

ALISAI UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

1995-96 PeaceBuilders® Program

District-wide Survey Results Year 1 Implementation

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INTRODUCTION

The PeaceBuilders®* program was developed to reduce the level of violence in the lives of children and adults. It uses a multi-dimensional approach based on a cognitive, social, imitative competence framework for understanding aggressive, hostile and violent young people. The major assumptions that drive the objectives and components can be summarized as: 1) children who are at risk for violence do not think or behave in the same way as other children, 2) young children who become violent offenders have a number of differences in their social relationships, and 3) young children who become serious offenders tend to copy the actions of real or media models who engage in aggression, which seems to maintain or worsen their cognitive-behavioral and social difficulties.

The six skills taught, reinforced, and modeled in the school environment are:

- 1) noticing and praising pro-social behavior in others who do something positive for you
- 2) reducing the use of put-downs and demonstrating respect
- 3) noticing and speaking up about hurts caused by self to others
- 4) using wise people and resources as mentors
- 5) picturing the good that can be, then acting to bring it about
- 6) avoiding situations that produce victimization

These skills are based on the Four PeaceBuilder Principles:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Praise People | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice Hurts and Right Wrongs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Give Up Put Downs | <input type="checkbox"/> Seek Wise People |

Funded by the City of Salinas, through the Community Development Block Grant Program, and the Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital, the Alisal Union School District (District) began the program district-wide in seven elementary schools: Bardin, Alisal, Sanchez, Fremont, Frank Paul, Steinbeck, and Virginia Rocca Barton in September of the 1995-1996 school year.

The '95-'96 school year was the first year the program was attempted and most schools were able to implement PeaceBuilders fully. Four thousand one hundred forty-six students participated in the program district-wide.

It is anticipated that a survey will provide information on the effectiveness of this program as well as additional guidance for a full implementation in the '96-'97 school year. The survey questions can be summarized as: 1) what is the level of implementation of PeaceBuilders, 2) are students displaying an increased level of skill development and behavioral competency, 3) what is the impact of the program on the staff, 4) are teachers receiving support for using the curriculum and components, and 5) what is needed to continue implementation and improve the program's effectiveness next year?

It was decided that an impartial, external evaluator would be most advantageous to conduct the survey. HeartSprings, Inc. provided survey instruments developed in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control during their study conducted in the schools in Pima County, Arizona. Those tools were tailored by the independent evaluator and Alisal Union School District for use in this project.

It should be noted that the survey process was initiated in February, 1996. The survey instruments arrived in April. Surveys were circulated in May. In the '96-'97 school year, evaluation needs more intentional planning from the outset. A more in-depth process is anticipated. This will require more time and fiscal resources.

*Whenever *PeaceBuilders* is referred to, it is done under copyright of HeartSprings, Inc., Tucson, Arizona

METHODS

Four methods were employed:

- 1) **Outcome Indicators:** a collection of eight outcome indicators including disciplinary actions, violent episodes, tardies, absences, vandalism episodes and costs, volunteer hours donated and community donations.
- 2) **Teacher's Survey.**
- 3) **Principal's Survey.**
- 4) **Supporting Staff Survey.** This includes Instructional Aides, Mental Health Professionals, Health Professionals, Noon Duty Supervisors, and Office staff

All schools participated in the district-wide evaluation, including 109 teachers (out of 220 employed, certified personnel. It should be noted 1/3 of Year Round staff were off-track when surveys were taken), the seven principals' offices, and 34 supporting staff (out of 250 site staff. This population needs more aggression data collecting support. It is an area that will be addressed in the '96-'97 school year.)

OUTCOME INDICATORS RESULTS

There was a significant change in every outcome indicator District wide, all of them in the desired direction of change. Disciplinary actions reduced by 49%, serious violence episodes reduced by 59%. Tardies reduced by 20% and absences reduced by 31%. The number of vandalism incidents reduced by 61% and the vandalism costs reduced by 61%. Volunteerism increased by 99% and community donation amounts increased by 15%. Table I illustrates the dramatic change as described.

