

# Positive Action Pilot

## Interim Report as of March 31, 2015 Report

### OVERVIEW

During the transition from middle school to high school, adolescents frequently establish patterns of behavior and make lifestyle choices that affect both their current and future wellbeing including their mental health. This is especially true for children and youth in stressed families or in underserved populations. Evidence supports the idea that a prevention or early intervention approach that targets individuals during their adolescent years is an appropriate and effective response, with both short-term and life span benefits.

### PILOT SETUP

During the first year, the Positive Action program was piloted in one classroom at Sequoia Middle School and in the Redding Community Day School classroom. For the second year of the pilot, which is still currently ongoing, the program was expanded to include two additional Sequoia classrooms, five classrooms in Fall River Mills, six classrooms in Burney, and one classroom in Montgomery Creek, for a total of 16 classrooms receiving Positive Action curriculum in Shasta County. Geographically, the pilot is taking place in two areas: Redding and the Eastern County.

The evaluation of this pilot project continues to be focused on the effects it has on attendance, disciplinary actions, and student behavior and attitudes. The five specific evaluation questions to be addressed, as listed in the contracts, are as follow:

- Are the students having more academic and social success?
- Are the students increasing their coping skills and psychosocial development?
- Are families being supported in ways that help them cope with their at-risk children?
- Is there a reduction in high risk behaviors such as substance use, violence and sexual activity?
- As a result of this program, are students being identified and referred to other needed services in the community?

Data is being collected on a variety of measures from multiple sources, and after the completion of the second full school year, will be broken down into the following six main categories: student attendance, student surveys, student classroom behavior, family surveys, implementation data and program satisfaction surveys.

The evaluation was originally to be performed on those students who receive a minimum of 20 Positive Action lessons. It was discovered in the beginning of the second year of the pilot phase that there was an issue regarding how the schools have been reporting student attendance as it relates to program dosage and the program evaluation: if a student was absent for any portion of the day, they were reported as being absent for the entire day.

Positive Action curriculum is designed as a dosage-response program. The more Positive Action lessons a student receives is directly related to positive program outcomes. In order to evaluate the program and attribute behavioral variations with any certainty, the lesson dosage must be tracked

appropriately. Moving forward for the second year of the pilot and beginning in December 2014, attendance will be tracked by the lesson in order to appropriately measure program dosage. Since the first one-third of the school year did not have individual Positive Action lessons tracked, only two-thirds of the original number of lessons will be required for inclusion. Based on this, **only students who have participated in a Positive Action classroom for at least 13 lessons (20 x .67) will be included in the outcome measures. Additionally, because a baseline is needed to measure whether or not there has been any improvement, any students for whom prior attendance, tardiness or disciplinary action information is not available will be excluded from this second year pilot project evaluation.**

Because of the significant number of students both entering and leaving the classrooms throughout the year, determining outcomes based on calendar quarters is not feasible. Therefore, outcomes will be grouped by those students who have completed at least 45 school days (1 quarter) in the Positive Action program classroom, at least 90 school days (2 quarters), at least 135 school days (3 quarters), and 180 school days (a full school year). The number of students evaluated in each of these groups (N) will most likely become progressively smaller (as was seen during year one), due to student movement in and out of the program classrooms.

## YEAR TWO IMPLEMENTATION DATA TO DATE

Based on implementation requirements from the Positive Action program, and the data provided from the vendors, it appears that there continues to be some issues with the program being implemented as prescribed.

Positive Action “Best Practices” documentation states that lessons should be taught first thing in the morning, and the concepts reinforced throughout the day. As reported in the Unit Implementation Reports from the teachers for year two of the pilot, this is not when the majority of Positive Action lessons are being provided in classrooms.

Positive Action, as mentioned above, is a dosage-response program. Implementing this program in both regular classrooms and with classrooms designed to serve students already experiencing behavioral issues, it is apparent that the behavioral issue classrooms see much more student movement into and out of them. This means the already acting-out students’ exposure to the Positive Action curriculum is not consistent and may in fact not be adequate in volume for some students to have significant effect on this population.

