

# Impact of a District-wide Individualized, Computerized, Positive Behavioral Intervention on Discipline Referrals, In-School Suspensions and Out of School Suspensions

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## ABSTRACT

A Georgia school district's comprehensive Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative included the implementation and evaluation of a self-regulated, computerized, social-emotional learning intervention, as a tertiary intervention for discipline-related problems. Between 2004 and 2007, 3,685 mostly low income, African American students in 40 elementary, middle and high schools were assigned self-regulated, reading-independent tutorials matched to their offenses and were encouraged also to explore underlying reasons for their behavior. A third party evaluator examined whether the self regulated intervention would be implemented with fidelity in diverse discipline-related settings, and whether use would result in fewer behavior problems. Three types of data were used to gauge results: Quantitative usage data logged by the software, quantitative outcome data provided by the schools and district, and qualitative interview data from students, implementers and administrators. Computer generated dosage data indicated students received on average, two hours exposure to the program. Specific tutorials were available for 99.5% of their offenses. Administrative data indicated that across all grades from first to fourth quarter, when rates of discipline-related offenses traditionally rise, discipline referrals decreased an average of 28% the first year, and increased an average of 5% the second year; in-school suspensions decreased an average of 30% the first year and 26% the second year. The greatest reductions were among high school students. Out-of-school suspensions increased an average of 48% the first year and 52% the second year from fall to spring, consistent with traditional patterns. Absent objective comparative data, we were unable to interpret the degree of positive effects on discipline referrals and ISS repeat referrals, and unable to make a judgment about whether out of school suspension differences were positive, negative, or neutral.

**KEYWORDS:** school discipline; individualized; In-School Suspension; computerized intervention