TABLE I
Change in Selected Outcome Indicators for PeaceBuilders Program
Alisal Union School District*, School Year 1995-96

Indicator as Reported by Site Principals	Pre-Peace Builders	Post Peace Builders	Amount of Decrease (-) or Increase (+)	Percent Change
Average Monthly Disciplinary Actions	305	155	- 150	49%

Number of Serious Violence Episodes (per year)	39	17	- 22	56%
Average Number of Monthly Tardies	748	602	- 146	20%
Average Number of Monthly Absences	1,300	900	- 400	31%
Number of Vandalism Incidents	36	14	- 22	61%
Estimated Vandalism Costs	\$5,000	\$1,950	- \$3,050	61%
Estimated Monthly Volunteer Hours Donated	755	1,500	+ 745	99%
Estimated Community Donations in Dollars	\$5,200	\$6,000	+\$800	15%
Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital Donations	0	\$20,000	+\$20,000	100%
City of Salinas	0	\$15,000	+15,000	100%

PRINCIPAL'S SURVEY RESULTS

The principals report that many activities are occurring often or consistently. One hundred percent of the principals report that children talk about being a PeaceBuilder. Eighty-six percent of principals report that classrooms have a bulletin board devoted to PeaceBuilding, the staff integrates PeaceBuilders, the staff provide praise for each other, class rules include "be a PeaceBuilder" with other curricular programs. Seventy-one percent report the incorporation of PeaceBuilders into classroom and school rules. Administrative, staff, and media support is reported as high.

Table II shows the results of the principal's survey. The **bolding** was used to emphasize the stronger findings.

TABLE II
Estimate of Implementation Level of PeaceBuilders
Principal's Survey, School Year 1995-96

Implementation Component as Surveyed by Site Principals	Never to Rare		Sometimes		More often than not to Consistently	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
1. Classrooms have a bulletin board devoted to PeaceBuilding.	0%	0	17%	1	86%	8
2. Children and staff use praise notes often.	0%	0	29%	2	71%	5
3. Teachers and staff use reproducible Binders 1 through 4: (We are PeaceBuilders, Praise People, Give Up Put-Down, Notice and Speak Up About Hurts).	14%	1	71%	5	14%	1

Implementation Component as Surveyed by Site Principals	Never to Rare		Sometimes		More often than not to Consistently	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
4. Teachers and staff use reproducible binders 7 through 8: (Get Things Done, which is about homework; and Find Better Ways, Which is about rewarding cooperative behavior and guest teachers).	14%	1	57%	4	29%	2
5. The staff integrates PeaceBuilders with other curricular programs.	0%	0	14%	1	86%	6
6. The school staff discusses successes and challenges related to PeaceBuilding at staff meetings.	14%	1	29%	2	57%	4
7. The school promoted, coached and followed up on home use of the <i>I Help Build Peace</i> book.	28%	2	29%	2	42%	3
8. The school incorporates PeaceBuilders into classroom and school rules.	0%	0	0%	0	100%	7
9. Teachers and staff model the PeaceBuilding strategies with each other.	0%	0	14%	1	86%	6
10. Staff provide praise for each other.	14%	1	0%	0	86%	6
11. The school invites and promotes parents and others as Wise Adults.	0%	0	57%	4	43%	3
12. Community members visit the school to see PeaceBuilders working.	29%	2	29%	2	42%	2
13. The school staff and teachers seek support from others to make PeaceBuilders more effective.	0%	0	57%	4	43%	3
14. School support staff volunteer to make PeaceBuilders work effectively.	0%	0	43%	3	57%	4
15. Staff provide daily nominations for students as PeaceBuilders, and those nominations are read over the public address system.	57%	4	43%	2	0%	0
16. Class rules include "Be a PeaceBuilder."	0%	0	29%	2	71%	5
17. Staff praise PeaceBuilding in the halls.	0%	0	29%	2	71%	4
18. District administrators support PeaceBuilders.	0%	0	0%	0	100%	7

Implementation Component as Surveyed by Site Principals	Never to Rare		Sometimes		More often than not to Consistently	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
19. Local media promotes PeaceBuilding at your school.	0%	0	14%	1	86%	6
20. Children talk about being a PeaceBuilder.	0%	0	0%	0	100%	7

The principals comment that the most difficult children in the schools were affected most by the consistent language, instruction and support for resolving problems, giving them a chance at being successful, and the support that the PeaceBuilder Community Implementation Team provides. The well-behaved children in the schools have benefited by being acknowledged and praised, considered "wise persons" (role models), learning leadership skills, and feeling safer and more relaxed in attending school.

In most schools the PeaceBuilders concepts have been integrated in everyday practice, including the discipline program, teacher evaluation program, parent meetings, staff meetings, noon and playground supervision. Phone calls to parents/guardians to inform them that their child was honored as a PeaceBuilder have been very effective for reinforcing behavior and building support at home for school behavior.

In addition to the surveys, the principals recommend, that more time be provided for staff training. There is high interest in a parent component, continued and expanded media coverage is recommended to reinforce the value of the program.

TEACHER'S SURVEY RESULTS

The majority of teachers felt that there was a reduction in the frequency of behaviors that are often the focus of discipline. A change of child behavior is the most accurate indicator of success for this program. Table III shows that in the majority of responses the occurrence of these behaviors "is less often".