Research on Positive Action found the most impact occurred when the program has been implemented from elementary school upward, providing the students with a Positive Action foundation. During this second year of the pilot, teachers and the two Positive Action Coordinators have commented that additional time is needed for Positive Action lessons, due to the students being completely unfamiliar with the concepts and vocabulary employed by the Positive Action program. They have expressed the desire that this curriculum be utilized in the primary grades also, so the foundational concepts and background can be established sooner. In the Mountain areas it has been suggested that it would be helpful to have Positive Action implemented as a class itself.

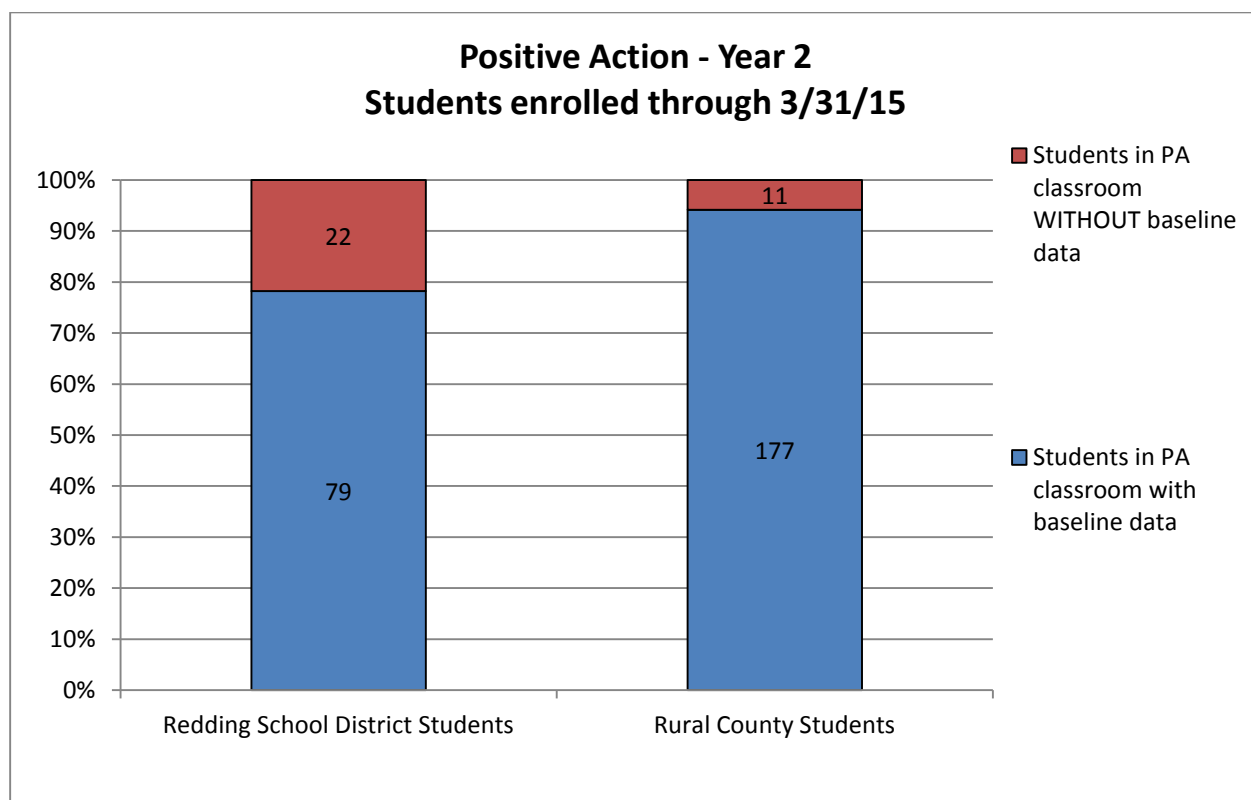
The additional classrooms in Fall River, Burney and Montgomery Creek have experienced the same challenges as the Redding School District in engaging parents in the program, but have continued to

involve parents and the student body in the implementation of Positive Action. Some parents have requested that activities for the entire family be implemented, so if this program were to continue, the goal should be to implement the Family Kit more completely.

