

# Outcomes and Performance Measures for Autism Train the Trainer Program

(FY2019 Appropriation Act - Public Act 207 of 2018)

**September 1, 2019**

**Sec. 1917.** (1) *From the funds appropriated in part 1 for autism train the trainer grant, the department shall appropriate \$55,000.00 to implement a pilot project to train school employees on the principles and practices of applied behavior analysis and research-based intervention strategies. The pilot project must do both of the following:*

(a) *Train paraprofessionals and teachers in a school district with a headquarters located in a city with a population between 6,900 and 7,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census in applied behavior analysis skills that match the national standard for behavior technician-level work and research-based intervention strategies.*

(b) *Train teacher consultants, school social workers, school psychologists, and other school personnel responsible for conducting functional behavioral assessments and the development of behavior support plans in a school district with a headquarters located in a city with a population between 6,900 and 7,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census methods for assuring implementation of a behavior plan with fidelity and strategies for sharing understanding of evidence-based behavioral health approaches with other school-based personnel.*

(2) *Outcomes and performance measures for the pilot project funded under this section shall include, but not be limited to, the following:*

(a) *A decrease in the number of center-program and self-contained-classroom referrals.*

(b) *A decrease in the number of suspensions, removals, and expulsions.*

(c) *A decrease in paraprofessional absences.*

(d) *An increase in teacher retention.*

(e) *An increase in safety.*

**(3) By September 1 of the current fiscal year, the department shall report to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, the senate and house fiscal agencies, the senate and house policy offices, and the state budget office on the information required in subsection (2).**

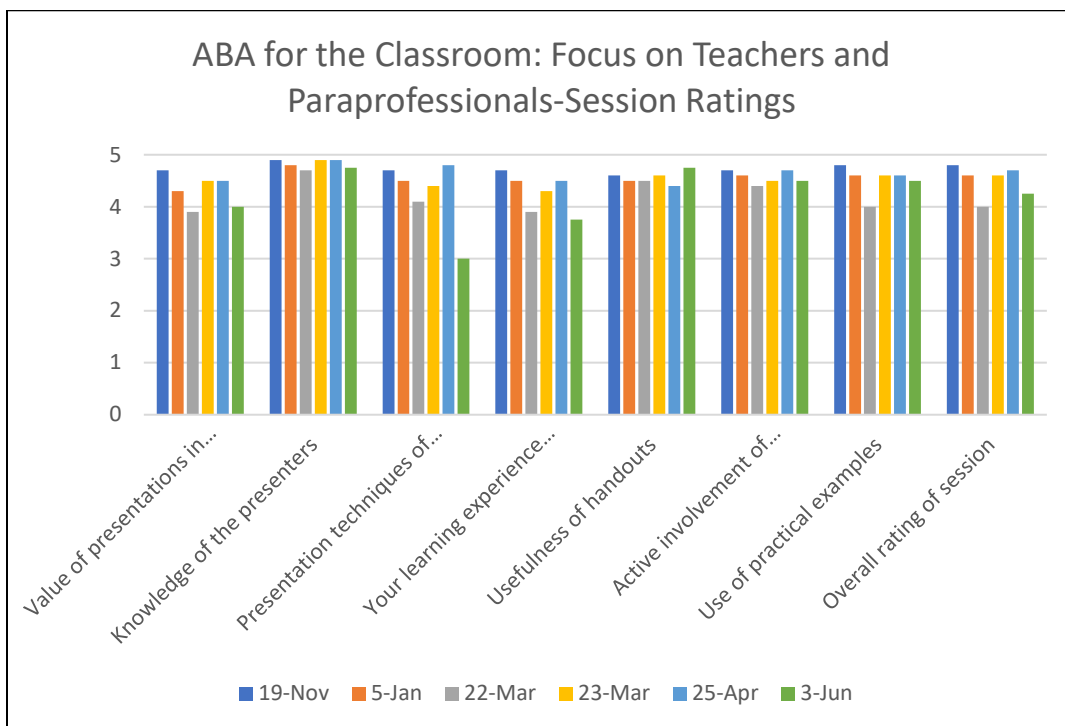


**Summary:**

As required under Section 1917 of Public Act 207 of 2018, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) contracted with the Autism Centers of Michigan and Walled Lake Consolidated School District for the Autism Train the Trainer Grant Funding. The Pilot Project was completed to full fidelity of the funding and the outcomes of the Project are included in this report.

