

Frequently Asked Questions About the Syracuse School-Based Intervention Team Project...



What is the School-Based Intervention Team project? How effective is this program in assisting children at risk?



The School-Based Intervention Team (SBIT) Project trains teams of educators at a school to work together as effective problem-solvers. Using the SBIT model, teams learn how to uncover the underlying reasons that a student might be experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties and to assemble practical, classroom-friendly interventions to address those student problems. SBIT Teams are made up of volunteers drawn from general- and special-education teachers and support staff. Any teacher in the school can refer a student to the SBIT Team.

The SBIT project was first developed in 1994 by the Syracuse (NY) City School District. Presently, 12 city elementary schools and 1 middle school participate in the project. In addition, the New York State Education Department has recognized the SBIT project as an exemplary program for training schools to run effective pre-referral intervention teams. A number of other school districts in New York State and around the nation have adopted the SBIT problem-solving model for their own students.

Syracuse City Schools has found that SBIT Teams do make a significant and positive difference in student performance. For example, the district has found that its schools who have an SBIT Team in place refer on average 40 percent *fewer* children for special education services each year than do schools that do not yet have an SBIT Team.



How does SBIT differ from traditional Child Study Teams?



In many states, Child Study Teams are responsible for finding children who may have educational disabilities and be eligible for Special Education or §504 Services. Child Study Teams are typically composed mostly of clinical evaluation staff such as school psychologists and speech/language pathologists.

In contrast to Child Study Teams, SBIT Teams focus solely on creating strategies to help children to be more successful in general-education classrooms. Classroom teachers are central and highly valued members of SBIT Teams. Among its core components, the SBIT model promotes a collegial atmosphere in which teachers work together to solve student problems, employs research-based interventions ideas to promote student success, and uses dependable but time-friendly assessment methods to measure the progress of struggling learners.



What are the roles of SBIT members?



To help SBIT meetings run more smoothly, team members take on structured roles. The *facilitator* runs the meeting, keeps participants on task, and checks in with the referring teacher to make sure that he or she agrees with the interventions being proposed. The *recorder* takes notes on the meeting proceedings in sufficient detail to create a detailed, written intervention plan. The *time-keeper* tracks elapsed time during the meeting to ensure that team members use valuable meeting time efficiently. The *case liaison* assists the referring teacher in collecting information about the student prior to the meeting and may also support the teacher in starting the intervention plan. SBIT members are cross-trained to fill any of these roles as needed.

Additionally, SBIT Teams have a *coordinator* who takes care of logistical issues such as scheduling meetings, maintaining a meeting calendar, and, when possible, arranging substitute teacher coverage for those attending the SBIT meeting.



What does a typical SBIT meeting look like?



The SBIT meeting process is based on an efficient, research-based problem-solving model. To initiate an SBIT meeting, the classroom teacher first completes an SBIT referral form, providing comprehensive background information about the student. An initial SBIT meeting is then scheduled. At that meeting, the team and teacher explore reasons for the student's learning or behavioral difficulties. They also identify student strengths. Then the group and referring teacher brainstorm about interventions likely to meet the needs of the referred student. The team notes those intervention ideas that the teacher finds most acceptable and collaborates with the instructor to turn them into a formal intervention

plan. Additionally, the SBIT and teacher come up with methods to track the student's improvement during the intervention. Before the meeting adjourns, a follow-up meeting date is set to review the student's progress.



How can I find out more about the SBIT Project?



For more information about SBIT, contact:
Ed Erwin, Director of Special Education
Syracuse City Schools

725 Harrison Street
Syracuse, NY 13210

Ph: 315-435-4424

Fax: 315-435-4987

Email: eerwin@freeside.scsd.k12.ny.us