Effective Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Supports: Reducing the Need for Seclusion and Restraint

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School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

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School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

- **School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) is a systems approach to establishing the whole-school social culture and intensive individual behavior supports needed for schools to achieve social and academic gains while minimizing problem behavior for all students.**

School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

- **SWPBS is NOT a specific curriculum, intervention, or practice, but a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of scientifically-based behavioral and academic practices for improving behavior and academic outcomes for all students.**

School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

- **Emphasis on four integrated elements:**
  - **socially valued and measurable outcomes**
  - **empirically validated and practical practices**
  - **systems that efficiently and effective support implementation of these practices**
  - **continuous collection and use of data for decision-making.**

School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

- **SWPBS approaches these issues from a multi-tiered prevention logic to prevent these behaviors from occurring in the first place, and to develop positive, more intensive intervention strategies if the behaviors of a student proves to be unresponsive.**

SWPBS – Guiding Principles

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SWPBS – Guiding Principles

- **Invest first in prevention to establish a foundation intervention that is empirically validated to be effective, efficient and sustainable.**
- **Teach and acknowledge appropriate behavior before relying on negative consequences.**

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SWPBS – Guiding Principles

- **Identify students who need more intense support and provide that support as early as possible, and with the intensity needed to meet the student's need.**

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SWPBS – Guiding Principles

- **Establish a continuum of behavioral and academic interventions for use when students are identified as needing more intense support.**
- **Use progress monitoring to assess**
  - **the fidelity with which support is provided**
  - **the impact of support on student academic and social outcomes. Use data for continuous improvement of support.**

Concerns About Seclusion and Restraint

Concerns About Seclusion and Restraint

- **Seclusion and restraint refer to safety procedures in which a student is isolated from others (seclusion) or physically held (restraint) in response to serious problem behavior that places the student or others at risk of injury or harm.**

Concerns About Seclusion and Restraint

- **Concern exists that these procedures are prone to misapplication and abuse placing students at equal or more risk than their problem behavior (Hill & Spreat, 1987; Williams, 2009).**

Concerns About Seclusion and Restraint

- **Seclusion and restraint procedures are inappropriately selected and implemented as "treatment" or "behavioral intervention," rather than as a safety procedure.**
- **Seclusion and restraint are inappropriately used for behaviors that do not place the student or others at risk of harm or injury (e.g., noncompliance, threats, disruption).**