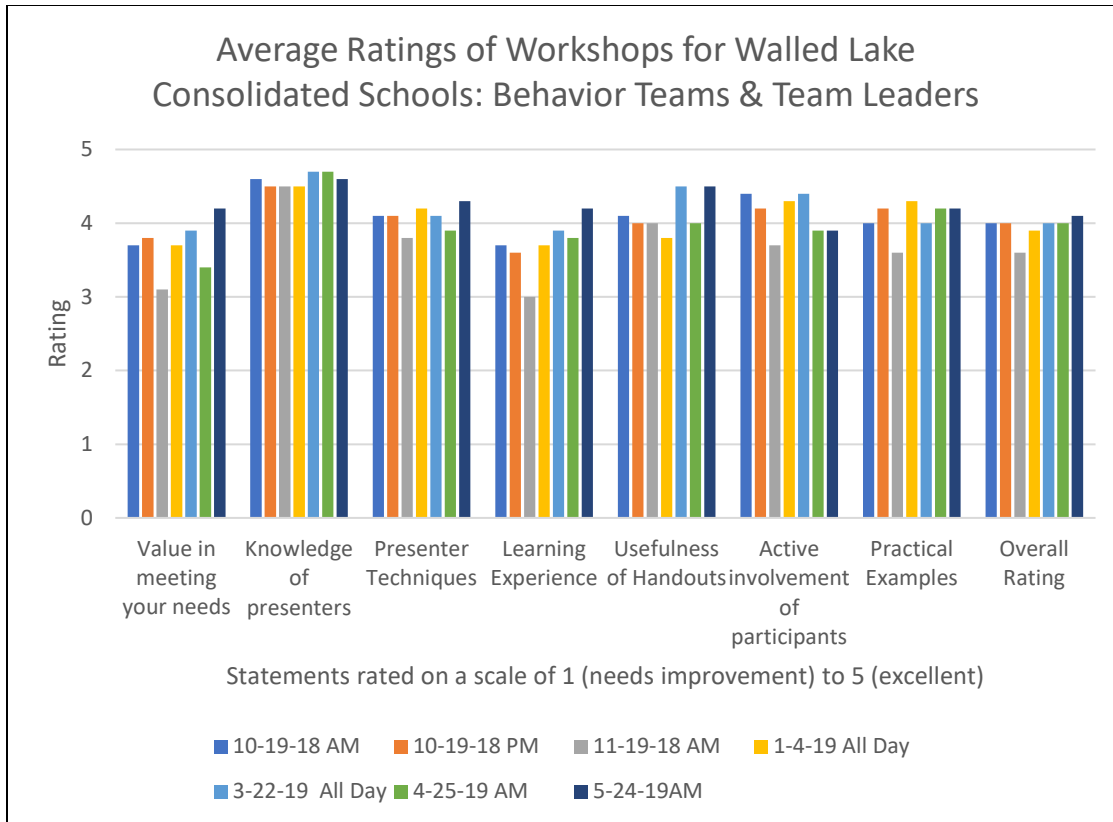
**Train paraprofessionals and teachers in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) skills:**

This Pilot Project provided 30 hours of in-person ABA training and 10 hours of Autism Internet Modules in alignment with the Behavior Analyst Certification Board’s task list for Registered Behavior Technicians to teachers and paraprofessionals. The in-person training was provided by two Board Certified Behavior Analysts from October 2018 through April 2019. The training evaluation reports were very favorable from the teachers and paraprofessionals and the results are listed below.



**Train teacher consultants, school social workers, school psychologists, and other school personnel responsible for conducting functional behavioral assessments and the development of behavior support plans:**

This Pilot Project provided 30 hours of in-person trainings on conducting functional behavioral assessments and the development of behavior support plan. Teacher consultants, school psychologists, school social workers, speech-language pathologist attending the trainings which were provided from October 2018 through May 2019. These trainings were provided by six Board Certified Behavior Analysts. The training evaluation reports were very favorable from the school staff and the results are listed below.



**Reported Outcomes:**

Out of District Placements/Least Restrictive Environment

- During the 2017– 2018 school year, 9 students were placed in center programs outside of the school district
- \$35,000 - \$80,000 per placement resulting in \$500,000 increase in cost
- During the 2018– 2019 school year, 1 student was placed in a center program
- Additionally, during the year, 3 students were returned to the district from centers
- Staff skills can be contributing to the substantially lower number of referrals out combined with the successful return of students to their home district special education programs.
- \$100,000 cost savings

Reduction in Student Referrals to More Restrictive In-District Placements:

- 2017– 2018 school year, added 7 to self-contained classrooms district-wide
- 2018– 2019 school year, added 1 to self-contained classrooms district-wide

