

**Response to Instruction and Intervention
for Behavior (RTI²-B) Framework**

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Acknowledgments

This framework is a combined effort among multiple divisions at the Tennessee Department of Education, school district professionals across Tennessee, and education preparation providers. Thank you to each individual who worked to develop the RTI²-B Framework and to Assistant Commissioner Theresa Nicholls.

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Introduction

The Tennessee Department of Education's strategic plan, *Tennessee Succeeds*, states our unifying vision: **“Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life.”** To achieve this vision, each school and classroom must provide students with opportunities to grow academically, socially, physically, and culturally.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is defined as “the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions” (Batsche et al., 2005). In Tennessee, we implement a unique version of the RTI model that integrates the principles of quality instruction *and* intervention, called the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) Framework.

Academic and behavior deficits are related and have been identified as significant predictors of outcomes once students leave the public education system. While RTI² focuses on academic instruction and intervention, students also require instruction and intervention in behavior to be successful academically, as well as within their communities and later in postsecondary and careers. Tennessee's new RTI²-B Framework unites evidence-based, problem-solving approaches to address student behavior. RTI²-B focuses on teaching students appropriate behaviors as opposed to punishing inappropriate behaviors and also develops positive relationships between students and school staff.

Similar to RTI² for academics, RTI²-B includes universal prevention efforts within Tier I to promote a positive school- and class-wide climate. Through a focus on strong Tier I behavior supports, schools can create a culture where all students and teachers are respected and included in their community.

With consistent and continued implementation of RTI²-B, schools can expect:

- an increase in positive interactions;
- a positive school climate;
- a proactive approach to crisis;
- an increase in instructional time;
- an increase in leadership opportunities for staff, parents, and students;
- an increase in student academic achievement;
- a decrease in interruptions to learning;
- a decrease in chronic absenteeism;
- a decrease in the number of office discipline referrals; and
- a decrease in suspensions.

Ultimately, when implemented with fidelity, RTI²-B will provide more time for teachers to teach, students to learn, and administrators to run their schools efficiently and effectively.

What the Research Says: Connection between behavior and academics

- Discipline concerns interrupt instruction and result in lost instructional opportunities.

(Scott & Barrett, 2004).

- Poor academic performance may lead to students engaging in problematic behavior that results in escaping academic tasks.

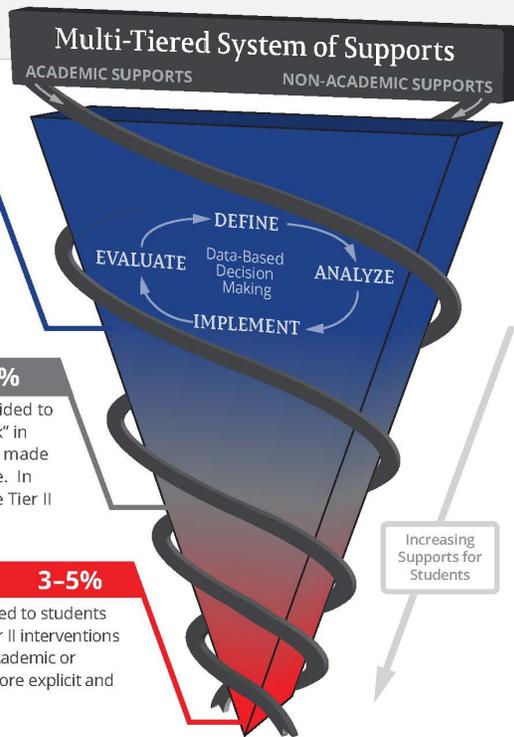
(Filter & Horner, 2009; Lee, Sugai, & Horner, 1999; Preciado, Horner, & Baker, 2009)

Connecting the Work

The RTI²-B Framework fits within a larger system of student supports. Researchers and practitioners call this a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), which is “the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions” (Batsche et. al 2005). Tennessee’s MTSS is a framework for seeing how all the practices, programs, and interventions fit together in order to meet students’ needs both within an individual classroom and across the school building. More information about Tennessee’s MTSS framework can be found here.

Tennessee MTSS Model

Guiding Principles
Leadership • Culture of Collaboration • Prevention & Early Intervention



TIER I All 80-85%

ALL students receive research-based, high-quality, instruction using Tennessee State Standards in a positive behavior environment that incorporates ongoing universal screening and ongoing assessment to inform instruction. In general, 80-85 percent of students will have their needs met by Tier I supports.

TIER II Some 10-15%

In ADDITION to Tier I, extra support is provided to students who have been identified as “at risk” in academic or non-academic skills or have not made adequate progress with Tier I supports alone. In general, 10-15 percent of student will receive Tier II interventions.

TIER III Few 3-5%

In ADDITION to Tier I, extra support is provided to students who have not made significant progress in Tier II interventions or who are significantly below grade level in academic or nonacademic skills. Tier III interventions are more explicit and more intensive than Tier II interventions.

As you see in the graphic, RTI²-B is one part of a larger system of supports. A comprehensive student support system should include health and wellness, social and personal competence, engaging academic instruction, and school climate and connectedness.

For many schools, these are not new strategies, but now the state has developed a framework demonstrating effective implementation. The RTI²-B Framework provides schools with assistance in determining if they are currently meeting the needs of all students, whether they are implementing current initiatives with fidelity, and what needs for training and support exist.

