriate behavior before relying on negative consequences.
- Use regular “universal screening” to identify students who need more intense support and provide that support as early as possible, and with the intensity needed to meet the student’s need.
- Establish a continuum of behavioral and academic interventions for use when students are identified as needing more intense support.
- Use progress monitoring to assess (a) the fidelity with which support is provided and (b) the impact of support on student academic and social outcomes. Use data for continuous improvement of support.

### **Research Supporting Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Support**

1. Schools are able to implement SWPBS as evidenced by more than 9000 schools using SWPBS across the nation.
2. Schools that implement SWPBS demonstrate reductions in problem behavior and improved academic outcomes.
3. Preliminary evaluation data indicate that more intensive individual student behavior support is perceived as more effective (and less likely to be needed) when SWPBS is implemented.
4. Evaluation (but not experimental) data indicate that implementation of SWPBS is associated with reduction in the number of instances in which intensive interventions (including seclusion and/or restraint) are perceived as needed, increases the effectiveness of comprehensive interventions, and improvement in the maintenance of behavior support gains.