

Ohio Registry of Effective Practices

Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Elementary School District PATHS Program

School Name: Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Elementary School

School Districts: Ripley Union Lewis Huntington School District

Partnering Agencies: The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, Miami University, Talbert House, Brown County Recovery Services, Brown County ADAMHS Board

Address:

85 Banting Drive
Georgetown, Ohio 45121

Phone Number:

937-378-3504

Available for Program Consultation: Yes

Available for Presentations/Workshops: Yes

General Program Overview:

In 2006, the Ripley Union Lewis Huntington (RULH) School District received a grant from The [Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati](#) to engage in planning related to school-wide prevention programming. Through a needs assessment process, the district identified a primary area of need related to social-emotional skill deficits among students. To address this need, the district selected the **P**romoting **A**lternative **T**Hinking **S**trategies (PATHS) program for implementation in the elementary school based upon its national recognition of effectiveness. The PATHS program is designed to increase social emotional competencies (such as self control, emotional awareness, social skills, and problem solving skills) and reduce problem behavior. This K-6 prevention program is designed to be taught by classroom teachers 2-3 times per week. Evaluation of the PATHS program has shown significant improvements for participants in areas such as self control, thinking and planning, emotional recognition and understanding, and reductions in aggression and conduct problems.

During the initial planning year, following the needs assessment and program identification, the district worked to garner buy-in from teachers, staff, students, and parents. Strategies to promote buy-in included a teacher in-service to provide information about the PATHS program, a teacher survey related to concerns and questions about the program, a handout based upon survey results with responses and further information to address questions and concerns, a visit by the core team and two additional teachers to a school already implementing PATHS to do classroom observations of PATHS lessons, meetings with staff to discuss the program and review the curriculum, and an in-service attended by all elementary staff provided by a PATHS trainer who presented an overview of the program, the theory and research supporting the program, program structure, and demonstration of lessons.

Program implementation began the following year, with a focus on incorporation into the existing curriculum and implementation by regular classroom teachers. The implementation has been completed in stages: Stage 1 in the first year formally introduced the PATHS program in Kindergarten and 1st grade, and Stage 2 in the second year added 2nd and 3rd grades. The process of implementation included the identification of a Core Implementation Team and a Program Coordinator with responsibility for data collection, outcome reports, teacher consultation, organization and maintenance of program materials, provision of supplemental materials, and the organization of team meetings. The program coordinator also met weekly with classroom teachers to discuss the lessons that they were teaching and to monitor student exposure to the PATHS curriculum.

[Back to Top](#)

Evidence of Effectiveness:

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the RULH Elementary School PATHS evaluation utilized measures in four areas: 1) [a standardized instrument from the PATHS Evaluation Kit](#) (Kusche & Greenberg) published by Channing Bete Company Incorporated, 2) the Ohio Diagnostic Assessment System tools for measuring cognitive skills, 3) individual student interviews of emotional vocabulary, and 4) the number of student redirections given by a teacher. Approximately 355 Kindergarten through 3rd grade students served by the PATHS program had pre- and post-test scores.

On the standardized PATHS evaluation instrument, pre- and post-tests completed by teachers at the beginning and end of the school year demonstrated a) a 7% reduction on the Aggression and Disruptive Behavior scale, b) a 20% increase on the Ability to Concentrate and Pay Attention scale, and c) a 19% increase on the Social and Emotional Competence scale. In addition, teachers also reported a 56% increase in student cognitive skills using the Ohio Diagnostic Testing Measures, and a 140% increase in student emotional vocabulary as measured by individual student interviews at the beginning and end of the school year in which students were asked "how many words do you know that describe how you feel." Finally, teachers were asked how many times they gave students redirections (recorded daily on a calendar) during the first and last months of the school year. Overall, teacher redirections decreased by approximately 33% from the first to the last month.

The following anecdotal story illustrates the application of lessons/concepts taught in PATHS. Two siblings in first grade experienced the death of their parent in the middle of the school year (parental consent has been given to share this story). Jane Massie, principal of the elementary school visited the family and talked with each child. One of the children told Jane that she was sad (and then she paused and reflected a little) and stated that she knew it was okay to be sad because her class had been discussing feelings at school. She stated that her teacher had told them during PATHS time that all feelings are okay to have. She mentioned that each student had a set of cards with feelings faces on them which they used to let others know how they felt. The little girl stated that her cards would probably show a sad face for a long time, but that she would be okay. Prior to these students returning to school following their parent's funeral their classroom teacher discussed the situation with her students. The teacher was able to use the PATHS lessons that discussed loss and experiencing sad and upset emotions. Having this resource available was very helpful in teaching young students about loss and about how to empathize. Once the siblings returned, they briefly discussed their loss with the class. The teacher emphasized to her students that they use their feelings cards to let others know how they felt. One of the girls often used her private feelings card to signify that she didn't

want to discuss how she was feeling. The other girl often changed her card and would discuss the various emotions she experienced. Overall, the PATHS program offered significant assistance to students and staff alike in dealing with this unfortunate circumstance.

[Back to Top](#)

Capacity and Resources:

The initial assessment and planning was supported by a planning grant from The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati. This grant provided one year of funding to conduct a needs assessment, identify a prominent area of need, select an evidence-based prevention program based on that need, garner buy-in from participants, and receive technical assistance and support from Miami University's [Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs](#). During that planning year, RULH applied for implementation funding from the Health Foundation which provided three years of support to implement the PATHS program within the district. Grant funds also supported a Program Coordinator position (7-8 hours per week) to support the effective implementation of the program.

Resources required for the initial implementation of the PATHS program include the purchase of the curriculum kit materials ([see this link](#) for information about cost of specific materials). In addition, training is recommended for all teachers, support staff, and administrators in a district in which the program is to be implemented. On-going technical assistance and consultation are also available from program developers.

Additional resources to support on-going implementation include teacher planning and implementation time, maintaining replacement materials, and ongoing consultation/supervision and evaluation.

[Back to Top](#)

Family Partnerships:

An effort is made to inform parents of the concepts taught in PATHS through parent handouts (provided with the curriculum) and newsletters related to the lessons taught in the classrooms. Parents are also involved in supporting the lessons through their work with their children on homework assignments given to review the ideas and topics covered in the lessons.

[Back to Top](#)

Community Partnerships:

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati has funded the planning and implementation of the PATHS program. A partnership with Miami University provides technical assistance for the planning and implementation process. Other community partners include Talbert House dba Brown County

Recovery Services who provide counseling services in the Brown County community and now in the school, and the Brown County ADAMHS Board who provided mental health needs assessment data collected from a grant also funded through The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati.

[Back to Top](#)

Sustainability Plan:

The [Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati](#) has funded the planning and implementation of the PATHS program. A partnership with [Miami University](#) provides technical assistance for the planning and implementation process. Other community partners include Talbert House dba Brown County Recovery Services who provide counseling services in the Brown County community and now in the school, and the Brown County ADAMHS Board who provided mental health needs assessment data collected from a grant also funded through [The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati](#).

[Back to Top](#)