

Secondary Schools Panel Discussion 4

Reinforcement

People are looking at the idea of teaching this to their faculty and the whole concept is grounded in applied behavior analytics that you're defining what you want terms of student behavior and teacher behavior you're defining it you're giving people the opportunity to practice and to receive reinforcements from it and everybody has some type of a ticket system and they collect different things bucks dollars tickets whatever but the whole idea that when those are given those are giving contingently so if somebody is meeting an expectation I give this to you and say I appreciate you doing whatever and that whatever is going to be an expectation matrix so might be meeting an academic expectation or a social expectation showing up on time being respectful responsible showing best effort whatever your school-wide expectations are some of the common themes that you've heard are that it's not just about shaping kids behavior everybody needs to buy in and if we're going to change teacher behavior they have to have opportunities to practice and receive reinforcements for it as well so once this whole plan is in place and behaviors may reinforce contingently and when we talk about behavior again it's not just narrowly defined its meeting academic social and behavioral expectations then the next thing we have to talk about is how do we reinforce it like when we're all in school what was considered to be very cool is not necessarily what's very cool today so part of what Chris talked about was figuring out what is motivating people and people generally want to either get something or they want to avoid something and so in setting up these reinforcement systems there are some kids that are extremely attention motivated and those videos have been a great thing and at Fairview middle school they've shown those at the beginning of every school day in the first two years tardiness to school dropped out dramatically because people are very curious as to who's in it am i in it that type of thing for the attention motivated child participation in those videos is excellent for some people they'd rather die a thousand deaths and have to be videotaped which is why Wendy is not sitting up here right now so as you're listening to that kind of talk a little bit about how they've set up reinforcement systems listen to how they've come up with ideas for escape motivated kids like front of the lunch line passes to get out of waiting in line an opportunity to skip out of certain things like homework passes or that type of thing and also listen to how they made money in order to make this work and their buildings so listen for the sources of reinforcement how they funded it and then how they kept variety because it's important to shift the novelty in your reinforcement system. Well, I think Chris can talk about this more but one thing is we're constantly getting feedback from our students about what prizes it is that they want and in the middle school we found out that that there's a big difference in what a 6th grader wants and what an eighth grader wants. So we constantly have to make sure that our assemblies and things pretty much eighth graders every time we survey them, they want time to hang out with their friends and they want to get out of stuff. Sixth graders are a little bit easier. Sixth graders will be very motivated. Again, we have that thing where there's a chance of something. So we'll do something like a pie in the face raffle. So we'll have I think this year we had 10 or would \$1 put in put their name on it and put it in and then at a pep rally which drew out and they got put a pie in the face they got to pick which teacher or principal that they wanted to do that for. So our big thing as we obviously we have assemblies we changed how we do those. Right now, we have half way through the nine weeks we have a one hour PBS assembly all the kids get to go to the gym. They get to do fun things that they like I might have karaoke, we might have video games, we'll have basketball going on sometimes will have a theme this

year. We did sort of a carnival where the slower carnival games that they play but we have a one hour assembly in the middle of nine weeks and then a two hour assembly at the end of the nine weeks. We brought in a magician, we brought in a band, we brought in different kinds of shows, we've had teachers that sing have performed at those but really the big thing kids want to do is just get together and hang out and then we provide some fun things to do and then we also this year where the time element is always a hard thing. Just there so many things to do and there's so many more expectations on teachers now. So on this year we're going to have our drawings in the cafeteria. We just decided that one time every day that each grade level was totally together so everybody can see it and we're always going to have an administrator and somebody else in there to do those drawings. So we're going to have random drawings in the cafeteria also. I'll remind you that we are also a middle school implementation and I would agree that the sixth graders are motivated differently than the eighth graders we have several levels of purchases that they can make with their mustang bucks in the classroom their school supplies and for a lot of the kids in our school to be able to purchase their own pencil or highlighter or have paper when they needed as a big deal we are over sixty percent free and reduced lunch and our kids don't have the discretionary money that many young people do today for them to purchase a backpack from the school store or school t-shirt or to be able to come in and buy a coke or a candy bar or even a gift to take to a birthday party has been a very big deal and a really wonderful motivator to put them in control of earning in purchasing things that are important in their lives our school cafeteria has agreed to serve students a slushy at lunch for mustang bucks and we reimburse the cafeteria for the cost of the product we have a librarian who allow students to pay their library fines with the Mustang bucks and to come in and have a library luncheon with a group of friends for \$4 apiece the economy is supported by the fact that we are a title school and I do have some money that I can make decisions about how it is spent and so our school store is generously stocked and initially the concerns that teachers had about soda at the end of the day we've been able to put in perspective because these are kids who might never have one at home and this might be the only coke they have all week long or the fact that they are able to use this money to purchase a gift for someone to get into a school dance to do things that they've just not been able to participate in the past it's been very powerful for us we do have a reward each nine weeks students who have received no administrative discipline referrals are invited to a different type of party and it does occur during their related arts time so that they don't lose instructional time but we might show a movie and popcorn we may have an outdoor play date where we have cold drinks for the them and we have just a bunch of games from the PE department set up outside but in each case the students who were not able to attend felt like it wasn't something they wanted to miss in the future and it's been tremendously successful at our school and I feel like a part of that is that we've provided an economy for something these kids would not have otherwise. We are in the same vein as _____ in that we decided that if one of our school rules was that when they come to school prepared then we needed to make available materials that they would need to be prepared so we completely got rid of our monetary bookstore where kids can come in and get supplies and we have stocked that now with the use of our hawk dollars. So if a kid comes in and they don't have a pencil but they were at school on time a pencil is a hot dollar, a teacher can give those out freely as they as they wish and so we want to make sure that all kids have that our school is very much when you talk about building relationships with teachers that communication is so important. We've done a lot of things in our building that is very haphazard I guess and it turned out to be really successful just by listening. One of the things that we did recently was we have a writer's club through our group and the writers club kids are mostly kids who are economically disadvantaged students and so and I really want

