

School promoting kindness with new program

[Craig Shoup](#), Reporter 9:45 a.m. EDT August 30, 2016



Banners are placed all along Ross High School promoting a safe school environment through acts of kindness and better behavior by students. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

FREMONT - After four years in elementary schools, a behavioral program is now being implemented throughout the Fremont City Schools District to encourage respect and better communication between students and staff.

The program, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, is designed to get all school faculty and students on the same page when it comes to being tolerant of others and creating a safer school environment.

PBIS has been a staple in the elementary grades and will now include students from Fremont Middle School and Ross High School.

"I think the program helps us offer a better school climate," said Gracy Lloyd, Ross High School principal.

Laura Bryant, principal at Otis Elementary, said PBIS in the lower grade levels builds a strong framework for students to treat classmates and teachers with respect, and added improvement is noticeable since the program began four years ago.

Lloyd said it's easy to ask someone to behave, but instead of allowing the student to determine what good behavior is, the school is promoting the common goal of being respectful, responsible and safe while in the classroom, hallway and lunchroom.

Lloyd said Ross High School underwent several changes during the summer with promoting the program, both with strategically placed posters detailing the school's desired behaviors, and shirts made for students to wear.

"You teach kids to read, so why not teach them how to act appropriately," Lloyd said.

Bryant said one set of rules helps with communication, saying students now have a better understanding of what is expected of them when they are on campus.



Fremont City Schools Curriculum Director Abby Abernathy, left, and Ross High School Principal Gracy Lloyd promote new school district initiative promoting kindness and tolerance in Fremont. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

Students who act up in class are often singled out and gain a certain amount of popularity. By instituting PBIS, teachers can highlight good behavior with rewards and prizes, and provide incentives that lead to good behavior.

"Kids are excited," said 11-year-old Hailey Held. "At school, the kids who behaved well would get a (toy) jet, or they would call you down to the office for a prize."

The change at the elementary schools has been significant, Bryant said.

"I see a big change. It's making the school safer," she said. "I think the sky is the limit for the program."

Lloyd said the program, which is mandated by the Ohio Department of Education this year for all schools, could usher in better behavior, meaning fewer trips to the principal's office and more educational opportunities for students.



Ross High School Junior Seneca Johnson shows off her new shirt about being respectful while at school. The school's district-wide initiative, a mandate by the Ohio Department of Education, will promote better communication between students, parents and school staff. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

With the program now heading to the middle school and high school, students are already excited about making the district a better place for education.

"I'm excited to spread the news, be positive and have better communication with the teachers," said Seneca Johnson, a 16-year-old junior at Ross High School.

"We think 95 percent of students are doing what they are supposed to be, and we are now in a better position to communicate with parents," Fremont City Schools Director of Curriculum Abby Abernathy said.

Abernathy said parental involvement in the program is key to success because having expectations for students begins at home with how kids interact and how they learn to respect those in position of authority.

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Poster with rules about proper behavior can be found in hallways and the cafeteria at Ross High School. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)