Leade

ership

Component 1: Leadership

1.1: Leadership Overview

Strong, unified leadership is critical to successful implementation. The following graphic identifies the essential components of the complete RTI²-B Framework and is based on the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Implementation (PBIS) Blueprint (2015).

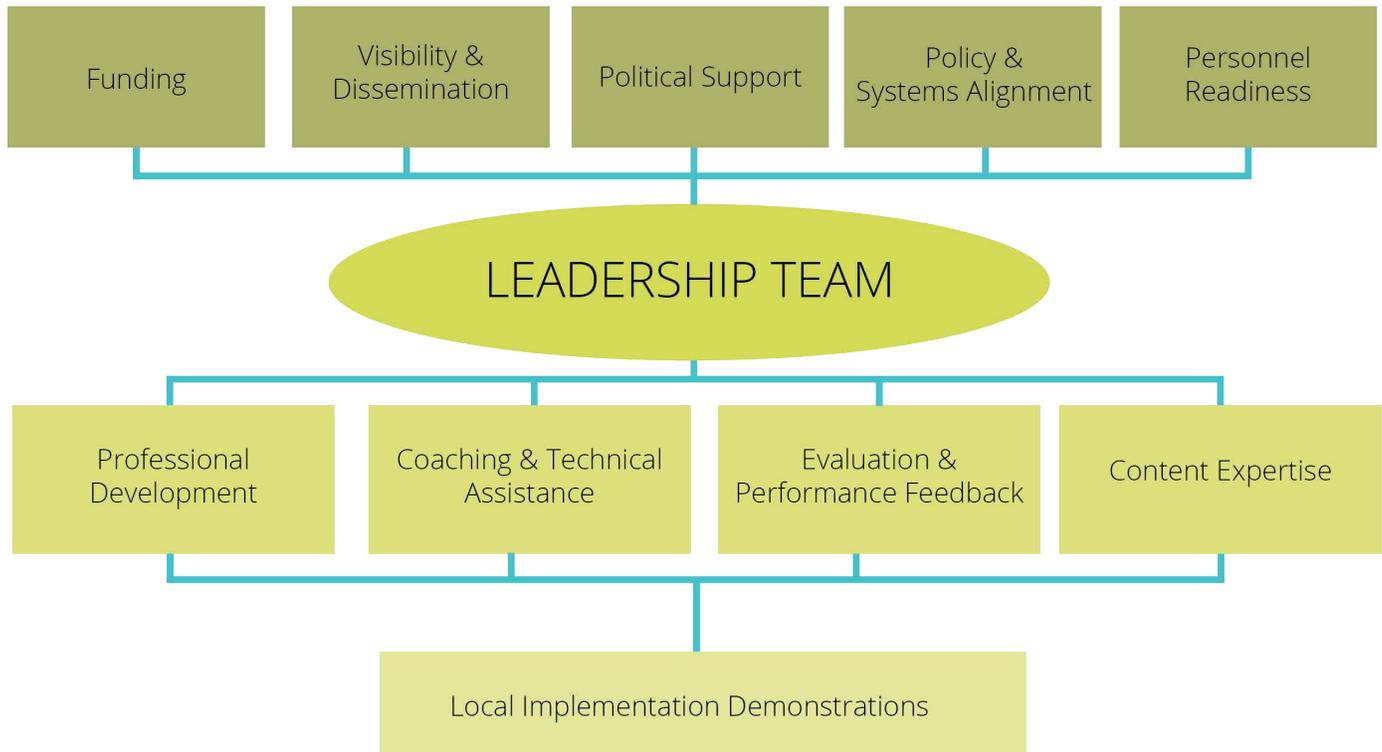


Figure 1 From Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Implementation Blueprint, version 18, October 19, 2015

Prior to implementation, the leadership team must address foundational systems, including the following: funding, visibility and dissemination, political support, policy and systems alignment, and personnel readiness.

The four bottom boxes in Figure 1 represent components that must be developed and maintained at all levels, particularly at the school level. These include professional development, coaching and technical assistance, evaluation and performance feedback, and content expertise. In addition, these same four components align with the TEAM administrator rubric, which measures and supports excellence within Tennessee schools.

Component 1: Leadership

The state-, district-, and school-level leadership teams are central to implementing RTI²-B successfully. In a highly effective school, the leadership team may be the same team that maintains the RTI² Framework; therefore, we will refer to both teams as the “RTI² leadership team:” a single, integrated team supporting both academics and behavior for all students. The responsibilities of the RTI² leadership team include:



Funding



Policy



Evaluation



Visibility



Training



Behavioral Expertise



Political Support



Coaching



Demonstration Schools

Key Research Connection

RTI²-B is consistent with one particular behavior intervention model supported by research, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS aims to prevent inappropriate behavior by teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007). PBIS is anchored in the belief that all students require explicit instruction in behavioral expectations and, when needed, appropriate individualized interventions are systematically provided to students, which includes addressing the role of the environment.

Component 1: Leadership

1.2: State Leadership Team

The statewide leadership team for RTI²-B is called the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (TBSP). It consists of representatives from the Tennessee Department of Education and three universities: University of Memphis–Lambuth, Vanderbilt University, and University of Tennessee–Knoxville. The department has allocated time and resources through a five-year training grant (2015-20) to better support schools and districts in implementing RTI²-B. The statewide leadership team completes a self-assessment and action plan annually, at minimum, to monitor growth and progress of implementation efforts. In addition, the team holds monthly task force meetings to continue collaboration and encourage open communication.

