

# Improved coordination

Delaware schools struggle to coordinate the many programs occurring in their buildings while simultaneously working to identify gaps in services and interventions needed to address the unmet needs of students. School districts, too, find it challenging to coordinate initiatives across departments, at times leading to fragmentation, inefficiency and confusion in the schools.

That's beginning to change. [The Delaware Department of Education](#), through a five-year federal School Climate Transformation Grant, tapped CDS to help the [Brandywine, Capital](#) and [Red Clay](#) school districts and their schools meet their programmatic goals while supporting the needs of all students, no matter their abilities.

Red Clay Consolidated, with the support of Sarah Celestin, its director of special education, and Sarah Schmittinger-Kashner, its Positive Behavior Support coach, formed a district leadership team to coordinate the district's social, emotional and behavior-related activities. The district also hired four behavior-support coaches to assist schools and provide a consistent message.

One beneficiary, [Austin D. Baltz Elementary School](#), worked with district coach Adriane Simpson over the summer to plan interventions for students with behavior challenges. It was "time-consuming trying to determine services to support students on a case-by-case basis," says Baltz Principal Amy O'Neill.

Now, the school has effective interventions students can access within three days. In its [Check-In Check-Out intervention program](#), students meet each morning with a trusted adult who helps them set goals for the day and brainstorm strategies to be successful – and who later checks back in with them to discuss whether they met their goals. Baltz student Tanyea likes what she sees. "I've been working on ways to handle my feelings and listen to my teacher when I get frustrated," she says.

Referrals that detail challenging behaviors among students at Baltz dropped by almost two-thirds in the past year, says O'Neill. "All this planning with district professionals," says Counselor Stacey Papa, "is quickly getting students the services they need."



Check-In Check-Out: Baltz Principal Amy O'Neill (left) supports Tanyea as she sets her goals for the school day.