

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Pearl B. Larsen School Students Sing And Act To Promote Positive Behaviors

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Education's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) 2017-18 Initiative was rolled-out successfully in a musical setting at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School on Thursday, January 25 in the school's auditorium, D.O.E. announced today.

Larsen School PBIS Team Leader Avril Maillard, outlining the four year-old initiative at the school told the students, "The behavior expectations that we are teaching you are not just for when you are at school, but wherever you are, like at home, shopping, at the movies or participating in sporting events." Later students at each grade level staged the problematic behaviors that are not accepted at various points on the school's campus

and bus stations, before acting out the proper behaviors.

At the prelude and at interludes, Music Teacher Monica Casey energetically engaged the students in musical renditions as they enthusiastically belted out in unison the lyrics to, "We are One Nation," "Super Hero" and "Do the Good You Know," songs that reinforce their commitment to be respectful always.

"Our aim is to improve students' overall behavior on the school campus and on the school bus. The school-wide PBIS initiative seeks to establish behavioral supports to achieve social, emotional and academic success," Maillard said. "Every school designs their own plan based on the culture and needs of their school. But for us to swim to success, the Pearl B. Dolphins have incorporated the 3 R's on campus -- respect yourself, respect others and respect your environment.

As an incentive to encourage positive behavior, the Larsen School PBIS initiative has put into effect a reward system. Each student can earn one (1) point daily for following the expectations and instructions, at specific points around campus. But if a student one day is deemed not to follow the expectations when they are in the classroom, cafeteria, computer lab, auditorium, etc., he or she will not receive a point for that day. An adult then will then write an "incident ticket" to that student classroom teacher.

"Consequences will be realized for negative behavior in the form of an incident ticket or an infraction referral. Incident tickets will be written by an adult staff on campus," Maillard said. "The first (1st) is a warning, second (2nd) is a parent contact, third (3rd) is work detail, fourth (4th) is a parent conference and the fifth (5th) incident ticket will lead to a one (1) day suspension."

On the contrast, Cool Dolphin tickets will also be written by staff members who observe a student doing something extraordinary or assisting an adult with a task. When Cool tickets amassed over 10 points for any student he or she will exchange points for school supplies at a reward store that opens on February 26, 2018.

According to Maillard there has not been any rampant behavioral incidences for Pearl B. Larsen School students. Principal Joan Claxton said that students have been taught how to be respectful to themselves, others and their surroundings, and that they have been reinforcing the good behavior they had already learned. The PBIS Initiative has been in effect at Pearl B. Larsen since School Year 2013-14.

All elementary schools in the district adopted a matrix to follow when rolling out the PBIS message on good behavior. According to PBIS Coach Yolande Greene who coordinates the V.I. Department of Education program in the St. Croix District, "PBIS is a program for preventing, reducing and replacing problem behaviors by employing a three-tiered framework."

Greene is pleased with the Cool Dolphin Reward System at Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School. "Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding," the PBIS Coach said. "The purpose of school-wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm."

PBIS is established by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education to emphasize "school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments." [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) . The Virgin Islands Department of Education's State Office of Special Education implements PBIS policies for the school districts.

*Feature Image: Music Teacher Monica Casey engages students at Pearl B's PBIS Rollout. (Credit: D.O.E.)*

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