



Reducing Behaviors and Staff Turnover

A Case Study of Rivermont In-district Services in Lynchburg, Virginia Public Schools

In-district Services Overview

At Rivermont our goal is to develop programs and services that meet the unique and specialized needs of each student we serve, while also keeping them in the least restrictive environment. What that means is meeting them in the setting that best suits their needs at that current time and developing targeted interventions to make progress against their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals. While some students are best served in an out of district setting, many children and young adults are best suited to learn and thrive in their own home school within their district.

The Challenge

Rivermont's partnership with Lynchburg City Public Schools (Lynchburg Schools) in Virginia, was developed to support students with autism spectrum disorder (autism), behavioral, and emotional challenges, as well as students in the general education setting, providing them with the tools and knowledge to succeed in their public school classroom. Anchored in the Multi Tiered Systems of Support model, Rivermont staff utilized ABA Therapy techniques and strategies in tandem with positive behavior supports to help students learn to manage their behaviors, gain critical skills, and make progress against their IEP goals. All interventions were developed in close partnership with Lynchburg School leaders and educators to enhance and enrich the learning environment and support instructional staff with additional tools.

The flexibility of the Rivermont IDS support model ensured that the program was individualized to the school, classroom, and even individual student needs, while also supporting school wide initiatives.

IDS Support Model:

Consultant:

Responsible for collaborating with building administration to delegate and direct services in each building.

Behavior Technicians:

Assigned to a building to provide direct classroom support to staff and administration with supervision from a consultant.

Our Approach

Following a consultation with Rivermont, the district elected to utilize the following specific supports for students ages 11-14 with a variety of diagnoses. Diagnoses consisted of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Speech or Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, and Emotional Disturbance. Services were provided to student both with and without IEPs and medical diagnoses. Supports used included:

- Behavior data collection and analysis for students identified by school administration;
- Professional development on subjects identified as areas on need or interest (in the school and for the district teacher conference);
- Direct staff observation and feedback;
- Consultation with school administrators; and
- In-school and in-classroom support from Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) and Behavior Technician (BT).

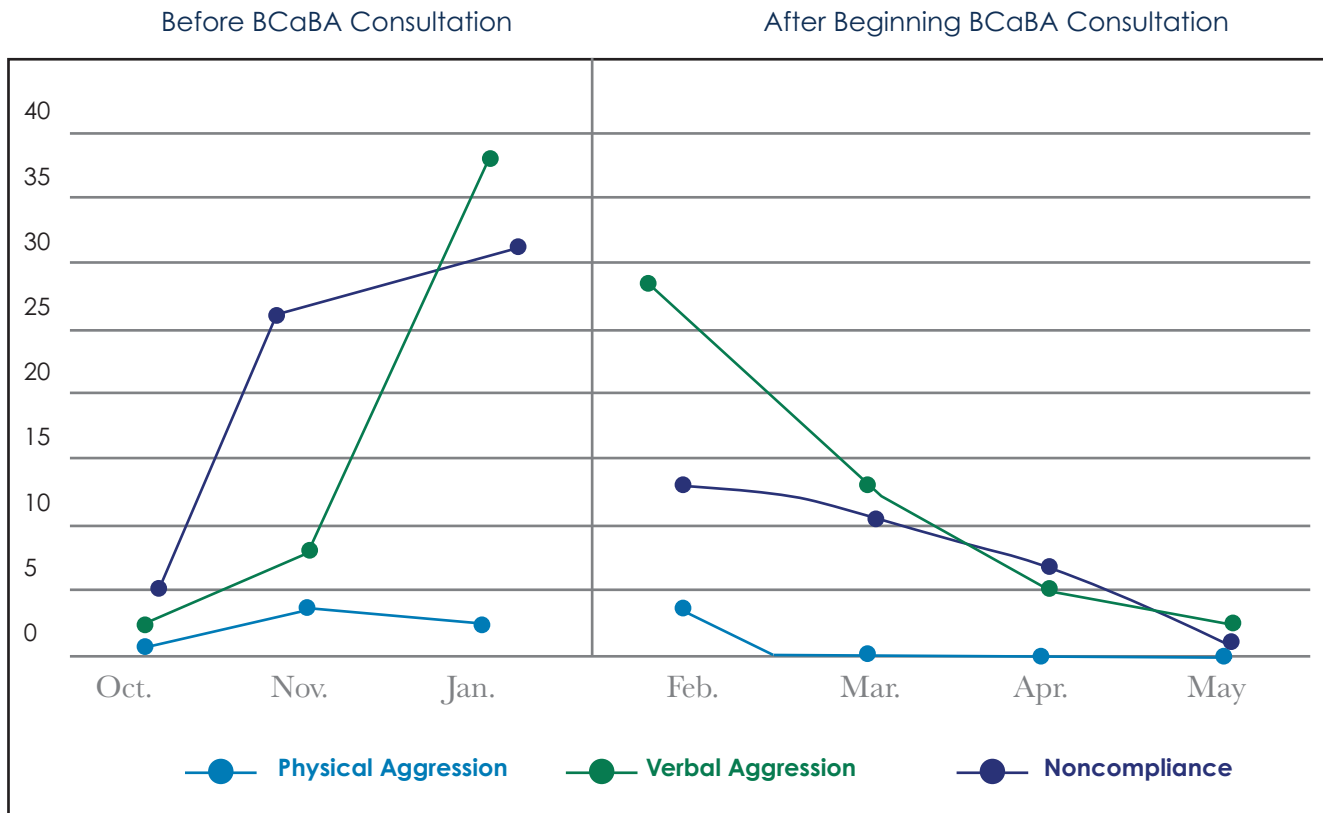
In order to assess the outcomes of these services, student behavioral data was collected daily over the span of one school year (180 days). The data collected tracked the frequency of undesired behaviors, to help Rivermont and public school staff track intervention efficacy and make adjustments to interventions in real time. Behavior data collection included the following: non-compliance, verbal aggression, physical aggression, property destruction, elopement, and inappropriate sexual behaviors. Classroom teachers also completed performance evaluations of their individual consultants, rating them in multiple performance categories as well as providing anecdotal written feedback on their experiences with Rivermont consultants.