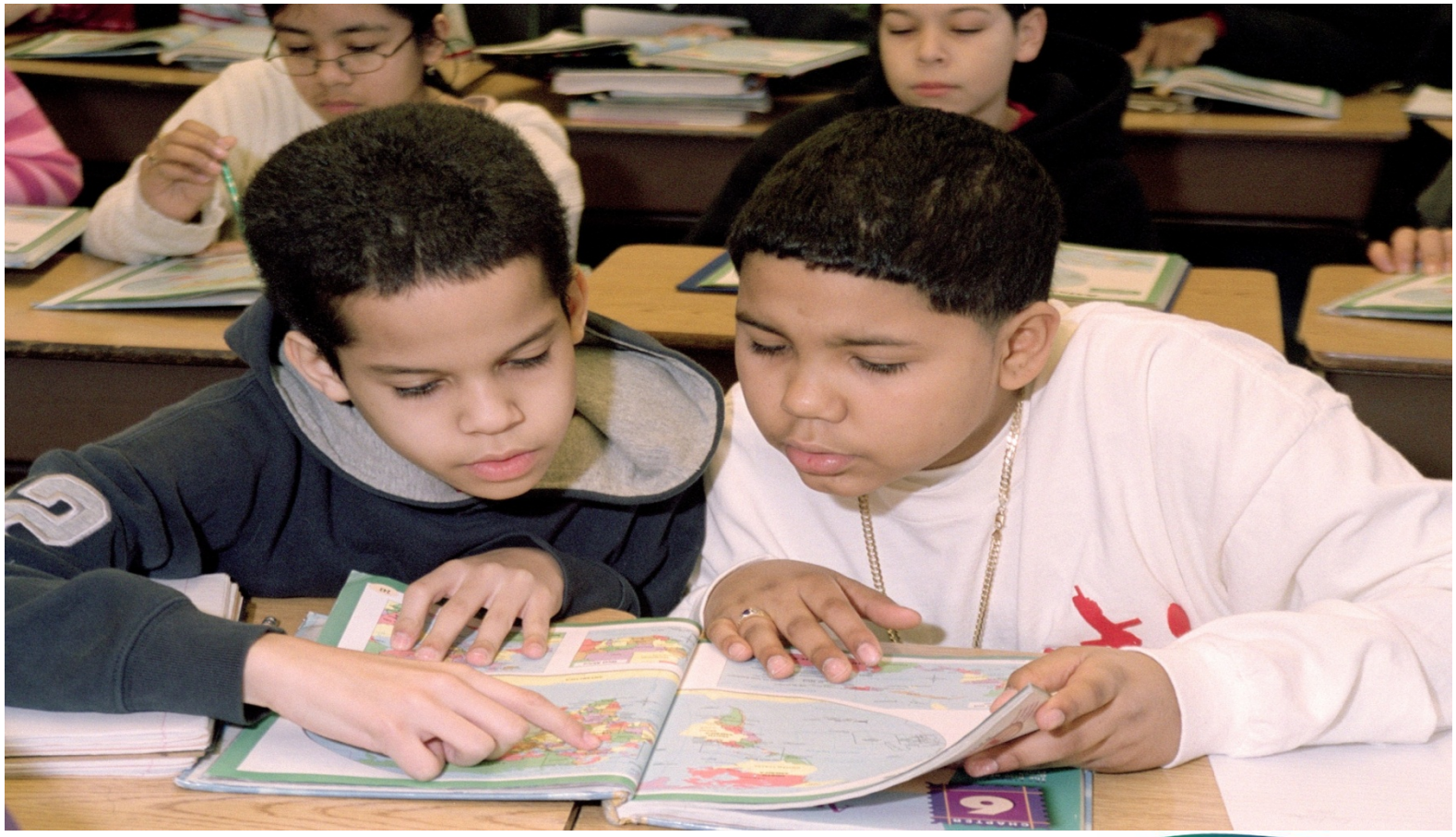
Concerns About Seclusion and Restraint

- **Students, peers, and/or staff may be physically hurt or injured during attempts to conduct seclusion and restraint procedures (Hill & Spreat, 1987; Williams, 2009).**
- **Risk of injury and harm is increased because seclusion and restraint are implemented by staff who are not adequately trained (Cunningham, McDonnell, Easton, & Sturmey, 2003; McDonnell & Sturmey, 2000).**

Concerns About Seclusion and Restraint

- **Use of seclusion and restraint may inadvertently result in reinforcement or strengthening of the problem behavior (Favell, McGimsey, & Jones, 1978).**
- **Seclusion and restraint are implemented independent of comprehensive, function-based behavioral intervention plans.**

Research Supporting Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Supports



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Research Supporting Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

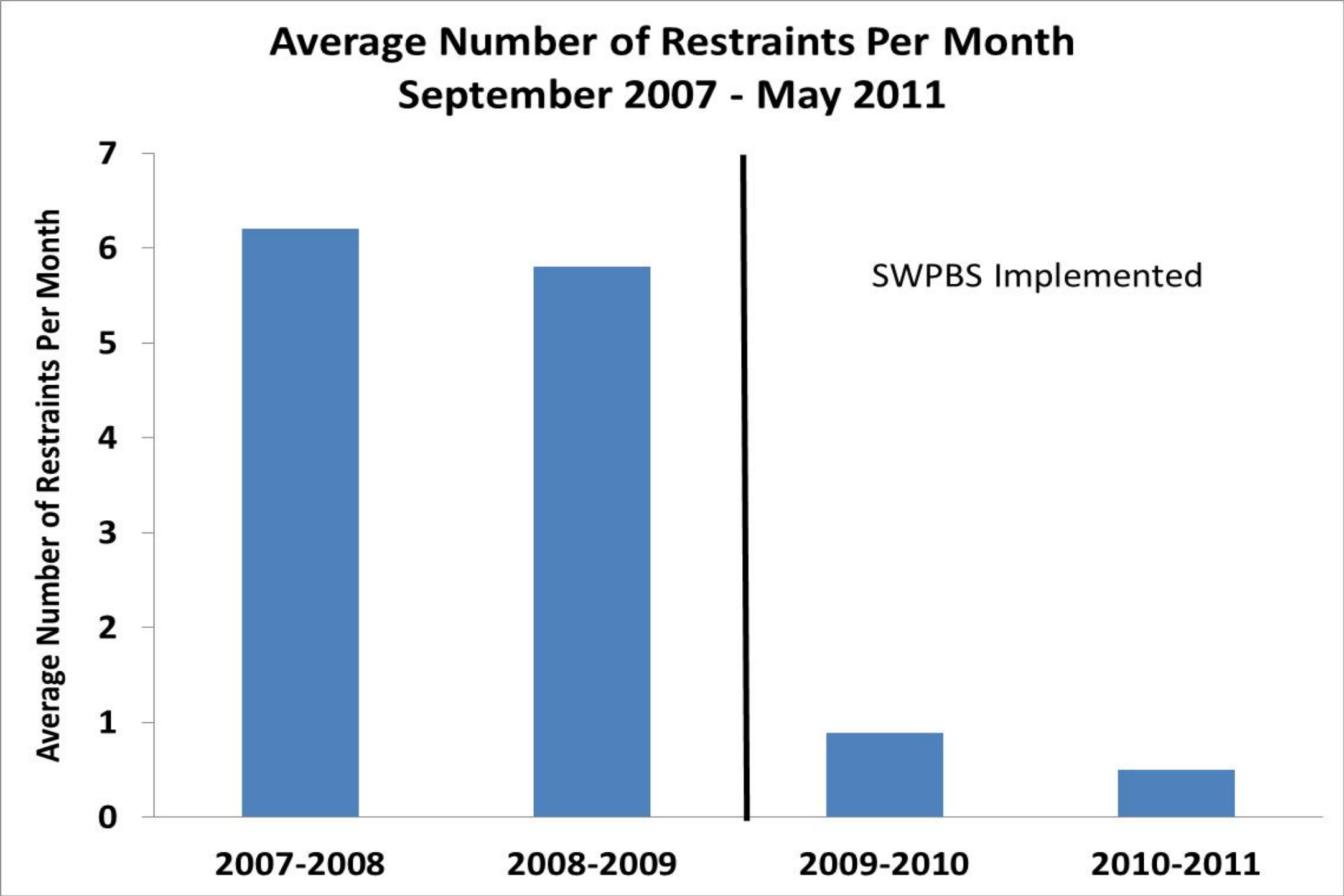
- **Schools are able to implement SWPBS as evidenced by more than 14,000 schools using SWPBS across the nation.**
- **Schools that implement SWPBS demonstrate reductions in problem behavior and improved academic outcomes (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010).**

