

Conference for School Leaders on Behavior

The Midwest Symposium Planning Committee has from time-to-time held retreats, “think tank”-like meetings where the committee could brainstorm topics, speakers, and research pertinent to its mission, and consider possible new MSLBD “initiatives.”

During a 2004 think-tank, one of the topics discussed was a desire to have a stronger impact on building- and district-level school leadership which would allow school leaders to better understand research-based practices to support the needs of students with behavioral issues, address discipline policies and practices, and support positive behavior support in schools. As district level policy leaders and implementors, their leadership on behavioral issues was considered essential.

While some administrators have regularly attended the Symposium, the primary audience has been direct service educators of students with emotional or behavioral needs. Moreover, when those educators were attending the Symposium, reliance on building leaders was increased making it difficult for leaders to attend the Symposium.

As described in the original proposal, a conference for school leaders would permit MSLBD to groom a new



audience and not detract from our existing audience for the Symposium. The intended audience would be special education directors, principals, assistant principals, team leaders, department chairs, psychologists, and others in administrative or consultative roles who provide leadership and policy support to behavior-related school programs.



The first Conference for Administrators on Behavior Issues was held in October 2006 at the University of Kansas – Edwards Campus. After five years, the name was adjusted slightly to the Conference for School Leaders on Behavior Issues to more clearly describe the potential attendees.

Over the 12 years that the conference was offered, attendance ranged from 100-120 participants. A wide variety of topics were addressed, many of them identified as “what every administrator needs to know about ___.” Topics included bullying prevention and intervention, behavior intervention plans, autism and Asperger Syndrome, student medications, culturally

Keynote Presenters

John Maag
Richard Simpson
Kay Cessna
Steve Forness
Tim Lewis
Kris Melloy
Michael Epstein
Kathy Kea
Susan Etscheidt
Dorothy Espelage
Brenda Smith Myles
Randy Sprick
Kathleen Lynn Lane
Jeffry Sprague
Rick Van Acker
Jerry Weast
Vern Jones
David Bateman
George Sugai
Kaye Otten
Jason Travers
Mike George



responsive schools, systematic screening for behavior, and many more. Participants rated the conference as valuable, and overall, the conferences were judged to be quite successful. Participants often mentioned that the small, intimate atmosphere promoted discussion and interaction.

In 2012 MSLBD initiated the Outstanding Building Leadership Award to be given during the Conference. To date, six of these awards have been given to deserving building leaders (See <https://mslbd.org/what-we-do/awards/list-of-past-mslbd-award-recipients.html>).



With the development of other conferences and resources, such as the conference of the Association for Positive Behavior Support, school leaders have had more options to access these kinds of content.



In 2016 and 2017, attendance waned and the MSLBD Planning Committee decided to discontinue the School Leaders conference and serve another pressing need...a conference focusing on autism. The last Conference for School Leaders on Behavior was held in October 2017. The first Simpson Autism Conference was held in October 2018.