Staff Retention/Added Skills Increased Attendance

- 50% reduction in absenteeism for Paraprofessional staff in participating classrooms
- 2017– 2018 school year, 327 absences
- 2018– 2019 school year, 162 absences
- Absenteeism cut in half. Not unusual for a paraprofessional to be engaged in a crisis and take the following day off or take the ‘mental health day’ in response to stress.
- 162 days the district did not need substitutes = cost savings of approximately \$12,000
- Increased time in class = increased meaningful instructional opportunities for students

### Staff Retention/Professional Staff Satisfaction

- Summer 2018, hired 23 professional staff
- Summer 2019, need to hire 5 professional staff
- 78% reduction in professional staff turnover

### Removals from School (Detentions/Suspension)

- In looking at discipline overall, the district experienced a 40% reduction at the Middle School level and a 10% reduction at the High School level from 2017-18 to 2018-19.

### Use of Positive Statements in Classroom

- Acknowledging appropriate behavior is a free tool, immediately accessible, minimal training involved and prevents problem behaviors by providing social attention to appropriate behaviors. Behavior specific praise, nonverbal signals of approval, and smiles are examples that, when applied at a minimum of 4:1, will go a long way toward increasing compliance, cooperation and student engagement in the curriculum. The goal is for the classroom staff to have 4 positive interactions with students for every correction or redirection interaction. The staff are then perceived by students as sources of predictable positive reinforcement as staff notice and comment on appropriate behaviors. As a result, those behaviors increase.
- In September 2018, 12 classrooms were observed by the trainers.
  - Pre-training: 2:1 positive to negative statements, on average
  - In some classrooms, the ratio was skewed to more negative comments than positive comments
- In June 2019, 8 classrooms were observed by the trainers allowing a pre/post comparison
  - Post-training: 4:1 positive to negative statements, on average
  - 7 of the 8 classes demonstrated increases in ratios of positive statements to negative statements ratio
  - Two of the eight classrooms observed did not meet the 4:1 goal
  - One classroom pre-training status had more negative than positive comments and the post-training status was 7 positive statements for every correction or redirection. In another classroom, the staff were performing at a high ratio of 11 positives to 1 negative and then improved on that performance to the even higher ratio of 14:1.

### Technical Adequacy of Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Support Plans

- Using the Technical Adequacy Evaluation Tool with a scoring rubric (Lovannone, Kincaid, & Christiansen, 2015), Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Support Plans (BSP) were assessed by the Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). The FBA is scored 0, 1, or 2 on nine elements for a maximum of 18 points. The BSP is similarly scored 0, 1, or 2 on nine components yielding a maximum of 18 points.
  - Pre-training FBA average: 7.3
  - Pre-training BSP Average: 4.6
  - Post-training evaluation of technical adequacy will be reported in September 2019.

### Beyond the Numbers, Staff Testimonials

Teacher: "This year we have been learning together, working and problem solving for our students. This was actual professional development. A first for me in my 16 years of teaching to learn at the same time as my paras versus me having to find time with students in the room to train them on behavior plans, academics, best practice, the list goes on and on. This is essential for student growth and progress. Also

essential for us to change our model and actually provide time to work together without students in the room.”

Paraprofessional: “I want to share a student success story. This young man was a new student in the adult transition program this year and he had a hard time adjusting to his new environment. He had negative attention seeking behaviors. We were able to discuss as a group, during the training, different strategies to take back and try out when the negative behaviors were in action. Each one that we tried was very successful! We have seen him grow as a student in a short amount of time. He has learned to make friends in a positive way instead of initiating interaction in a dangerous way! This was also a student that would elope and just leave the building. He has not left the building since implementing the new positive strategies which lends itself to a higher level of student safety. I cannot say enough about how awesome and effective the ABA training has been for the transition program! We feel so honored to have been a part of this training. We are better educators because of it!”

#### Sustaining the Skills, Increasing Capacity, and Continuing the Benefits

- Walled Lake Consolidated School District:
  - Partner/contract with a BCBA for proactive planning with staff
  - Create new paraprofessional positions, using trained paraprofessionals to support data collection and modeling of ABA strategies
  - 8, half-day paraprofessional trainings will be offered annually to sustain and increase learned skills
  - Conscious positive partnership with outside agency BCBA's
- Autism Centers of Michigan:
  - Complete post-training review of FBA-BSP
  - Design start-up checklist for interested districts to successfully plan for applying behavior analysis in the classroom training (e.g., identify outcomes, secure awareness and permissions from administration regarding scope and purpose of training, plan for sustaining and growing skills, participant agreement to commit to training, and other elements)
  - Explore implementation in other interested districts
  - Expand cadre of trainers
  - Create participant manual with accompanying trainer guide

#### Permanent Products

- Access to completed products including the module PowerPoints, participant manual, and glossary plus training materials.