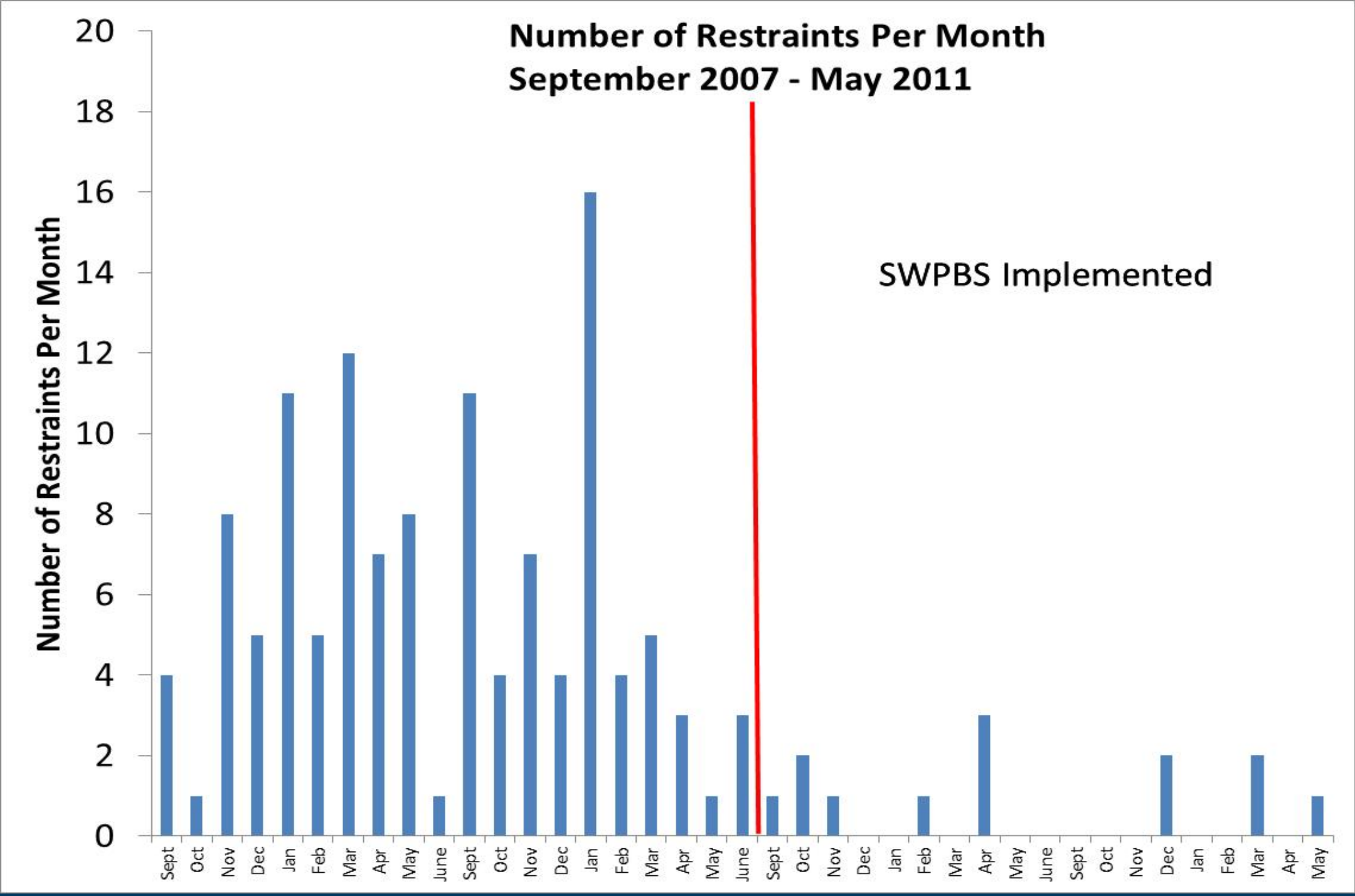
Research Supporting Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

