

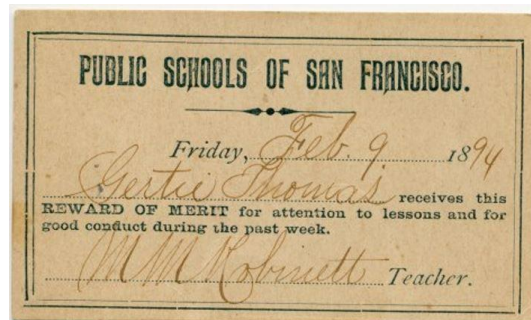


The Undeniable Truth of Positive Behavior through a Reward Program!

Is a reward program an effective way to change bad behavior to good behavior in an academic setting? Let's look into the research behind this trend and discuss various reward programs currently being used.

History

Rewards in the classroom as a way to structure your behavior management policy is not a novel approach. As far back as the 1800's teachers began to give out **certificates** called "Rewards of Merit". This proved to be a more effective way to curb the bad behavior of their "unruly charges" rather than the dunce cap.



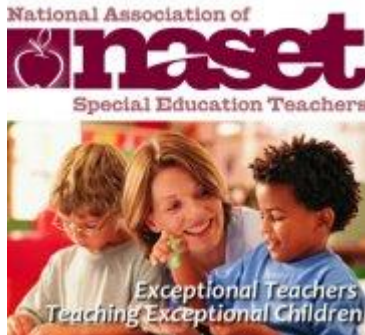
<http://americanhistory.si.edu>

Since the introduction of "Rewards of Merit" certificates into the classroom, behavior has been monitored and manipulated by all sorts of incentive techniques. Some the more popular incentives include:

1. Play money
2. Tokens

3. Stickers
4. Colored cards
5. Popsicle Sticks
6. Check list

Research



According to The National Association of Special Education Teachers or NASSET, www.naset.org their research into the effectiveness of a **token economy** to increase appropriate behavior was very promising.

Here is a graph of one of their findings. Using only three targeted behaviors, the graph shows a decrease in these behaviors through a reward system.

Table 1
Total Target Behaviors Displayed Per Week

	Out of Seat	Off Task	Talking
26-Jan	4	8	10
1-Feb	4	7	10
9-Feb	3	6	10
17-Feb	2	3	8
24-Feb	2	3	8
6-Mar	2	3	7
14-Mar	1	2	7
22-Mar	1	2	7
29-Mar	1	2	5
4-Apr	0	1	5
18-Apr	0	1	5
25-Apr	0	1	3



An article written on theconversation.com titled: **The Power of Rewards and Why We Seek Them Out**, provides interesting insight into the do's and don'ts of rewards. They state that there are two types of rewards:

- a. **Consistent reinforcement** – a good way to train a new behavior
- b. **Intermittent reinforcement**- strongest way to maintain a behavior

This article also points out that when people make the argument that rewards for children only make them curb their behavior for extrinsic reasons and not intrinsic motivation, we should look at, as a society, the fact that rewards are all around us and they are a very important part of our lives.

1. Shopping reward points
2. Social media “clicks” and “likes”
3. Online gaming
4. Pay Check
5. School grades and report cards



PBIS or Positive Behavior Intervention + Support is a trend in its self. It is becoming the face of classroom and school-wide behavior support and management. More than 25,000 schools are implementing this program schoolwide.

Based on a tier framework, it provides a point system with positive rewards to reduce student discipline. Many schools adapt a paper ticket system in order to comply with the point system. These tickets are then turned in for various types of rewards or incentives.



Reward	Category
"Family Night Bag" ⓘ	K - 12 th Free Privilege 🏆🏆
"Specials" teacher's assistant ⓘ	3 rd - 12 th Free Privilege 🏆🏆
\$5 fast food gift card ⓘ	K - 12 th \$5 or more Tangible 🏆🏆
2nd chance ⓘ	3 rd - 12 th Free Privilege 🏆🏆
5-minute stand up ⓘ	3 rd - 12 th Free Recognition 🏆🏆
Admission to a dance ⓘ	6 th - 12 th Inexpensive Privilege 🏆🏆🏆
Admission to a game of Student VS. Teacher ⓘ	3 rd - 12 th Free Privilege 🏆🏆🏆
Admission to a holiday party ⓘ	K - 12 th Inexpensive Privilege 🏆🏆

According to PBIS’s own research, the implementation of this program has its problems. The excitement and implementation does not sustain past the first year. Schools tend to lose momentum to the point of abandoning the program in about 58% of the cases.

The framework for this program to run effectively,

- takes time
- needs buy in and collaboration from staff and students
- needs consistent and constant data collecting

PBIS is a great framework for behavior modification, but it's just that: **A framework**. Each school has to modify it to work for them and that is where the breakdown comes.

1. Not enough communication between teachers and administration to discuss what is working
2. No time to rework what isn't working
3. The tier framework becomes a one size fits all

4 Paper Reward Programs Still Being Used Today



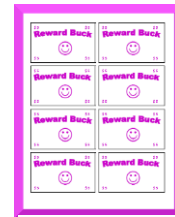
Star Chart



Red, Yellow, Green Cards



Red Light Green Light



School Bucks

These programs have been around for years. They come in various shapes and sizes. Depending on the creativity of the teacher, these programs can be very eye appealing.

But are they effective and efficient?

- **Pros:**
 1. Colorful
 2. Visual for all
- **Cons:**
 1. Made of paper (**not eco-friendly**)
 2. Visual for all (**privacy issues**)
 3. Time consuming (**printing paper, recording stars, switching cards**)
 4. Degrading/shaming aspect
 5. School bucks get lost or destroyed
 6. Manual accountability/data collecting (if any)
 7. 2 out of 4 cannot be reused

Technology-based Reward Programs are slowly coming into play. Teachers are discovering new resources to try and bring 21st century learning into their behavior program.

But are these programs any better?

- **Pros:**
 1. Can eliminate some paper tokens
 2. Use of technology
 3. Data collection and accountability is stored
 4. Many are free for teachers or with limited access
 5. More private
- **Cons:**
 1. Some school divisions require approval
 2. Need access to technology on a regular basis
 3. No tactile or tangible product

The Bottom Line

If you really look at the behavior reward programs being implemented, you will see that most programs benefit the teacher, not the student. These programs don't teach any kind of academic skill. They tend to lean towards the **consistent reinforcement** model, which then masquerades as the "one size fits all" equation.

When developing a behavior reward program that fits your needs, you need to consider, first and far most: **How will it benefit your students?**