A Brief History

NCLB—School Improvement Grants (SIGs) for Lowest Performing Schools

In 2015, the U. S. Department of Education added a new model, Whole-School Reform, to the School Improvement Grants existing four models. To qualify as a Whole-School Reform model, a program had to meet six criteria. The Positive Action program met all of these criteria and was distinguished as one of four approved Whole-School Reform models in the nation.

ESSA—Comprehensive Support and Instruction, the New Title I Category for Lowest Performing Schools

In 2017, while Whole-School Reform was a welcome addition to the restrictive traditional four SIG models under NCLB, ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) has given states and districts/schools new freedom. Under ESSA, the former SIGs are now a new category under Title I—Comprehensive Support & Improvement. Presently, there is even more funding here for transforming these lowest performing schools than in SIGs.

The Whole-School Reform model designed for SIGs is also an excellent approach for Comprehensive Support and Instruction as well. Positive Action has implemented with good success, the Whole-School Reform model in numerous schools with School Improvement Grants and will do the same for Comprehensive Support and Instruction of Title I.

The SIG Whole-School Reform model is a five-year initiative with the option of using the first year for planning or for immediate implementation. Both approaches have worked well. The additional years provide for the model to become well entrenched into the whole-school system.

Whole-School Reform Evidence of Effectiveness, U.S. Department of Education

NCLB—School Improvement Grants Requirements for Whole-School Reform

1. Must be evidence-based by having at least one study (PA has three) that met the standards of the U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse: Positive Action met the requirements for outcomes in:
   • A core academic area with reading and language arts outcomes.
   • At least one “Other” area with behavior, social emotional learning (SEL), school climate, mental and physical health, and character outcomes.

2. Serve ALL Students

   Positive Action has a PreK–12 curriculum delivered universally to all students. The Counselor’s Kit targets students with more intensive needs (Tier 2 and beyond; RTI) and is an excellent incidents response tool.

3. Promote Leadership and School Climate

   The Positive Action Climate Development Kits extend and reinforce the positive actions taught in the classroom school wide as well as engaging parents and community members to transform the entire school community into a vibrant, healthy and safe place.

4. Engage Parents

   Positive Action includes a Family Kit that contains valuable lessons that share the same concepts taught at school. Classes are available for parents to learn how to use the lessons with their families through the Family Classes Kit and/or the Parenting Classes Kit.

5. Engage the Community

   The Positive Action Community Kit guides community members to do positive projects in support of the school at the community and sub-community level such as government, media, business, and social services.

6. Include a Sustainability Component

   Schools may sign up for subscriptions which replenish consumable materials for PreK–8 Instructor’s Kits and provides training at a lower rate.
Whole-School Reform was the only SIG model of the NCLB models that the U.S. Department of Education required be approved as evidence-based. For ESSA, being evidence-based is an equally important distinction for Comprehensive Support and Improvement. Schools can adapt The Positive Action Whole-School Reform Model to fit the school’s needs and goals for Comprehensive Support and Improvement and/or any other Title I programs.

The Model

WHY do you use Positive Action for Whole-School Reform?

The rational for whole school reform recognizes that to be effective in transforming a school, all the key players, educators and family and community members, must be present in a student’s education.

Positive Action provides an integrated, unified model for everyone that promotes a coherent, common sense approach with a shared vision. This powerful approach results in improved learning and greater success for all in the school’s whole ecosystem. Students thrive and grow to reach their potential.

Outcomes in all areas—academics, social and emotional, behavior and physical and mental health—improve as doing positive actions becomes a way of life.

With this model, implementation is easy because there are completely prepared tools for each part of the system: school, family and community. Effective, high quality training is available in on-site workshops or webinars.

WHAT is the Positive Action Model for Whole-School Reform?

The Positive Action Whole-School Reform model engages the whole ecosystem of a school: the classroom instruction, the school-wide climate development, the family, and the community.

A unifying philosophy coordinates the Positive Action system, which is that you feel good about yourself when you do positive actions and there is a positive way to do everything. A Circle depicts the philosophy by showing that positive thoughts lead to positive actions and positive actions lead to positive feelings about yourself, which in turn, lead back to positive thoughts.

The program teaches positive actions for the whole self: physical, intellectual, social and emotional.