The roles of the statewide leadership team are outlined below.



- 1. Funding:** The state budget allocates funds for the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (TBSP) to support district and school implementation of the RTI²-B Framework.



- 2. Visibility:** An important aspect of the RTI²-B Framework is keeping the plan in front of all stakeholders at all times. Implementation of RTI²-B is encouraged and supported by the Tennessee Department of Education, as evidenced by a commitment to do the following:
 - Create and maintain a RTI²-B website that includes TBSP regional support contact information, district and school resources, and upcoming events.
 - Provide communication to stakeholders regarding opportunities to learn and grow in implementation effectiveness. This may include tips for implementation, and notices of upcoming professional development opportunities. Model of Demonstration schools will be identified using criteria developed by the state leadership team as schools that implement the principles of RTI²-B with a high level of fidelity. Create opportunities for professional development and/or discussions throughout the state (e.g., presentations at conferences, CORE region trainings).
 - Recognize exemplary districts and schools as Model of Demonstration schools/districts with regard to training and implementation efforts.



- 3. Political Support:** The state will provide political support of the RTI²-B Framework by sharing annual reports on district- and school-level activities, soliciting feedback from stakeholders across the state, and keeping the RTI²-B Framework a priority.

Component 1: Leadership



1. **Policy:** The state will provide an RTI²-B Framework and school implementation guide. The statewide leadership team will create and sustain an action plan for maintaining the framework throughout the state. Action planning should occur at regularly scheduled meetings and should include the state RTI²-B goal, team member roles and responsibilities, action items, and deadlines.



2. **Training:** The department will help support TBSP's efforts in training state-, district-, and school-level RTI²-B coaches (e.g., school psychologists, behavior specialists, social workers, and school counselors) to build capacity and promote sustainability.



3. **Coaching:** The state will support a RTI²-B coaching model. At the state level, this is the recognition of demonstration schools and connecting those schools to neighboring schools beginning implementation or searching for implementation support beyond the TBSP.



4. **Evaluation:** The state will work with the TBSPs to ensure that schools and districts are supported in implementation and sustainability.



5. **Behavioral Expertise:** The state will remain well informed of all the resources available from local and national universities, other state-funded projects, and national projects that could benefit the regional support contract, districts, and schools.



6. **Demonstration Schools:** The department and TSBP together will identify Model of Demonstration schools and/or districts and ask these schools to participate in coaching networks and communities of practices to assist in implementation efforts of other schools.

Component 1: Leadership

1.3: District Leadership Team

Sustaining RTI² and RTI²-B requires systemic support and a common vision. Many districts have established RTI² leadership teams. This same team can expand their role to lead and guide RTI²-B implementation to ensure the success of all students through high-quality instruction, interventions, and support for academics and behavior. The RTI² leadership team also guides the district's action planning and assessment processes; coordinates training, coaching, and evaluation activities related to RTI²-B; and creates changes in district procedures that will support long-term use of RTI²-B.

The roles and responsibilities of the RTI² team that support RTI²-B implementation at the district level include:

- Funding
- Visibility
- Political support
- Policy
- Training
- Coaching
- Evaluation
- Behavioral expertise
- Demonstration schools

Team Composition

Membership on the district's RTI²-B leadership team requires a designated chair/external coach and may include the following individuals:

- Elementary administrator
- Classroom teacher
- Special education
- Mental health professional
- Data management
- Attendance
- School psychology
- School counselor
- Parent
- Curriculum and instruction
- Secondary administrator
- English as a second language (ESL) teacher
- Federal programs supervisor
- Transportation
- Safe and supportive schools
- School social worker
- Behavior specialist
- Student

Component 1: Leadership

1.4: School Leadership Team

Many schools have established RTI² leadership teams. This same team can expand their role to lead and guide RTI²-B implementation to ensure the success of all students through high-quality instruction, interventions, and support for academics and behavior. In order to successfully implement RTI²-B at an individual school level, a systematic approach is required, which includes four common components:

1. Administrative support and school commitment to implement with fidelity
2. A strong leadership team led by the school's RTI²-B internal coach
 - An internal coach is an individual within the school who leads the RTI² implementation, monitors fidelity, ensures implementation, and provides expertise in RTI²-B.
3. Effective communication with the district leadership team to distribute the latest information and best practices to each school
4. Consistent data collection and use of data in problem solving and decision making

The principal should provide the opportunity for members of the school community, including students, to serve on the school-based RTI² leadership team.

Team Composition

The school-wide RTI² leadership team is composed of a group of stakeholders whose primary responsibilities, roles, and activities are to proactively reduce and address problem behaviors. The school team oversees the day-to-day implementation of RTI²-B, ensuring that tools for successful implementation are available. This team requires a designated chair/internal coach. Additionally, the school team may include the following individuals:

- Administrator
- English language learners teacher
- School psychologist
- General education teacher
- Student
- School counselor
- Mental health specialist
- Support staff
- Data coordinator
- Parent
- Special educator
- School social worker
- Behavior specialist

School Team Role and Responsibilities

The role of the school-based team is to organize implementation efforts of RTI²-B at the school level and keep it a high priority including:

- Funding
- Training
- Visibility
- Coaching
- Political support
- Evaluation
- Policy
- Behavioral expertise

