



ASSOCIATION FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

# Newsletter

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## Association for Positive Behavior Support

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## APBS Board Update

Don Kincaid

One of the core values of APBS is a commitment to engage in *ethically* and *fiscally responsible* behavior by making transparent decisions with equity and fairness while maintaining a sustainable and financially viable organization. Our commitment to transparency, equity, and fairness remains strong, but our capacity to remain sustainable and financially viable has been impacted by several variables. APBS has long had a commitment to keeping all fees for members at very low rates. We continue to offer conference and membership rates that are well below those of similar associations. In the past, we have been able to generate sufficient funds from our annual conference and membership fees to support many of our APBS goals and activities. In fact, most of our revenue has been from conference registration and membership fees.

This limited array of revenue-generating options was not particularly problematic until COVID. The cancellation of our 2020 International Conference on Positive Behavior Support and much smaller 2021 virtual conference has produced a decreasing trend in revenue due to smaller conferences and membership numbers. While we are not in any immediate danger of insolvency as an association, the APBS Board will be working diligently to enhance existing revenue streams and explore new revenue options in the coming years that may include fundraising, collaborations, sponsorships, or for-purchase products.

What does this mean for you as an APBS member? Well, we hope that you will understand that the association may consider modest increases in both membership and conferences rates in the coming years. The APBS Board promises that your ongoing commitment to supporting our activities will be met with access to high quality products,

resources, and events. As president of APBS, I welcome any ideas you might have for generating revenue from existing or new activities or products. Please send any ideas to me at [kincaid@usf.edu](mailto:kincaid@usf.edu).

We hope that you will join with your colleagues at APBS and work to build a sustainable and valuable association that helps us achieve our global mission to “*enhance the quality of life of people, across the life-span, by promoting evidence-based and effective positive behavior support to realize socially valid and equitable outcomes for people, families, schools, agencies, and communities*” (APBS Mission Statement, <https://www.apbs.org>).

## Board of Directors Election

It is time once again to vote for new members for the APBS Board of Directors! The call for nominations is now closed, and the window for voting opened in late July and will close in late September. There is a strong slate of candidates representing educators, researchers, and leaders from diverse backgrounds and with unique abilities. This year, APBS members will elect six general seats to the board. To learn more, please visit our website at <https://www.apbs.org/>.

## Join an APBS Network

Find an APBS network consisting of like-minded professionals, practitioners, and family members in your region or a network corresponding to your area of positive behavior support practice. APBS networks span the globe, from the United States of America and Canada to Europe, Asia, and Australia. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.apbs.org/networks>.

## APBS Recognizes

The ability of APBS to promote positive behavior support is largely dependent on the voluntary efforts of its members. Therefore, we devote a feature column in the *APBS Newsletter* to recognizing our outstanding volunteer members. Based on recommendations from our operating committees, we acknowledge members who have made extraordinary voluntary contributions to APBS.



**Jennifer Jeffrey-Pearsall**  
Sheppard Pratt Health System  
APBS Mid-Atlantic PBIS Network

Jennifer Jeffrey-Pearsall has served on the APBS Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Ad Hoc Committee and has been instrumental in supporting its work over the past year. Jenn has been involved in action planning activities, including the design and development of a paper addressing positive behavior support in the IDD field. In addition to the IDD Ad Hoc Committee, Jenn has served as a volunteer for other committees as well. You will also hear her voice as the narrator for the *Introduction to APBS* video on the home page at [www.apbs.org](http://www.apbs.org). For these reasons, we nominate Jennifer Jeffrey-Pearsall for Outstanding APBS Member Volunteer recognition and thank her for her volunteer service to the Association for Positive Behavior Support!

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**Editor's Note:** This issue of the APBS Newsletter and the next will be focusing on international applications of PBS. The following articles highlight innovative PBIS research and practices occurring in the Netherlands and in several countries in Europe. The first article provides an overview of Monique Nelen's longitudinal research on SWPBIS in the Netherlands. It is followed by an article that describes an innovative technology and school-based research project focused on augmented reality and SWPBIS that includes partners from Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

## First Longitudinal Research on SWPBIS in the Netherlands

**Monique Nelen**  
Windesheim University

Monique Nelen will defend her PhD thesis at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, this September. The title of her dissertation is *School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions*

*and Supports in Dutch Elementary Schools: The Implementation and Effects of a Whole School Intervention Approach*. The main objectives of this research were threefold: (1) examining the cultural adaptation of School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) to the Dutch educational context (Nelen, Willemse, et al., 2020); (2) describing fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS in Dutch schools (Nelen, Blonk, et al., 2020); and (3) exploring the relationship between fidelity of implementation and student outcomes at the school level (Nelen et al., 2021). These studies are the first scientific attempts to build evidence for the implementation of SWPBIS in the Netherlands.

## Outcomes and Conclusions

At the introduction of SWPBIS to the Netherlands, a consortium of cooperating partners was responsible for modifying SWPBIS to the Dutch educational context. Core features remained intact, and several procedures were adapted. This study included an examination of Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) and School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) measurements in 117 schools and showed that all SWPBIS core features and standard procedures were present. Adaptations in procedures did not seem to interfere with fidelity of implementation. Moreover, in examining implementation in 66 Dutch elementary schools for three years, a significant increase in fidelity scores—and a significant decline in the percentage of students stating that there were unsafe locations in and around school—were found. These data also suggest that changes in fidelity were related to an increase in students' social well-being and a decrease in the number of behavior incidents, indicating that if a school strongly improved on fidelity of implementation, positive outcomes for social well-being and behavior incidents were also likely to be seen.