to part of our teacher has kind of mother duck them and so they really aren't a part of any other group or club in there there's sort of stand-alone kids she want to get all of the writers club kids a t-shirt but the kids who are in that particular club may not have the funds to do that so school-wide said "ok, well we can supply those t-shirts but the kids are going to have to come up with 15 hawk dollars", so it was a way of us using our money to make sure that we fit the needs of kids certain kids all kids different kids in our building the way that we usually do funding is a big issue in our school because we don't feel like we need to keep going to the community we have a very large community but a lot of schools and all things and with the economy businesses are sort of in tight supply too. So we want to make sure that we do our work up front and we can say that to the community here this is what we've done to raise our money this is what we believe so we're not constantly asking for something that approach has given us a lot of good things from the community saying we are going to help you guys out because we see what you're doing but one of the biggest things that we do when we raised most of our money is we have a fall festival every year and so what happens is we connect that with the dance so kids buy dance tickets which helps monetary with money they bought dance tickets which helps the grade level and then at the dance they buy tickets not hawk dollars but tickets and I go through and they play a variety of games we've hooked up with one of the supplies to party supply stores event centers things in Clarksville who has given us really good deals on helping out so we set up games and the kids spend the money we have a costume contest it's about octoberish so it's kind of Fall Festival and we do all kinds of different things. We are we only we are only allowed to have about 400 tickets sold and we're trying to up that amount but we raised about \$2,500 at that and through that and through some help with our parent group we have offered a variety of things throughout the school year a lot of things that you have to realize is that what everybody's talking about is some of this is free. You know, it's just creative scheduling figuring out your times, how can we make this work when do the kids get antsy, when are they tired when our teachers tired, when is everybody to break and if you do that constructively and creatively it doesn't really cost you that much money and we've been able to supply what we have in our building is that between eleven and twelve hundred kids through that one fall festival for an entire year. We have drawings, we've given away Wiis, kids are winning gaming systems, we give away iTunes cards, and all kinds of things that we do we sell movie tickets. Some of the places in our in another way that we do buy in is some of their clubs don't really have any way of making money. So we let the kids come in and watch a movie for hawk dollars and we have a huge screen and it was just almost a theater like quality. So they do that then they buy concessions and the concession monies that they have will help other areas in the school last year we had a student our community actually teacher in our building who has a child who has leukemia and so all the concession profits from that went to that family for a Christmas present that was a way of really making the kids aware of kind of what was going on and we try to do that all the time that we're a community and we are helping each other all day long every day and that seems to be what works best for us just is the kids buy in and how we get them to behave the way they want to and for greater good. I want to approach this from two different levels the middle school level I feel very successful in the fact that we found numerous ways to raise money and we are from a but low economic area and the way we raise money was doing several different things we did school dances we've done lock ins I've done talent shows have we had a mother's day out we did one night we had a basketball play day where kids could stay after school I mean we came up with so many different ideas our lock in we charge \$20 a kid from six to midnight and we probably head over 200 kids so we raised \$4,000 and that that alone paid for things that the prizes we were able to give at _____ I believe really propelled our program to another level because when you can give away ten speed bike every