TABLE III
Change in Discipline Focused Behaviors
In Comparison With Before Starting PeaceBuilders
Teacher's Survey, School Year 1995-96

Child Behavior as Indicated by Classroom Teachers	Is Less Often		Is Unchanged		Is More Often		Was Never a Problem Now or Before in My Class	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
1. Argue a lot	50%	49	29%	28	8%	8	15%	15

Child Behavior as Indicated by Classroom Teachers	Is Less Often		Is Unchanged		Is More Often		Was Never a Problem Now or Before in My Class	
2. Are defiant, talk back to staff	47%	47	20%	20	5%	5	28%	28
3. Brag or boast	35%	38	32%	33	6%	6	27%	28
4. Are cruel, bullies, or mean to others	48%	51	25%	27	6%	6	21%	22
5. Destroy property belonging to others	39%	41	28%	29	5%	5	28%	29
6. Disobey at school	53%	55	27%	28	6%	6	14%	15
7. Get in many fights	49%	51	28%	29	5%	5	18%	19
8. Talk out of turn	42%	45	46%	49	6%	6	6%	6
9. Disrupt class discipline	45%	46	33%	34	7%	7	15%	15
10. Show off or clown around	41%	43	37%	39	6%	6	17%	18
11. Are explosive and show unpredictable behavior	45%	48	22%	23	5%	5	28%	30
12. Must have demands met immediately, easily frustrated	42%	45	36%	39	7%	7	15%	16
13. Act stubborn, sullen or irritable	42%	45	34%	36	5%	5	20%	21
14. Have sudden changes in mood or feelings	42%	44	32%	33	5%	5	21%	22
15. Tease a lot	45%	48	28%	30	7%	7	18%	19
16. Threaten people	45%	49	18%	20	6%	6	29%	32
17. Show signs of involvement in gangs	28%	30	21%	22	8%	8	39%	41

The majority of teachers report a change in children's social skills and behavior. Four of the most important of these skills are listed on Table IV. The majority of teachers report that more children exhibit these skills after the implementation of the program.

TABLE IV
Change in Class Behavior In Comparison to Before PeaceBuilders
Teacher's Survey, School Year 1995-96

Comment as Noted on Teacher's Surveys	Fewer to Somewhat Fewer Children	No Change	Somewhat More Children to More Children
1. Have good work habits (e.g., are organized, make efficient use of class time, etc.)	8% (9)	39% (42)	53% (58)
2. Respond to teasing or name calling by ignoring, changing the subject, or some other constructive means.	6% (6)	39% (42)	55% (59)
3. Listen carefully to teacher instructions and directions for assignments.	5% (5)	37% (40)	58% (62)
4. Appropriately cope with aggression from others (e.g., tries to avoid a fight, walks away, seeks assistance, defends self.)	5% (5)	27% (29)	68% (73)

Half of the teachers are teaching most concepts such as "*What is Peace?*" or "*Helping or Hurting Behaviors*" from the *PeaceBuilder Action Guide*. Half of the teachers report the use of praise notes and posters. Seventy-two percent of the teachers report receiving leadership from their principal towards implementing PeaceBuilders. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers find PeaceBuilders compatible with their own teaching style.

While many classrooms are using most of the tools of PeaceBuilders, some tools are being used only in some of the classrooms (such as the *I Help Build Peace* book, the use of praise notes, and the use of the reproducible binders). Half of the teachers report needing more preparation or coaching. Seventy-six percent of the teachers would like to learn how to spread the program to families and community.

Table V shows the extent of use of the PeaceBuilders components and some opinions of the use of the program in the school and the classroom.

TABLE V
Teacher Comments on the Use of PeaceBuilders
in the School and Classroom
Teacher's Survey, School Year 1995-96

Comments as Noted on Teacher's Surveys	True or Yes		False or No		Unsure		Does Not Apply	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
1. I am teaching most concepts such as "What is Peace?" or "Helping or Hurting Behaviors" from the Action Guide.	49%	49	38%	38	6%	6	6%	6
2. We study the "I Help Build Peace" book in class.	27%	27	56%	57	5%	5	12%	12
3. My class writes praise notes to each other frequently.	30%	29	48%	47	7%	7	14%	14
4. I use the lessons and techniques from the reproducible binders in my classroom.	31%	31	57%	57	3%	3	9%	9
5. I send praise notes about students to parents each day.	25%	25	66%	65	2%	2	7%	7
6. PeaceBuilders posters and praise notes are displayed in the building and frequently changed.	51%	51	26%	26	20%	20	3%	3
7. All school support staff are supporting PeaceBuilders.	48%	48	17%	17	35%	35	0%	0
8. The principal shows leadership implementing PeaceBuilders.	72%	71	10%	10	17%	17	1%	1
9. I have reservations about using PeaceBuilders.	23%	23	64%	63	9%	9	3%	3
10. The idea of PeaceBuilders are compatible with my own teaching style.	89%	86	5%	5	6%	6	0%	0
11. I feel I need more preparation or coaching to use PeaceBuilders.	52%	53	37%	38	8%	8	3%	3
12. I want PeaceBuilders to teach more about how to spread it to families and the community.	76%	75	12%	12	10%	10	2%	2