However, these results need to be interpreted with care due to the lack of a control group, the number of missing data for school outcomes, and the composition of the sample. At the start of this study, many SWPBIS professionals and schools were interested in participating. Therefore, we chose to follow all schools that agreed to participate instead of focusing on the nine schools that started implementing SWPBIS in September 2015. To prevent losing participants in this longitudinal study, it was important to develop a research design in which participation itself added value for both schools and SWPBIS coaches. As Tobin (2009) stated: "When we do research, we have the obligation to our participants that the research benefits them" (p. 270). We estimated that the student outcome variables chosen (to relate fidelity with outcomes of SWPBIS) were relevant for schools, as they were either in line with SWPBIS core features (e.g., behavior incidents) or obliged by law to collect (e.g., social safety and academic achievements).

## Discussion

This research project opened the way for building evidence on SWPBIS implementation in the Netherlands by establishing the

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infrastructure and partnerships needed for research. It showed how SWPBIS was introduced and adapted to the Dutch educational context. To measure fidelity and student outcomes, organizations and professionals connected. Both schools and PBS coaches learned how to use fidelity measures to improve their practices and how to work on SWPBIS sustainability. In addition, a common language was developed on core features and standard procedures of SWPBIS, which has resulted in a stronger knowledge base that can support faculty and staff in addressing problem behavior and creating safe schools.

## Final Thoughts

Given the fact that acceptance of a schoolwide intervention is linked to personal beliefs, values, and motivations of teachers, which are all grounded in one's own historical and cultural background, one could argue for adding an extra step to the process of SWPBIS implementation in which the values and core features of SWPBIS are overtly defined and discussed. This seems particularly important when one wants to implement SWPBIS in another culture or country. As fidelity of implementation is related to positive outcomes, the use of fidelity measures plays an important role in the cultural adaptation processes to prevent drifting too far away from SWPBIS core features and standard procedures. Supporting schools in how to organize data-based decision making in their daily practice is important: In our study, schools were struggling with collecting and providing behavioral data such as the recording of behavior incidents yet came to value the yearly measurements of TFI and SET.

To learn more about this research or to request a copy of the dissertation, please contact me at [mjm.nelen@windesheim.nl](mailto:mjm.nelen@windesheim.nl).

## References

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## Investigating the Effect of Augmented Reality on Behavioral Management Within Primary Schools

Sui Lin Goei, Jeroen Pronk, Wilma Jongejan  
VU Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Giuseppe Chiazzese & Crispino Tosto  
Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Istituto per le  
Tecnologie Didattiche Palermo, Italy

Researchers of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU, Netherlands) and Istituto per le Tecnologie Didattiche of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ITD) are currently studying how to introduce augmented reality for supporting behavioral teaching and learning processes in schools. *Augmented reality* (AR) is an enhanced version of the real physical world that is achieved using digital visual elements, sound, or other sensory stimuli delivered via technology. We argue that AR can be a promising technology to support behavioral teaching and learning processes by integrating it in activities aimed at teaching positive behavioral routines and alternative responses, reducing the incidence of problem behavior, and supporting the behavioral change. This research is part of the Horizon 2020 Augmented Reality Interactive Educational System (ARETE) project. ARETE aims to develop, integrate, and disseminate interactive technology via AR methods and tools for the creation and inter-connection of existing digital systems and to build a pan-European competitive ecosystem.

Together VU and CNR-ITD are designing and developing a set of 12 AR animated 3D scenarios for modelling and practicing behavioral expectations and routines by students ages 9–12. The 3D AR objects will be integrated in an AR app. The app will be tested during the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 school years. The so-called AR-PBIS app can be played via a mobile device, wherein AR learning scenarios are available that children can experience via teacher-designed lessons. The scenarios will be enriched with 3D characters and objects that add to the real world, showing behavioral routines specific for school environments. Children, through an alien character, will be protagonists of behavioral lessons in AR. The alien will be the main actor of the scenarios and will support the students in the knowledge and training of the routines in the most common school settings, such as the classroom, the entrance/exit of the school, the corridors, and so on.

AR animations show an alien character demonstrating promoted behavioral expectations in a school environment like the “walk purposefully” routine and depicting school values like responsibility and safety. For example, children are expected to “walk

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Figure 1. Augmented reality character in the AR-PBIS app.

purposefully” when entering or exiting the main door of the school building or when moving along the corridor before entering the classroom. The alien will show the child self-regulatory skills to properly implement the behavioral routine, and this will be embedded in a behavioral lesson designed by teachers.

Dutch and Italian primary schools, with at least 2–3 years’ experience with School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) implementation, will be involved for testing the AR app in the 2022–2023 school year. To assess the impact of the educational intervention supported by AR, students will be asked to complete several questionnaires to evaluate their learning of behavioral, social, and emotional skills and their perception of their school- and classroom-based experiences.

While the effect of AR solutions has been explored in other contexts, as in the case of the promotion of consumers and pro-social behaviour, this research study will introduce for the first time AR in a behavioral lesson enhancing the effectiveness of interventions provided within the broader framework of SWPBIS.

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 856533. The consortium consists of ten partners from seven European countries (Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, and the UK) composed of seven academic and research partners, two industry partners, and one non-profit organization. The project coordinator is Dr. Eleni Mangina of UCD, Ireland. For more information see [www.areteproject.eu](http://www.areteproject.eu).

#### APBS Vision Statement:

*Members of APBS across the world will interact with the Association as their primary reliable resource on positive behavior support and view their engagement as personally and professionally beneficial.*

19th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

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SCIENCE, VALUES, AND VISION

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**Interested in contributing to the APBS Newsletter?**

Please contact Randall L. De Pry, Editor ([rdepry@pdx.edu](mailto:rdepry@pdx.edu)) for additional information.