Findings

Program Efficacy

Behavioral data collected both before and during Rivermont consultations, observations, and feedback on appropriate interventions revealed significant reduction (and in some cases, elimination) of undesirable student behaviors by the end of the data collection period. This frequency reduction and/or elimination was consistent across all undesirable behaviors tracked.

ABA Consultative Services In Public Schools



Teacher evaluations completed by classroom teachers demonstrated overwhelmingly positive responses and ratings for Rivermont services. Here are some excerpts of documented teacher feedback:

- “Ms. Katie is an invaluable resource in my classroom. Her presence is not only comforting to me, but to every student. Ms. Katie’s observations and suggestions are helpful and valued! I wish I had her for every class.”
- “Ms. Katie gives 100+10%. She supports our students and staff on and off the clock. She has innovative ideas and is graceful with her suggestions.”
- “She is always very receptive to my questions and has provided many suggestions for behavior support. Very professional and approachable. Great asset to SMS.”
- “Katie has been amazing in and out of my classroom! I know that I can go to her for advice and she’s a great help. We love her!”

Teacher Support and Satisfaction

In addition to the data collected to track Rivermont's efficacy, there are also notable positive outcomes worth mentioning. Lynchburg's administrative team reported a surprising increase in both teacher and staff retention after utilizing Rivermont's services. In fact, at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, Lynchburg had more than 36 new staff members. However, at the beginning of 2023-24, new hires were reduced to only 12. Administration believes this is because teachers and staff felt more supported and less overwhelmed, and therefore more satisfied in their positions.

66% decrease in staff turnover compared to previous year.

Conclusions

The collaborative efforts between Rivermont and Lynchburg City Public Schools have yielded remarkable outcomes in student behavior management and teacher satisfaction. Through targeted interventions and support strategies, Rivermont has demonstrated its capacity to effectively address the diverse needs of students facing social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. The significant reduction and, in some cases, elimination of undesirable behaviors attest to the efficacy of Rivermont's approach. Moreover, the overwhelmingly positive feedback from classroom teachers underscores the invaluable support provided by Rivermont consultants.

Beyond the intended outcomes, the partnership has also resulted in unexpected benefits, including a notable increase in teacher and staff retention rates within Lynchburg Schools. These findings affirm the pivotal role of collaborative initiatives in creating supportive and enriching learning environments, ultimately fostering student success and well-being. As Rivermont continues to empower students and educators alike, its impact on special education and behavioral support services remains profound and enduring.

Overview of Rivermont School-Based Programs

Rivermont In-district Services

Rivermont's In-district Services provide a continuum of custom services to districts in need of special education, therapeutic and mental health services, professional development, and consultation within their schools. Each district has the opportunity to choose from a customized selection of services in order to meet their unique and specific needs. Therefore, any of the following services may be implemented within a district.

In-district Placement

Special education classrooms are embedded into the public school setting, led by Rivermont team members. This service is designed to add capacity, expertise, and wrap-around support within a district's own school setting.

In-district Consultation

Customized and targeted consultative services are provided, including assessment, strategic planning, in school and classroom supports. This service is designed to strengthen the quality of special education services in schools, provide added capacity and knowledge to staff, and contribute to small and large scale improvements across the district.

Professional Development

Tailored and ready-made professional development is offered both virtually or in person for staff and administration. Development options may be selected from a comprehensive selection of focus areas in order to target staff and district needs.