nine weeks and an Xbox to every grade level you're going to have people saving their tickets I think it's important that those students know why they're getting those why they are getting the tickets and what they can use them for so they need to know the prize this nine weeks is an iPad. We gave an iPad at the high school this last school year and for the first time all year there was a huge buzz of everybody wanting their tickets when all year long we didn't have a structured prize to build up to that and then we went from none no interest to so much interest we didn't any tickets left. So I think that they need to see that reward at the end and the ways you can raise money food is a big motivator for all of us and in middle and high school students especially you can use it so many ways the cafeteria tie in is huge sonic and other of your local restaurants will donate meals and things like that and I put a list together for us of rewards that cost rewards that do not. Things that you can do that don't cost anything. We even did a pass that was change classes like if you had art and you wanted to go to music today you could do that with that pass. We came up with so many things that you could use homework passes get out of lunch, detention pass. There were so many things that we used it didn't cost us anything and then there are other things we spent thousands of dollars with oriental trading and Rhode Island novelty and it's amazing we probably give away over 2,000 bouncy balls in the last seven years and then they would throw them in class getting taken up and we'd sell them again the next week. So we replenish our store we had we have a prize store and a concession stand that can only use those tickets for and I think that the PTO involving your PTO is huge because if they get to make the plan they get to have that idea they get to run the concessions it takes a lot of us and it's important to have some parents on that PBS team to get that input and we've even had students on our PBS team. So I think those are some ways I think creativity is number one if you just are creative on how to raise money what works at your school what would people like to do charge them for it and tell them it's all going back to the students. They're all getting this back because it's going programs. So I think the fundraising part and figuring out what rewards fit your students is very important and you have to have someone that can lead that whether it be a parent or teacher. Again, at the high school level we were trying to figure out ways that the PBS team wasn't responsible for everything as well and one of the two kind of go into the student interest piece this for the last two years we had our statistics classes do some analysis of student interest and so that was a huge piece that was helpful that we can just say "hey this is what you guys wanted" and for us food was definitely a piece big packages we found was an exciting thing like a football season package or you know a pet package where they got different things you know that we're school-related school spirit wear, prom was a huge piece but things that we could kind of put together and take the thought out for them we found was it was a very big deal and then we did varying levels of the prom package but the largest one and this this is now kind of an expectation kids at the beginning of the year will say are we doing that prom thing again and they'll save They call it hoarding their tickets which is pretty exciting is that means they're in and they'll show us the clumps of tickets but they the prom package the biggest one is like a limos, flowers, a tux and these are things that we just get donated because the local businesses want the publicity of saying they did it and then dinner somewhere and then it kind of drops from there a dinner card or just flowers or a tux rental and those varying pieces can meet the interest level that was spoken up earlier that a lot of our kids want to have that high school experience but it's an impossibility to do it at that ground level that many people in our school community can so it allows some of that. Another thing that we did that we're I'm really proud of and this was a kind of a teacher driven thing that address the teachers who felt like the kids who are always doing what they're supposed to be doing aren't getting reinforce and some of that was the reply was really easy, "well reinforce it then just give them tickets for that", but we didn't address growth and we didn't feel like we

were always addressing academics as much as we wanted to as a school another piece of that helped us with the kids kind of our AP level students our high-flying kids felt like all of the sudden this was a program that they could pay attention to so instead of saying I don't need those tickets or I think this is ridiculous it became "oh wait a second I can get an iPad 2" well you need an iPad just as much for school is as the lower level kid and they just created kind of a universal peace that again was just a secondary product of what we thought was a good idea for one thing and trickle-down or I guess in that case trickled up to another unique group of kids another piece we found was beneficial was really addressing the teacher piece and saying out loud you guys need PBS too and finding ways that we didn't we don't have a lot of money we money is definitely our largest struggle our PTSO gives us grants every year had written a couple grants and gotten funding from community organizations but funding is our biggest challenge so we especially with the teachers had to find ways to give them what we felt like they needed and the number one thing that we do for teachers this time we were able to give away a couple paid days off last year and prep periods where as a PBS team we said we're committed to at very specific times of the year giving teachers PBS time off and so one of us would go in and run their class for that period so they could have an extra prep period and that was phenomenal in the way that we did that was based on the teachers who gave the kids tickets so it was a win-win for everybody and that that was a huge reinforcer not only for the program for but for the teachers and especially the teachers who felt like with this is ridiculous I shouldn't get rewarded for the kids shouldn't get rewarded for what they should be doing anyway well all the sudden the teachers were getting rewarded for what they should be doing anyway and we found stellar benefits there. So looking at the notion of reinforcement you can see that they've come up with very creative ways to generate income to come up with what motivates kids and teachers in terms of accessing or avoiding either experiences or tangible items or different experiences sensory like music and things like that in looking at this notion of reinforcement again we want to really emphasize it has to be contingent and that's so important that the kids are only accessing that reinforce or contingent upon meeting in expectation and the same is true for teaching and also you've heard about the importance of the parent component many teams have involved parents in actually building the plan almost everybody involves their parents in implementing because they you know they often have the time and even if you're in a situation where you're the majority of your parents are in the work force outside of the home there are still opportunities to involve parents and that it could they could be preparing tickets coming up with different methods of soliciting reinforcers from the community one school took a bus down to a mall they had pre-printed different certificates and they hit every store toward the end of the year inventory and they walked out with roller bag luggage that couldn't be resold or certificates or discount coupon that the key is to be creative and think about how you can make this work for your school