Some teachers provided written comments that showed a keen interest in further incorporating the program into the classroom, school and community. As with the supporting staff, many teachers expressed the need to bring the concepts to parents and the community. Some teachers suggested more

school-wide PeaceBuilding activities to “keep it more alive”, and a “shot in the arm after winter break” to maintain enthusiasm mid-year. A suggestion was made to provide the manual to the teachers before summer break to allow time to prepare. Finally, there were many comments supporting the PeaceBuilder use of a common language to reinforce child behaviors.

SUPPORTING STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

(Instructional Aides, Mental Health Professionals, Health Professionals, Noon Duty Supervisors, and Office staff)

A strong majority of supporting staff report an improvement in children’s behavior, calmer children and staff, and fewer discipline problems since the beginning of PeaceBuilders. Seventy-four percent of staff report that children are taking responsibility more. Eighty-three percent report that the school has done a good job implementing PeaceBuilders. Finally, 77% report that the program has made their job easier. Table VI shows the results of the supporting staff survey.

TABLE VI
Level of Effectiveness and Level of Implementation of PeaceBuilders
 Support Staff Rating*

Comment by Support Staff	Rarely	Sometimes	More often than not or consistently
1. Children are better behaved since we started PeaceBuilders.	0	39% (12)	61% (19)
2. Children and staff are calmer since PeaceBuilders started	0	35% (12)	65% (22)
3. More teaching and learning happen in the school since we started PeaceBuilders.	0	40% (12)	60% (18)
4. I see fewer discipline problems since we started PeaceBuilders.	9% (3)	25% (8)	66% (21)
5. I have seen children who were troublemakers turn around since we started PeaceBuilders.	9% (3)	41% (12)	48% (14)
6. I see more children taking responsibility since we started PeaceBuilders.	3% (1)	23% (7)	74% (23)
7. I see signs that adults are also starting to model PeaceBuilding at school.	3% (1)	34% (10)	62% (18)
8. I see evidence of PeaceBuilders in the neighborhood or community that makes me think it is spreading.	7% (2)	41% (12)	52% (15)
9. Our school has done a good job implementing PeaceBuilders.	3% (1)	14% (4)	83% (24)
10. PeaceBuilders has made my own job easier.	3% (1)	20% (6)	77% (23)

* Instructional Aides, Mental Health Professionals, Health Professionals, Noon Duty Supervisors, and Office staff.

Suggestions from support staff include: 1) involve the parents/guardians as peace builders, 2) continue to develop more models for the children to observe, 3) continue to make home visits or calls home to inform the parents/guardians of the change in their children.

CONCLUSIONS

The strongest evidence of a program's effectiveness is the change in desired outcomes. The PeaceBuilder's goals of reducing and preventing violence in the lives of students are best measured with outcome indicators such as **serious violence episodes, disciplinary actions, and vandalism.** Tardies and **absences** affect the continued reinforcement of the program and the value of education for the students. **Volunteerism** promotes all of the benefits of community and parent involvement including reinforcement of the value of education and of non-violent solutions. All of these indicators changed considerably in the desired direction, demonstrating that the tangible benefits of the program can be realized.

There was a high level of acceptance for the value of the program. Repeatedly, the program was praised for the use of **modeling** and for a **common language** reinforcing the Four PeaceBuilder Principles. There is considerable evidence that in most schools the program concepts are incorporated in the many components of school life. The results show a change in student discipline referrals, in skill development and in behavioral competency. **Throughout the district, children are aware of, talk about, and are very proud of being PeaceBuilders.**

Many components of the program were adopted, many of them actively involving the children: students engaged in expression PeaceBuilding in classroom skits, school assemblies, and community functions (television panels, rallies, training forums); using praise notes; inviting and promoting parents and others as "wise adults" and incorporating "be a PeaceBuilder" in the class rules. **There is an overwhelmingly consistent impression that a large percentage of children show increased positive behavior since implementing PeaceBuilders.**

Some components of the program were not fully adopted. These components tended to be the more resource intensive areas such as community member visits, implementing the intensive PeaceBuilders Guide, and monthly or weekly themes about PeaceBuilding. These can serve as areas to support and expand in the '96-'97 school year.

It is apparent that the support of district administrators and local media contributes considerably to the success of the program. This level of support will be necessary for the successful implementation of the program more fully in all of the schools. The program will need to further incorporate more home and community components in the next year.