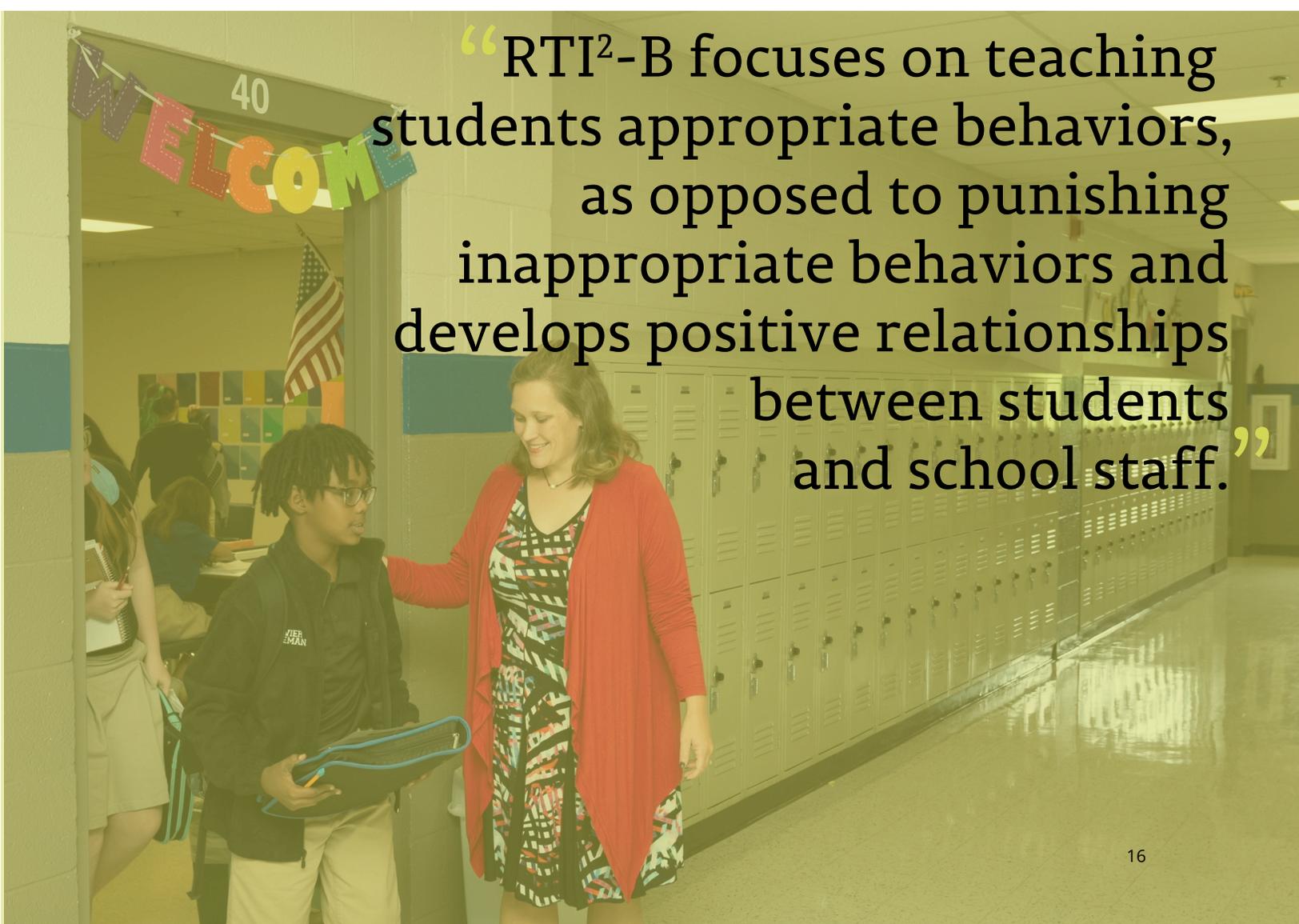
The school team can also access the supports and training available through TBSP to assist with implementation, fidelity, data analysis, and sustainability.

Component 1: Leadership

1.5: Student Leadership Team

Schools that have shared leadership support systems that engage students—rather than demand student compliance—have fewer discipline problems, increased student achievement, and higher graduation rates (Bruening, 2014). Developing a RTI² student leadership team is an important opportunity to empower students. By gathering input from students and involving students in the RTI²-B process, schools move from actions being “done to students” to “working with students” (Smyth, 2006). Students become more engaged and motivated because their voices are heard. Such measures have been shown to decrease discipline problems and increase academic achievement and graduation rates. Additionally, the school climate becomes more positive, allowing teachers to teach and students to learn.

The RTI² student leadership team should be comprised of a diverse and representative group of students. This team should include representatives from all grade levels (elementary may choose to begin at third grade), and a demographic distribution similar to the school population and to academic and behavioral diversity. For schools with a student population that is younger than third grade, staff should consider ways for students to share their thoughts and ideas in a more informal manner.



“ RTI²-B focuses on teaching students appropriate behaviors, as opposed to punishing inappropriate behaviors and develops positive relationships between students and school staff. ”

Component 1: Leadership

1.6: Sustainability

Addressing the sustainability of RTI²-B in the early stages of planning and implementation will lead to lasting, positive effects for schools. If staff members must learn new initiatives every year, they become frustrated and burn out quickly. Schools that carefully consider the sustainability of RTI²-B will increase the efficient use of time and resources and will see the continued improvement of their implementation efforts. Schools that have been implementing a student support framework, like RTI²-B, for many years have found two significant predictors of sustainability: the level of commitment from stakeholders and the organization of implementation efforts. RTI²-B should be linked to the strategic plan of the district to give the framework purpose and meaning. For example, when attempting to increase graduation rate, attendance rates, and social and personal competencies levels, RTI²-B can be an approach used to achieve these goals.



