

UPDATE: PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT

On 7/31/09 U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, wrote to the Chief State School Officers about the use of seclusion and restraints in the school setting.

Secretary Duncan's letter follows a recent hearing in May of this year to the Education and Labor Committee as well as a special report from the Government Accountability Office entitled "Seclusions and Restraints: Selected Cases of Death and Abuse at Public and Private Schools and Treatment Centers.

Secretary Duncan's letter highlights the following:

- Each State should review its current policies and guidelines regarding the use of restraints and seclusion in schools to ensure **every student** is safe and protected, and if appropriate, develop or revise its policies and guidelines by 2009-2010 (status of state efforts to be discussed by 8/15/09 including relevant laws, regulations, policies).
- Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) can provide a systems approach and framework to ensure social and emotional support in schools.
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides significant one-time resources that districts can use to implement a school-wide system of PBIS
- Seclusion and Restraint Guidelines should be publicized so that administrators, teachers, and parents understand and consent to the limited circumstances under which these techniques can be used.
- Ensure parent notification when seclusion or restraint interventions do occur.
- Provide resources needed to successfully implement the seclusion and restraint policies and hold districts accountable for adhering to the guidelines.

In response to Secretary Duncan's letter, PATTAN, submitted a request to PDE on behalf of the PA Positive Behavior Support Network for consideration of the above and highlighted the networks efforts to scale-up the SWPBS effort to provide schools in the Commonwealth with the training and technical assistance needed to offer this framework.

PATTAN also requested that PDE consider the use of PBS in the development of the standards aligned system (clear standards, fair assessments, a curriculum framework, instruction, materials & resources, and intervention all of which lead to student achievement).

PATTAN further requested that PDE consider the benefits of having PBS serve as a platform to support efforts not limited to but including SEAL (Social, Emotional and Academic Learning), Resiliency, reduction in out of school placements, and satisfying requirements of NCLB among others with far reaching impact for all children (general and special education).