## YEAR TWO OUTCOMES TO DATE

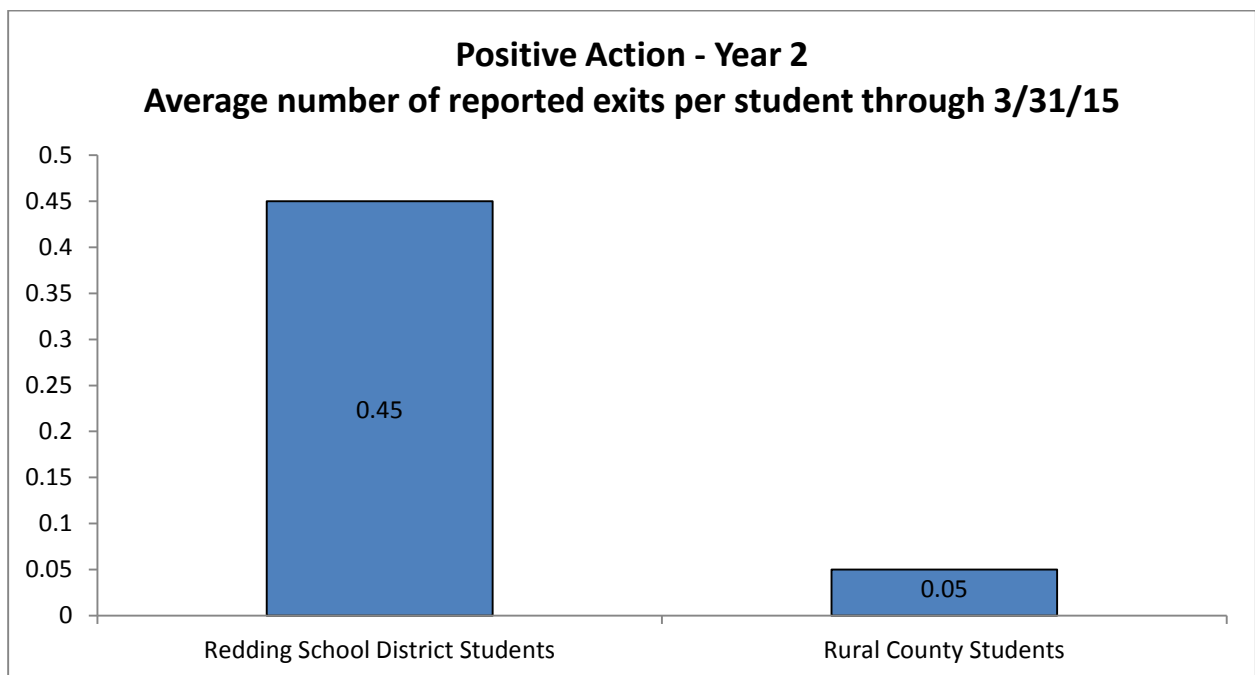
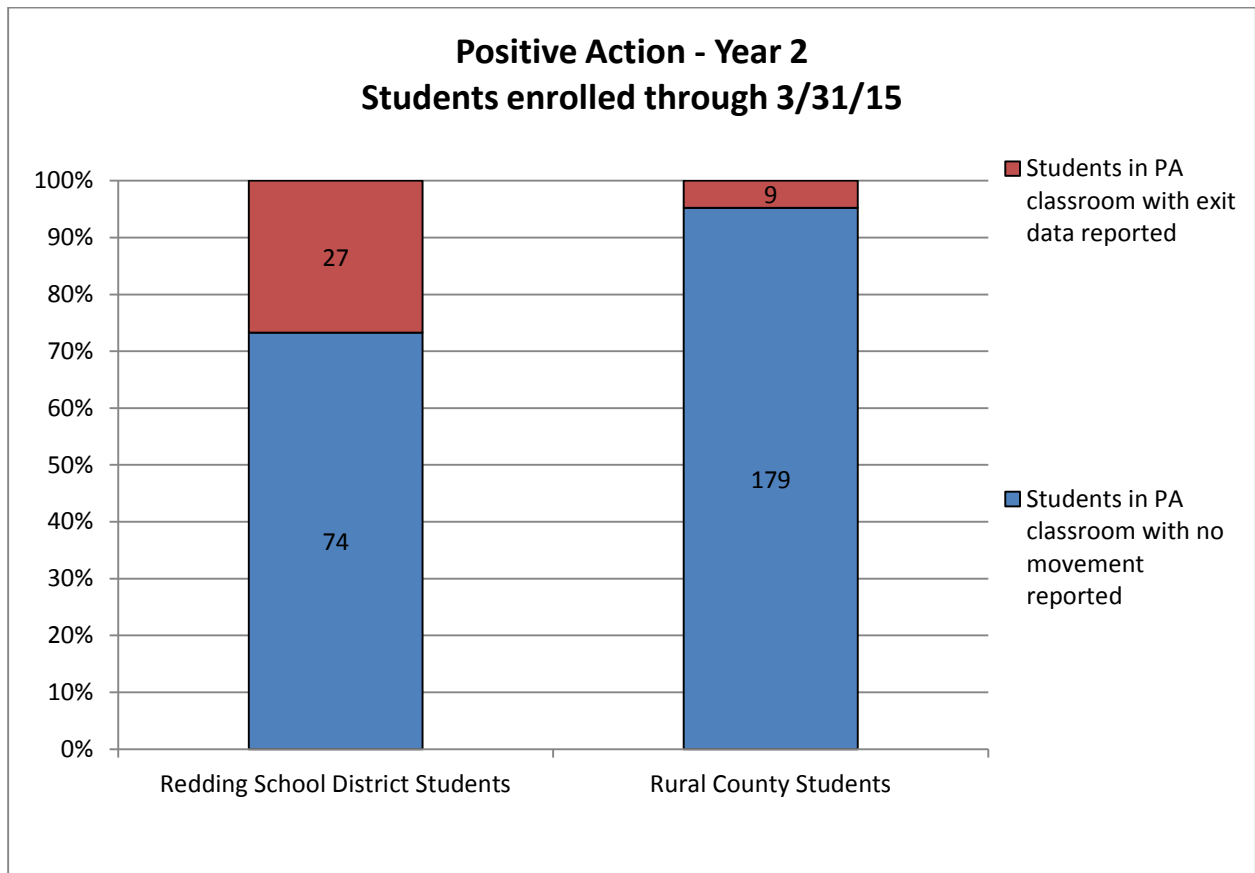
Because of the dosage requirements explained above in the “Pilot Setup” section, it is impossible to provide any outcomes until after the end of the current school year, when all the data compilation can be completed. However, a cursory overview of the raw data does not appear to reveal any significant trend differences from the results gathered in year one of this pilot. The main difference will be in the fact that with more records to review, some of the findings may have more statistical significance than was seen with the smaller sample size in year one of the pilot.

In year 2 of the Positive Action pilot program, from the beginning of the school year until 3/31/15, there have been a total of 101 unique students assigned to a Positive Action classroom in the Redding area (Sequoia or Redding Community Day School) and 188 unique students assigned to a Positive Action classroom in the outlying rural areas of Shasta County (Burney, Fall River and Montgomery Creek). Until the data from the full school year is available, it is impossible to determine which of these students will have received adequate dosage to include them in the outcome evaluation. However, of the 101 unique students in Redding, 22 of them (22%) have no baseline data for absences, tardies and/or behavioral referrals, so they will definitely be excluded from evaluation. Of the 188 unique students in the rural county classrooms, 11 of them (6%) have no baseline data and will be excluded from evaluation.

