



# apple bytes

*a monthly news update from the  
Georgia Appleseed Center for Law & Justice*

February 2014

## **A Theory of Change: School Climate Improves Student Behavior & Reduces Juvenile Court Involvement**

Actually, this is not just a theory. There's a lot of research that substantiates it, plus many examples right here in Georgia that bear out the powerful impact of school climate change.

What is school climate? It's how students, parents and school personnel experience school life; it reflects imparted goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching practices, organizational structure and more. Students in schools with positive school climate have better behavioral outcomes, leading to higher academic achievement and less involvement in the juvenile court.



Here in Georgia, the GA Department of Education has adopted a framework of practices to help public schools & communities proactively address climate change, based on the needs of their students. It's called **PBIS, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support**, and it does just that. It's designed to help reinforce appropriate behavior in each sphere of the school environment - and beyond. It is a school-wide approach that recognizes appropriate behavior is often a skill to be learned, just as reading and writing, and requires its own effective strategies for success.

To Georgia Appleseed, PBIS is an important tool for effecting systemic change and a natural fit to the community level engagement we know is necessary to dismantle the school to prison

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**GOOD APPLE AWARDS**  
**Thursday, April 24**  
recognizing efforts to help  
dismantle the school-to-prison  
pipeline in Georgia

### **Law Firm**

**Pope McGlamry Kilpatrick  
Morrison & Norwood LLP**  
(Leadership in opening of GA Appleseed  
Columbus Office)

### **Volunteers**

**Viral Dave & Josh Williams**  
(Creation of Toolkit  
searchable online database)

### **Statewide Partners**

**Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.  
Georgia District Association**  
(Creating opportunities for  
GA Appleseed presentations in  
communities across Georgia)

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pipeline. Our study, **Effective Student Discipline: Keeping Kids in Class**, reveals the high out-of-school suspension rates that too often feed that pipeline to the juvenile justice system.

In fact, 'School Climate' is recognized as such a game changer that it is included in the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education annual list of top ten issues to watch in 2014.

Over the next year, thanks to new grant funding, Georgia Appleseed will work with leaders in the **Bibb County Schools (Macon)** and the **Muscookee County Schools (Columbus)**, testing PBIS in action at select schools and monitoring outcomes.

Keeping kids in class and on the path to success is a forecast all will welcome.

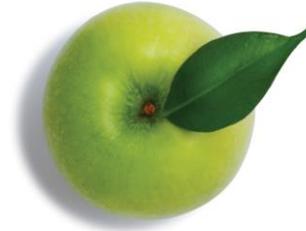
**Learn more**

[Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, Top Ten Issues to Watch in 2014 \(10th edition\): Issue 5: School Climate - It matters, a lot.](#)

[Positive Behavior Supports, Georgia Department of Education.](#)

**The climate is sunny on Georgia Appleseed's [Facebook](#) page. Like us today!**

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**Thursday, April 24, 2014  
6:30 P.M.**

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(Adjacent to Atlantic Station)  
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Awards Program**  
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