Preparing Impleme

for RTI²-B entation

Component 2: Preparing to Implement RTI²-B

2.1: Considerations

The following are questions to consider in the initial phases of streamlining and integrating RTI²-B into work at the school level:

1. What initiatives, programs, and/or policies are currently in place that address the non-academic needs of students?
2. Do these programs support each other? Is there overlap? Is there conflict between programs?
3. How much instructional time are teachers spending on behavior, routines, social skills, and classroom management?
4. How much time are school administrators or non-classroom staff spending on behavior, routines, social skills, and discipline within Tier 1?
5. What data are collected by teachers, schools, and the district?
6. How are data being used to make decisions?
7. When and how are students' non-academic needs being addressed?

Research shows a correlation between strong school-wide, Tier I practices and effective Tier II and Tier III interventions and supports (Kim, McIntosh, & Hoselton, 2014). Schools with strong Tier I instruction are better able to identify students that require additional Tier II or Tier III interventions (Anderson & Borgmeier, 2010). When Tier I is not effective, schools may become overwhelmed with discipline needs and the large number of students who appear to need more intensive interventions and support. However, when data are used in decision making related to the selection and implementation of the intervention, strong fidelity of implementation and positive effect on student growth is evident, even when a school has not been able to fully implement all three tiers (Horner, Sugai, & Anderson, 2010).



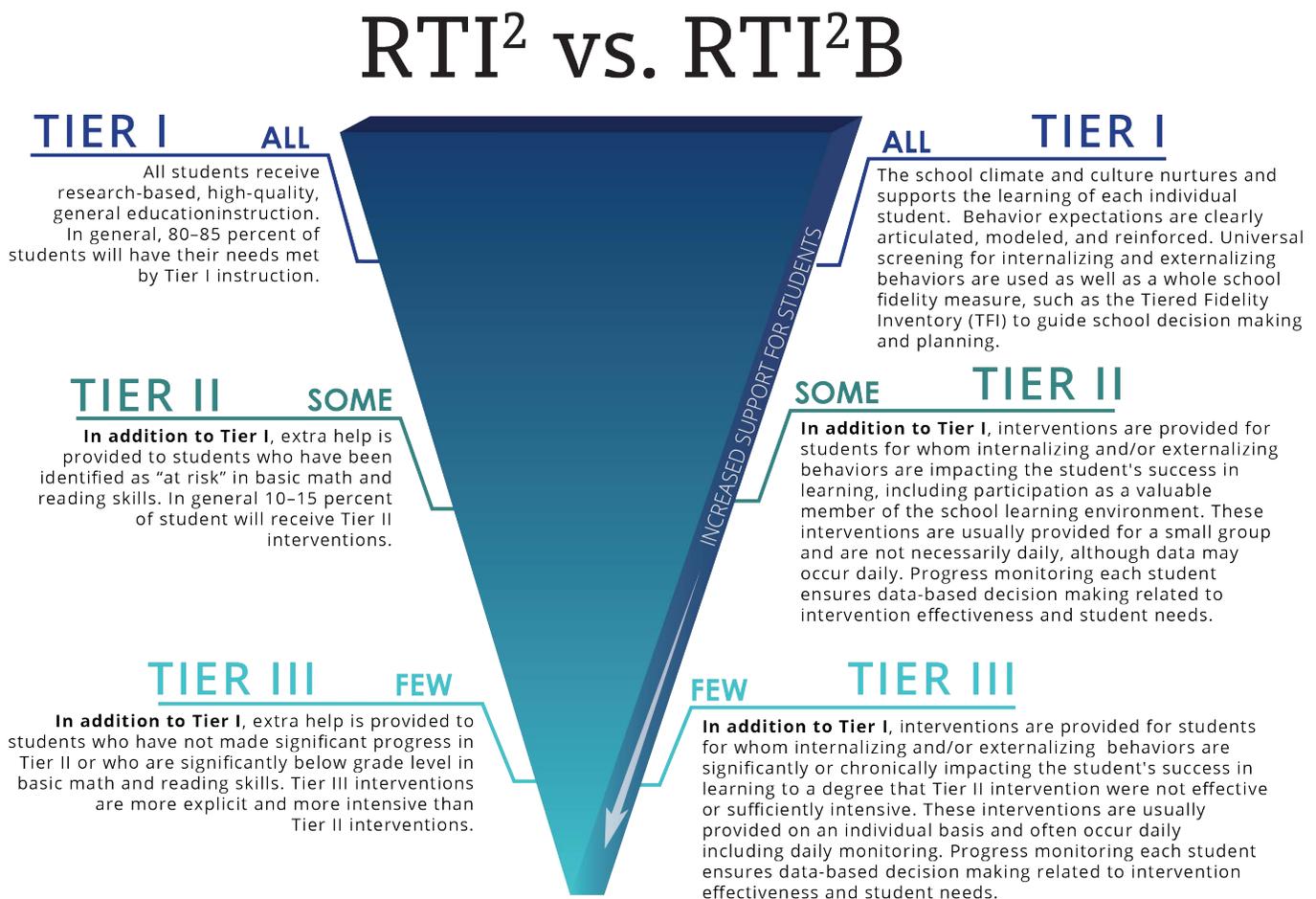
“Ultimately, RTI²-B will provide more time for teachers to *teach*, students to *learn*, and administrators to *run their schools efficiently and effectively.*”

