

Vineland CARES with Positive Behavior Support

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach. If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach. If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach. If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach. If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we...teach?...punish? Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?” Herner, 1998

Vineland Elementary School has made a commitment to teach students how to behave in the school environment. We are currently in our first year of implementing a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) system, which in Charlotte County Public Schools, is facilitated through the University of South Florida. The purpose of PBS is to build a school environment in which positive behavior is emphasized more than problem behavior. It is a proactive approach that includes teaching, reinforcement, and research-based strategies that foster a positive learning community.

Last summer a team of Vineland staff participated in a multi-day training in which a plan was written specifically for our school and the needs of our students. One of the first goals of the team was to define our student expectations. Vineland CARES is an acronym used to help students remember what is expected of them.

Vineland Courteous

Act Responsibly

Respect Everyone

Eager to Learn

Success for All

Large signs with the expectations are posted around the school and a pledge, which students say every morning, was developed based on them.

Next, using these expectations, the PBS team developed rules for the common areas of the campus, such as the cafeteria and the playground. During the first weeks of school, teachers focused on teaching these rules to their students. Heron Hero coupons are given by all staff to students who display positive behavior, such as following our school rules. Students then use their Heron Heroes to purchase items from the Vineland Hero Hut. The Hero Hut operates bi-weekly during lunch. It is run entirely by parent volunteers. Using their Heron Heroes, students may “buy” items, or coupons for intrinsic rewards, such as having lunch with the principal.

Often, students do not realize that the school bus is an extension of their school environment. Denise Alexander, a Vineland first grade teacher and PBS team member, has developed a bus component for our PBS plan. The Bus Crew is a newly formed team of students selected to model proper behavior on the bus. Being a member of the Bus Crew means being a role model and making a commitment to excellent behavior on the bus. Members have made a pledge to “Do right, treat people right and have zero bus referrals!” In addition, Bus Crew members starred in a video filmed on campus that featured them singing the **Bus Rap** and following bus rules. The video was shown to students campus-wide via closed circuit TV. Following the week long debut of the **Bus Rap**, every class on campus boarded a school bus and learned proper bus behavior. The Bus Crew continues to model proper behavior, as well as reward bus riders with Bus Heron Heroes for their excellent behavior.

Although this is only our first year of PBS implementation, we have seen positive changes in our school and excitement among the students. Using data from students and staff, our PBS plan will continue to grow and change as we seek to make our school a place where we can truly say, “Everyone at Vineland CARES!”