Six units define these positive actions and run throughout all the tools in the Positive Action system:

Unit 1: Philosophy and Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle
Unit 2: Positive Actions for the Physical and Intellectual areas
Social and Emotional Positive Actions of:
Unit 3: Managing Yourself Responsibly
Unit 4: Getting Along with Others
Unit 5: Being Honest with Yourself and Others
Unit 6: Improving Yourself Continually

All the materials can stand alone or fit together seamlessly, as they are in Whole-School Reform, or in any other configuration. They will always be consistent and coherent. Positive Action tools are:

School
• A PreK-12 classroom kit for each teacher and 30 students
• Drug Education Supplement Kits, Bullying Prevention Supplement Kit, Conflict Resolution Supplement Kit
• A Counselor’s Kit for counselors, therapists, social workers, school psychologists and others
• School/Site-Wide Climate Development Kits (Elementary and Secondary) for leaders to involve everyone

Family
• Family Kit for families
• Family and Parenting Classes Kits to teach parents how to use the Family Kit

Community
• Community Kit for all community members and groups
WHEN do you use Positive Action for Whole-School Reform?

Using Positive Action for Whole-School Reform always makes sense. Learning is more effective if everyone in the school’s community work together harmoniously to benefit students.

However, because the need is so great, as is the case in the nation’s lowest performing schools, School Improvement Grants for Whole-School Reform given to states from the U.S. Department of Education for schools consisted of a five-year model that enabled schools to have enough time to really establish the Whole-School Reform approach.

Positive Action endorses the five-year model for Whole-School Reform to establish doing positive actions throughout the school community and reach new heights in cooperation for the benefit of students and everyone.

Other models, with a different number of years to establish implementation, work also. Whole-School Reform is an excellent option anytime.

WHERE do you use Positive Action for Whole-School Reform?

Schools use the Positive Action model for Whole-School Reform school-wide—in every classroom and all common areas—as well as in homes and the community. It works for any Title I program, including school-wide, targeted, after-school and RTI.

WHO uses Positive Action for Whole-School Reform?

The Positive Action Whole-School Reform model is an option for every education administrator striving to improve their school(s).

_A cost-benefit analysis shows that Positive Action is an excellent investment. An independent study performed by the Washington State Institute of Public Policy found that Positive Action returns $31.57 in benefits for every dollar spent._

HOW do you use Positive Action for Whole-School Reform?

Positive Action’s Whole-School Reform Model Implementation Plan

Positive Action has an effective plan with five goals and performance measures for implementing Positive Action. These goals cover all the key elements of project management to assure quality implementation and avoid common obstacles.

While each implementation goal is important, the essence of the model is contained in Goal 3, where the customized program for the school is created.

Implementation Goals:

Goal #1: To fulfill orders completely, undamaged and on time.

Goal #2: To account for school funds accurately.

Goal #3: To create a “Your Positive Action Program” plan for the upcoming school year.

Goal #4: To create an Evaluation Plan.

Goal #5: To create a Memorandum of Understanding between Positive Action and the school.
The Every Student Succeeds Act for the first time takes a significant step toward helping educators understand what works by defining “Evidence-Based.” ESSA-funded programs must show proof that they are effective. ESSA defines “Evidence-Based” in four tiers. Positive Action has studies that meet the requirements in all of the tiers but show here the two highest tiers.

**ESSA Levels of “Evidence-Based”**

1. **“Strong evidence,”** meaning supported by at least one randomized study (RCT);
   - 3 Studies: RCT: Chicago, RCT: Hawaii, RCT: Southeastern State

2. **“Moderate evidence,”** meaning supported by at least one quasi-experimental study;
   - 3 Studies: Quasi: Long-term, Quasi: Nevada, Hawaii

**What Works Clearinghouse**

The U.S. Department of Education listed Positive Action on What Works Clearinghouse in 2006 (revised 2007) as the top-rated program in the nation for improving academics and behavior.

- Approved Program: 1 study
  - Academic Achievement: +14 percentile points
  - Behavior: +19 percentile points

**Evidence for ESSA**

- Strong ESSA Rating—Math
- Strong ESSA Rating—Reading
- 1 of 2 programs to receive “Strong” ratings in both math and reading for elementary levels; the only non-assessment-based program to receive such ratings

Contact a Positive Action consultant now and let us help you find out how it would work for your schools.

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