Component 2: Preparing to Implement RTI²-B

2.2: Relationship between RTI²-B and RTI²

The distribution of students needing interventions through the RTI²-B Framework should follow a similar distribution as the distribution of students needing interventions through the RTI² Framework. The majority of the student population (85–90 percent) will have appropriate social, emotional, and behavior skills with high-quality and evidence-based foundations of social and behavioral support in place through Tier I. Some students (approximately 10–15 percent) will need more support in one or more skills but, with that support, will be able to learn the needed skills for long-term success. A few students (3–5 percent) will require more intensive intervention in social, emotional, or behavioral support. A small number of students will require special education intervention, services, and support in social, emotional, and/or behavioral skills.

The following chart summarizes the similarities and differences of RTI² and RTI²-B.



Tier I Pro

ocedures

Component 3: Tier I Procedures

3.1: Implementing Tier I Interventions



ALL TIER I

The school climate and culture nurtures and supports the learning of each individual student. Behavior expectations are clearly articulated, modeled, and reinforced. Universal screening for internalizing and externalizing behaviors are used as well as a whole school fidelity measure, such as the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) to guide school decision making and planning.

All students in the school should receive Tier I instruction and supports. Tier I is the structure that establishes the culture, climate, behavioral expectations, and supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students. The focus is on prevention through explicitly taught and clearly defined expectations, acknowledgement of positive behavior, consistent consequences for problematic behavior, and continuous collection and use of data to make decisions.

Prior to implementation, the school RTI² leadership team should review the current practices within the school, beginning with Tier I. The school-wide PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory (Algozzine et al., 2014) is one way to evaluate effectiveness, and it assists in answering two main questions:

1. Are the programs that comprise the universal supports implemented with fidelity?
2. Are students achieving the desired student outcomes?

Schools should focus on the Tier I development and implementation first in order to ensure that students understand the behavior expectations and establish school-wide consistency. When Tier I is not implemented with fidelity, universal screeners are likely to identify a significantly large portion of the school population as “at risk.” Tier I implemented at a high level of fidelity reduces this risk and increases the likelihood of school-wide success.

Component 3: Tier I Procedures

3.2: School Climate

School climate refers to the quality of school life and aspects of the school environment that make students feel academically challenged; physically, socially and emotionally safe and valued; and engaged in their school community (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Building a positive school climate depends on contributions from the entire school community—including students, teachers, administrators, and parents—to create learning environments where a child can succeed.

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments defines the three broad dimensions of school climate: (1) engagement, (2) school safety, and (3) school environment.

1. Engagement is defined as strong relationships among students, teachers, families, and schools, and strong connections between schools and the broader community.
2. School safety is defined as schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use.
3. School environment is broadly characterized by its facilities, classrooms, school-based health supports, and disciplinary policies and practices. It sets the stage for the external factors that affect students.

District- and school-level leadership is important to ensuring that the guiding principles of establishing a positive school climate are met and the interventions and supports are being implemented as intended with fidelity. Effective leaders recognize that while they may initiate and coordinate school climate improvement, the school community, including teachers, students, and parents, are critical partners in the implementation of these efforts.



Component 3: Tier I Procedures

3.3 School-wide Behavioral Expectations

Developing a set of school-wide expectations is one of the first steps in the development of the RTI²-B plan for a school. Schools should create three to five positively stated expectations (e.g., be respectful, take pride, give your best effort, etc.) that are applicable to all settings in the school (e.g., cafeteria, hallways, restrooms, classrooms, outside common area) and address important social outcomes for the school. The expectations should be posted throughout the school to serve as reminders for staff and students. Schools then create a behavioral expectation matrix. The behavioral expectation matrix is a visual representation of the school-wide behavioral expectations within each setting. It is a way of operationally defining and describing what each expectation looks like within a given setting. For example, being responsible in the cafeteria may look like cleaning up after yourself, whereas being respectful may involve including others in your conversations and speaking at an appropriate volume.

Teaching School-Wide Expectations

All adults in the school setting are responsible for modeling and teaching the school-wide behavioral expectations to all students in the school. Schools should develop a plan for teaching expectations to students, including the development of lesson plans specific to the different locations in the school, as well as an explanation of when, where, and by whom the lesson plans will be taught.

School teams should also develop a plan for continued review and re-teaching of the expectations throughout the year to ensure maintenance and mastery by the students. It is important to allow students the opportunity to practice the expectations and to then provide them with feedback. Additionally, to ensure that students take ownership over the school-wide expectations, it is valuable to include a rationale for each expectation (e.g., "It is important to be respectful of ourselves and others in the classroom so that we all feel included and can do our best work.").



For example, a school-wide expectation is to walk single file on the right side of the hall. This must be explicitly taught to students at the beginning of the school year in order for them to have a clear understanding of what it means to be respectful of others while in the hallway.

Component 3: Tier I Procedures

Acknowledging Appropriate Student Behavior

Schools should develop systems for acknowledging when students exhibit positive behaviors. Developing a school-wide acknowledgement system helps to foster a positive school climate because faculty and staff focus on students' positive behaviors rather than the inappropriate behaviors. Focusing attention primarily on the positive behavior creates a safe learning environment for students and a safe working environment for adults.