- **Preliminary evaluation data indicate that more intensive individual student behavior support is perceived as more effective (and less likely to be needed) when SWPBS is implemented (Medley, Little, & Akin-Little, 2007).**

Research Supporting Implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

- **Evaluation (but not experimental) data indicate that implementation of SWPBS is**
  - **associated with reduction in the number of instances in which intensive interventions or practices (including seclusion and/or restraint) are perceived as needed,**
  - **increases the effectiveness of comprehensive interventions, and**
  - **improves the maintenance of behavior support gains (Feinberg, Simonsen & Putnam, 2010).**


Average Number of Restraints Per Month
September 2007 - May 2011
Average Number of Restraints Per Month
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
SWPBS Implemented
2007-2008
2008-2009
2009-2010
2010-2011


Number of Restraints Per Month
September 2007 - May 2011
SWPBS Implemented
Number of Restraints Per Month
0
2
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8
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12
14
16
18
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School-wide Positive Behavior Supports

- **George (2000) with the implementation of SWPBS in an alternative school in a year over year basis found that:**
  - **the number of physical restraints decreased by 69%**
  - **the number of minutes of seclusion decreased by 77%.**
  - **Only one instance of physical restraint was used in the last 40 days of school.**

Positive Behavior Supports

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Positive Behavior Supports

- **Preventive (Functional Behavior) assessments should be conducted to understand these situations concerning the problem behavior:**
  - **where**
  - **under what conditions**
  - **when**
  - **with whom**
  - **why**

Positive Behavior Supports

- **Functional behavior assessments should include:**
  - **review of archival records**
  - **interviews with parents, family members, and students**
  - **direct observation**
  - **collection of and analysis of observational data**
  - **examination of previous and existing behavioral intervention plans.**

Positive Behavior Supports

- **Any behavioral intervention must be consistent with the student's right to be treated with dignity and to be free from abuse, regardless of the student's educational needs or behavioral challenges.**
- **Behavioral interventions should be preventive, constructive, and positive in their features, implementation, and intent.**

Positive Behavior Supports

- **Behavioral interventions should be empirically documented for its effectiveness and efficacy**
- **Behavioral interventions should be adapted to the contextual or cultural characteristics of the student, staff, and setting**
- **Staff members should be trained to the highest level of implementation fidelity (accuracy and fluency)**

Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Supports

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Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Supports

- **Carr et al., (1999) completed a comprehensive meta-analysis of the efficacy of positive behavior support interventions for people with developmental disabilities who engage in severe problem behavior.**
  - **PBS was found to be effective for examined problem behaviors and across a wide variety of participants, and settings.**
  - **Effect sizes were large and associated with reductions in problem behavior that usually exceeded 80%.**
  - **PBS was most effective when a functional assessment was completed and used to design interventions.**

Effectiveness of Positive Behavior Supports

- **The National Autism Center's National Standard Project found that the vast majority of treatments that have been shown to be effective through well-controlled research come from behavioral fields such as positive behavior supports, applied behavior analysis and behavioral psychology (2009).**

Toward Effective Policy

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Toward Effective Policy

- **The majority of problem behaviors that are used to justify seclusion and restraint could be prevented with early identification and intensive early intervention. The need for seclusion and restraint procedures is in part a result of insufficient investment in prevention efforts.**

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Toward Effective Policy

- **Seclusion and restraint can be included as a safety response, but should not be included in a behavior support plan without a formal functional behavioral assessment (a process used to identify the context in which the behavior occurs and why the problem behavior continues to occur).**

Toward Effective Policy

- **Seclusion and restraint should only be implemented**
  - **as safety measures**
  - **within a comprehensive behavior support plan**
  - **by highly trained personnel, and**
  - **with public, accurate, and continuous data related to:**
    - **fidelity of implementation and**
    - **impact on behavioral outcomes (both increasing desired and decreasing problem behaviors).**

Questions

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- **For more information**
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  - **pbis.org**
  - **nationalautismcenter.org**

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