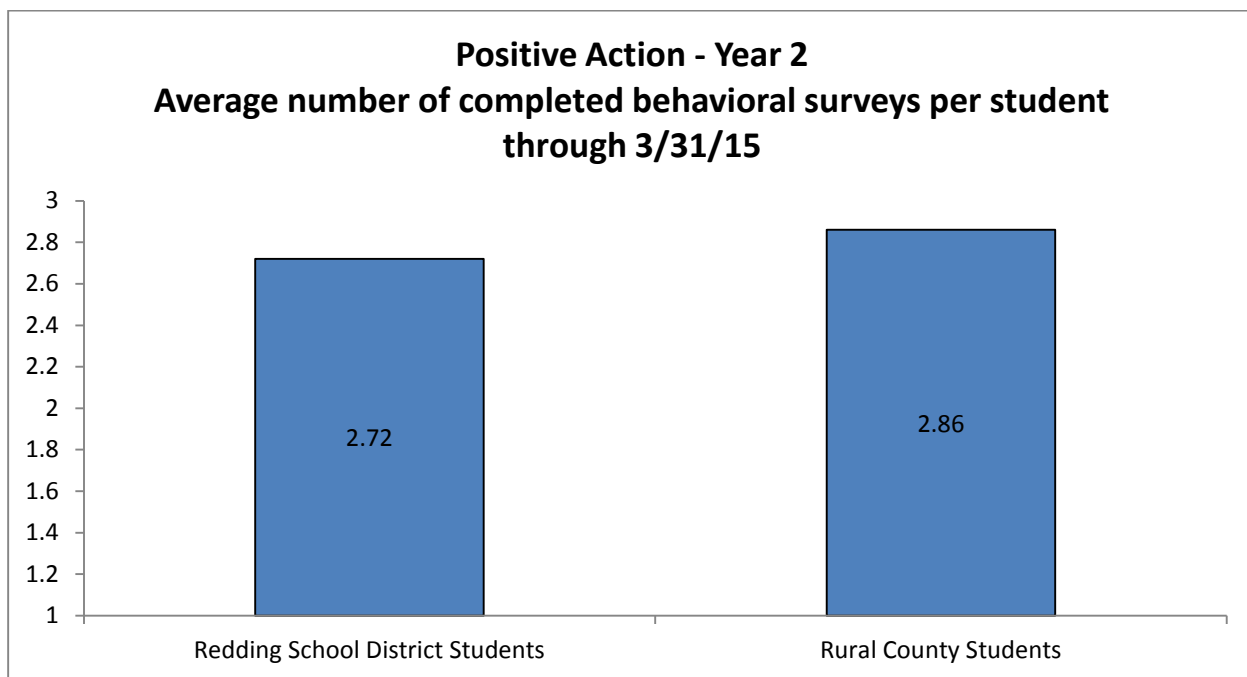


Through 3/31/15, of the 101 students in the Redding classrooms, there have been 45 separate exits reported for 27 unique students (27%). Several students moved in and out three separate times. Of the