A key feature of an acknowledgement system is providing behavior-specific praise when students are engaging in appropriate behaviors. Research has shown that behavior-specific praise is an effective classroom management strategy for reducing inappropriate student behavior and increasing appropriate pro-social behaviors (Allday, Hinkson-Lee, Hudson, Neilsen-Gatti, Kleinke, & Russel, 2012). Behavior-specific praise is a way of providing students feedback about their effort to engage in appropriate behavior and increases the likelihood of engaging in those appropriate behaviors in the future. Specific praise provides feedback necessary for learning. Telling a student, "You did such a great job showing respect by raising your hand and waiting to be called on!" informs a student of the appropriate behavior to exhibit again in the future. A general praise statement of "Great job!" does not provide the specific feedback to inform future appropriate actions. Further, behavior-specific praise or encouraging language should vary by age. Teachers may use different language when acknowledging a kindergarten student's efforts as opposed to a twelfth grader. Praising and encouraging language should be an ongoing form of feedback and the foundation of any school acknowledgement system.

In addition to behavior-specific praise, schools should set up a shared system throughout the school to reinforce appropriate behaviors. For example, some schools hand out paper tickets when students are "caught being good." Other schools use online point systems to keep track of appropriate behaviors. The ticket/tokens/points can later be exchanged for intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Schools can structure their reinforcement systems in a variety of ways; some schools may choose to do school-wide celebrations, some may have a school store, and some may have reinforcement systems set up at the individual classroom level. When developing an acknowledgement system, leadership teams should consider the needs of the students, the current level of office discipline referrals, student input, and other relevant factors that are unique to each school. These considerations will help a school determine how frequently students will need reinforcement as a way of maintaining student interest and motivation.

Responding to Inappropriate Student Behavior

School teams should work together to determine what student behaviors are considered inappropriate at their school. It is helpful to divide inappropriate behaviors into those considered "major" versus "minor" behavior concerns. Major behaviors are managed at the office or principal level, while minor behaviors are managed at the classroom level. An Office Discipline Referral (ODR) form should also be created to match a major versus minor behavior grid. A school staff member should complete the ODR form when inappropriate behaviors occur in order to track student behavior. The data from the forms could then be entered into a database to easily track all inappropriate behaviors and be accessed by the school-based RTI² leadership team to guide decision making.

Component 3: Tier I Procedures

3.4 Classroom Management

Students spend the majority of their time while in school in the classroom. In order for teachers to maximize teaching time and provide meaningful instructional interactions, they must practice effective classroom management. Research identifies five categories of classroom management techniques:

1. maximizing structure and predictability;
2. posting, teaching, reviewing, monitoring, and reinforcing expectations;
3. actively engaging students in observable ways;
4. using a continuum of strategies to acknowledge appropriate behavior; and
5. using a continuum of strategies to respond to inappropriate behavior. (Simonsen et al. 2008)

These five categories are also reflected in the social and personal competencies strategies, such as student-centered discipline, teacher language, responsibility and choice, warmth and support, cooperative learning, self-reflection and self-assessment, setting up your classroom, establishing and teaching classroom expectations, and accessing support.

Student-Centered Discipline

Student-centered discipline refers to a strategy for classroom management. In order to be effective at student-centered discipline, teachers should use developmentally appropriate disciplinary strategies that motivate students to want to behave appropriately in the classroom. Such discipline occurs when students have opportunities to be self-directive and have some say in what happens in the classroom. In a strong and positive approach to discipline, teachers do not attempt to over manage their students, nor do they use punitive measures to motivate appropriate behavior. Furthermore, students and teachers should develop shared norms and values in the classroom. This strategy allows students to connect the rules to the overarching vision of how the classroom is run and increases student ownership.

Similarly, teachers should enact proactive classroom management strategies that are aligned to the norms and vision for the classroom, and they should use management strategies consistently. If a student breaks a rule, the consequences should be logical in relation to the rule that was broken. For example, if a student pushes another student in line, an appropriate consequence would be to line up last for the rest of the week rather than lose gym or recess for the week, a consequence unrelated to the incident. Through the development of consistent and logical rules and consequences, students begin to learn to regulate their own behavior and resolve difficult situations that arise in the classroom.

