

January 28, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contact/source: Brad Allred, 208-733-1328; brad@positiveaction.net

Research finds *Positive Action*® program improves students' test scores and behavior.

TWIN FALLS, ID. – A study by Oregon State University researchers found that [*Positive Action*®](#), a program that teaches social and emotional skills and character development to elementary school children, can improve academic test scores as much as 10 percent on national standardized math and reading tests.

Other key findings include:

- 21% improvement on state reading tests
- 51% improvement on state math tests
- 70% fewer suspensions
- 15% less absenteeism

Supported by the National Institute of Drug Abuse and published in the January issue of the *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, this study was conducted in 20 public elementary schools in Hawaii, 10 of which were randomly assigned to receive the program and the rest were controls. Participating schools had below-average standardized test scores and a diverse student population with an average of 55 percent of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches.

Behavioral findings from the same study were published by the *American Journal of Public Health* last October. Researchers found that students who had gone through the *Positive Action*® program were about half as likely to engage in alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse, violent behavior and/or sexual activity as those who did not take part in the program.

“This research demonstrates that a comprehensive, school-wide social and character development program can have a substantial impact on both reducing problem behaviors of public health importance in youth and improving their school performance,” said [Dr. Brian Flay](#), a professor in the [Department of Public Health at OSU](#) and the study’s principal investigator.

Dr. Carol Gerber Allred, President of Positive Action, Inc., developed the program based on insights she gained from her teaching experiences. “It was apparent that behavior and academics were directly related, but there was nothing available to approach both areas simultaneously.”

The positive results from this study reinforce *Positive Action*'s recognition by the [U.S. Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\)](#) as the *only* character education program out of 41 such programs that improves either academics or behavior. "I hope these results contribute to an understanding of the importance of doing social, emotional and character development for improving academics," Allred said.

The *Positive Action*® program consists of almost daily 15-minute interactive lessons focusing on such topics as responsible self-management, getting along with others, and self-improvement. At schools implementing the intervention, these lessons occupied about one hour a week for every grade. Information about the study and the program is available at <http://www.positiveaction.net/> or by calling 800-345-2974.

###

About the *Positive Action*® Program: Positive Action® is recognized as a top-rated, evidence-based program for improving academics and behavior. Since it was conceived of by Dr. Carol Gerber Allred in 1982, Positive Action® has been used in more than 13,000 schools nationally and internationally. The program components are: PreK–12 Curriculum, Schoolwide Climate Development Kits (Elementary and Secondary), Drug Education Kits (Grade 5 and Middle School), Counselor's Kit, Conflict Resolution Kit, Family Kit, Family Classes and Parenting Classes Kits, and Community Kit. Many are available in Spanish.

About the OSU College of Health and Human Sciences: Emphasizing a holistic approach to optimal health and disease prevention, researchers focus on nutrition, physical activity, the psychology of aging, improving the health of children and older adults, public health, access to health care, and maximizing environmentally friendly materials and structures.