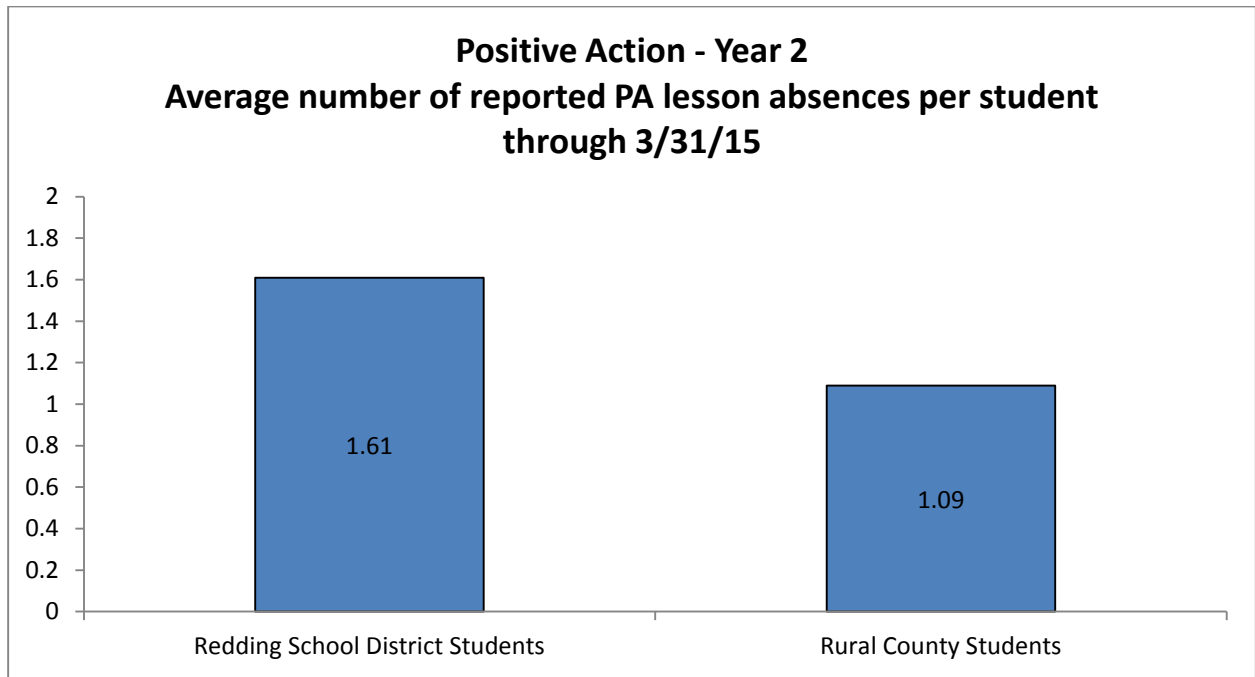
188 students in the rural county classrooms, there have been 9 exits reported for 9 unique students (5%).



Through 3/31/15, in the Redding classrooms the teachers have completed a total of 277 behavioral surveys on 102 unique students. In the rural classrooms, teachers have completed a total of 530 surveys on 185 unique students. As you can see, the number of unique students served provided by the teachers does not exactly match the data from student surveys or from the coordinators as far as unique students served. This may be due to students entering and subsequently exiting classrooms before any behavioral surveys are due, or may be caused by data entry errors with the student identification number. These issues will be researched and addressed once all program dosage information is available, after the end of the school year.



As mentioned previously, in order to accurately determine dosage, teachers were asked to start tracking and turning in individual PA lesson attendance sheets in December. From 12/1/14 through 3/18/15 (the most recent data provided to the county by the schools), there have been Positive Action attendance records submitted for 94 unique students in the Redding classrooms and 186 unique students in the rural county classrooms. These records represent 86 Positive Action teaching sessions in the Redding classrooms and 109 Positive Action teaching sessions in the rural county classrooms. There were 151 absences reported for individual students in the four Redding classrooms during their PA sessions (an average of 1.61 per student), and 203 absences reported for individual students in the twelve rural county classrooms during their PA sessions (an average of 1.09 per student). In both the Redding classrooms and the rural county classrooms, 79% of the students have an attendance of 90% or better for Positive Action lessons.



An additional data concern is the timeliness of reports from the schools. As of 3/31/15, none of the schools has provided all required information by the contractual due dates. There is a vast amount of data being requested from the school, but this timeliness issue hampers mid-program evaluation