



# Indicators of Behavior Support: Relationships to Academic Achievement and School Safety

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Recent research conducted by the Center for the School of the Future shows that conditions of “behavior support,” as reported on the Indicators of School Quality (ISQ) survey system, are better predictors of academic achievement and school safety than are measures of socioeconomic status, maternal education, and other demographic variables. The analysis presented in this poster utilized “behavior support” data, compared to standardized measures of academic achievement and school safety, from more than 100 schools located in seven Western states and the District of Columbia .

Since 2000, the Center for the School of the Future at Utah State University has collected information from hundreds of schools using the *Indicators of School Quality* (ISQ) survey system. More than 600,000 students, parents, and teachers have responded with descriptions of their school’s learning environments (student commitment, teacher excellence, school leadership, instructional quality, school safety, parent support, resource management). Parents also provide information on seven neighborhood or community risk factors (economic status, home language, family bonding, academic status, community affiliation, neighborhood stability, and peer associations), resulting in a school risk-level score (low, moderate, or high). The combined information, describing both the school and neighborhood, has proven accurate in predicting a school’s level of academic achievement.

## Method

In an effort to help schools to improve the quality of their learning environments, we began gathering information pertaining to behavior support, variables purported to produce better student behavior and performance. Effective models of school-wide behavior support often emphasize (1) clear academic and behavioral standards and expectations; (2) positive teaching relationships; (3) systematic teaching of critical academic and social skills; and (4) reinforcement of appropriate student behavior through praise and other affirmative teacher behavior.

Five yes/no questions comprise the new behavior support domain on the Indicators of School Quality (ISQ) survey for elementary and secondary students (Table 1). Answers to these questions were compared to responses to the other ISQ questions and to standardized measures of academic achievement.

Table 1. Behavior Support Questions from the ISQ Survey

Emphasis	Elementary Student	Secondary Student
<b>Clear Expectations</b>	Are you often confused about how to behave at school?	Are you frequently confused about what is expected of you at school?
<b>Positive Relationships</b>	Do your teachers care about you?	Is there an adult at school whom you trust to ask for help?
<b>Social Skills</b>	Do you have a lot of friends?	Do students at this school generally respect adults?
<b>Academic Skills</b>	Do you read a lot?	Do you do well on tests and assignments?
<b>Praise and Recognition</b>	Does your teacher often say you are doing good work?	Are you recognized enough for your efforts to succeed?

## Sample & Results

Data were analyzed from 102 schools in seven Western states and the District of Columbia where ISQ was conducted during the 2005/06 school year. Although most of the schools were in Utah, this sample represented schools found across the country, with similar ethnic diversity and enrollments. A significant portion of these schools were located in neighborhoods with very low income families. Second language learners accounted for more than half the enrollment in several schools. For all of the analyses using academic achievement data, only the 71 Utah schools were used. This was done to ensure standardization of the dependent variable.

The analysis revealed significant relationships between the assessments of efforts to implement behavior support strategies throughout the school (judged by the students’ responses to the five questions), and academic achievement and safety. In summary, these measures of behavior support were even better predictors of achievement and safety than were measures of community risk.

Legend for Figures 1-4

Opportunity to Improve (Red), Typical (Yellow), Superior (Green), Exemplary (Purple)

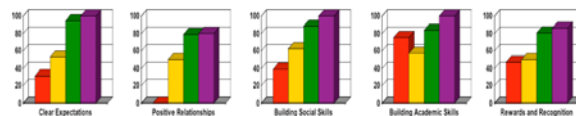


Figure 1. The Relationship Between Behavior Support Ratings and % of Schools Achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

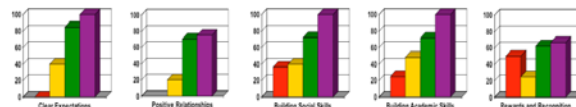


Figure 2. The Relationship Between Behavior Support Ratings and % of Schools Achieving Proficiency on CRTs

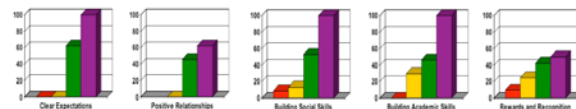


Figure 3. The Relationship Between Behavior Support Ratings and % of Schools Achieving Proficiency on CRTs (Subgroups)

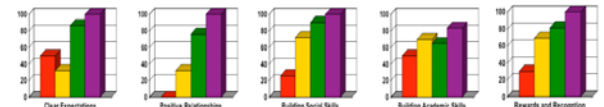


Figure 4. The Relationship Between Behavior Support Ratings and % of Schools Judged to be Safe Environments

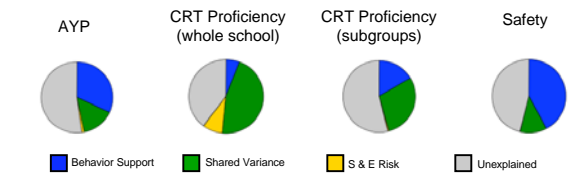


Figure 5. Behavior Support and Social & Economic Risk Data as Explanations for Variance in Outcomes

## Conclusions

- ❖ Ratings of behavior support domains, as reported on ISQ surveys, were highly predictive of:
  - AYP success
  - CRT proficiency for the entire school and its subpopulations
  - Perceptions of school safety
- ❖ Social and economic risks were not unique predictors of academic success and school safety
- ❖ Behavior support items from ISQ predicted AYP and CRT success with 85% accuracy

It seems that providing clear behavioral expectations, fostering positive student-teacher relationships, building social and academic skills by maximizing opportunities to respond, and creating a school-wide system of rewards and recognition lead to better academic and safety outcomes in any social or economic situation.

## References

Taylor, M. J., West, R. P., & Smith, T. S. (2006). Indicators of school quality (ISQ) survey manual. Center for the School of the Future, Logan: UT.  
 West, R. P., Smith T. G., & Taylor, M. J. (2004, Fall). Principles for effective schools. *The Utah Special Educator*, 25, 10-11