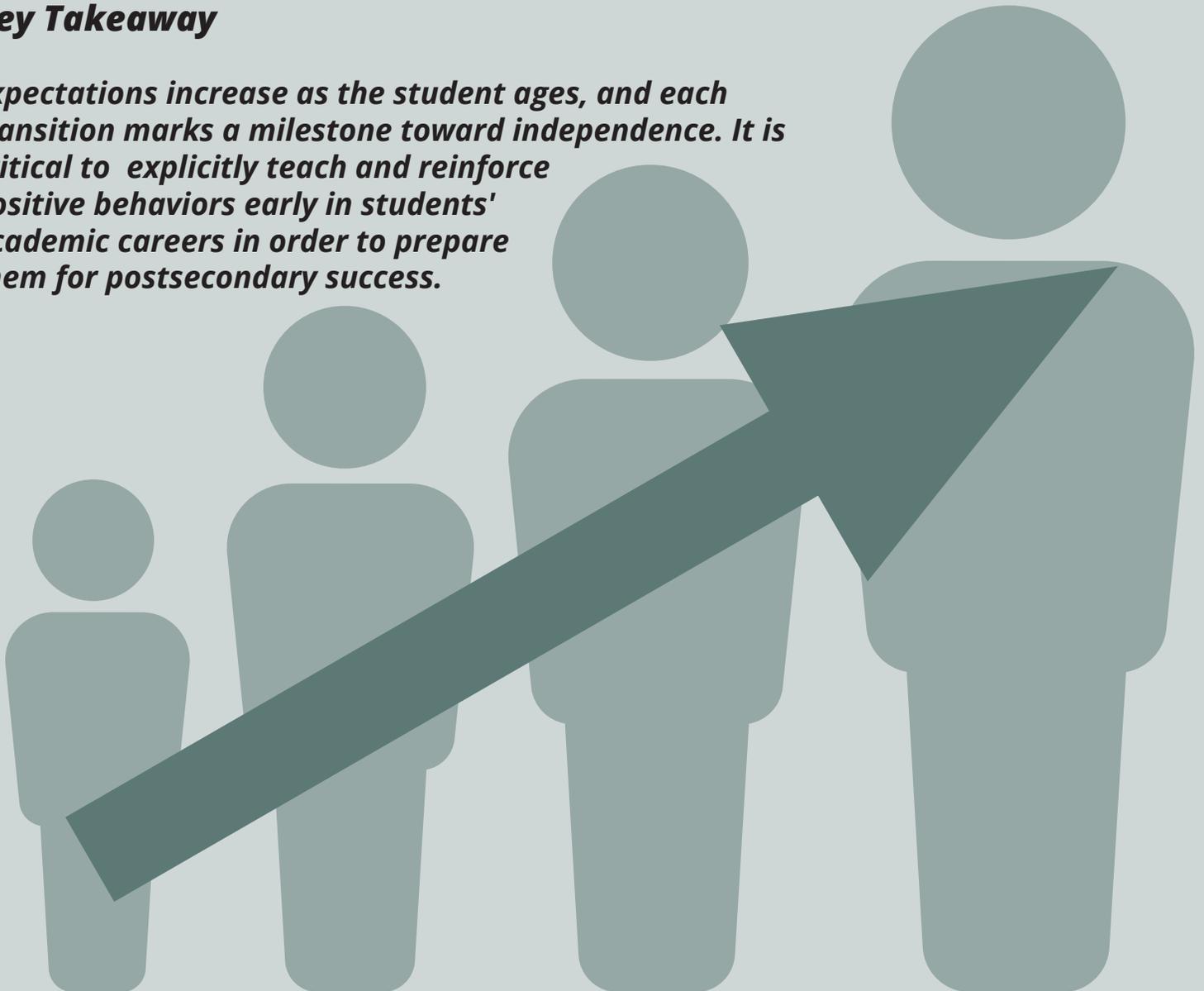
Component 3: Tier I Procedures

Cohesive classroom management from the beginning of a student's academic experiences is a key to their future success. When students are young, they can be more easily redirected and encouraged with small reinforcements, such as stickers. Younger students are also able to be physically redirected and supported for safety. As students get older, addressing intensive academic and behavioral needs becomes more challenging.

An additional consideration in developing district-wide RTI²-B is a student's transition from elementary to middle school and middle to high school. Expectations increase as the student ages, and each transition marks a milestone towards independence. Behaviors required for independence need to be explicitly taught to all students. These expectations should gradually increase over time, effectively preparing all students for independent living and for college and career success.

Key Takeaway

Expectations increase as the student ages, and each transition marks a milestone toward independence. It is critical to explicitly teach and reinforce positive behaviors early in students' academic careers in order to prepare them for postsecondary success.



Component 3: Tier I Procedures

3.5 Universal Screening Procedures

All students participate in a universal screening process through the RTI² Framework to identify those who may need additional support and/or other types of instruction. Universal screeners are not assessments in the traditional sense. They are brief, informative tools used to measure specific skills. A norm-referenced universal behavior screener, designed to screen externalizing behaviors (e.g., physical or verbal aggression, self-injury, and disruption) and/or internalizing behaviors (e.g., anxiety, depression, withdrawal, and isolation), may be used to identify students at risk for behavioral difficulties.

Please note: Any screening for mental health concerns requires written parental consent.

Just as with academics, multiple sources of data should be used in determining student need for intervention and/or supports. These may include:

- Standardized teacher-completed rating scales (by individual or class)
- Teacher nomination
- Attendance
- Grades
- Classroom behavior reports
- Office discipline referrals
- Reports from prior teachers
- Previous referrals
- Test scores
- Parent or student requests for support

For all grades, it is essential that behavioral universal screening occurs at least once in the beginning of the school year (or per instructions for the particular screening tool). However, it is best practice to conduct universal behavior screening three times per school year: at the beginning (fall), middle (winter), and end (spring). Teams should follow instructions for particular screening tools when selecting universal screening times.

If a school team is using office discipline referrals (ODRs) as the only source of data for behavioral screening, school teams should review the ODRs that each student has accumulated on a more frequent basis (e.g., monthly).

Component 3: Tier I Procedures

As with academics, care should be taken that any screener or assessment tool is free from cultural, ethnic, or language bias.

Families expect assessment of students' academic skills during the school year. The screening of behavior, however, is fairly new. As such, it is critical that families and students are informed of the purpose of the screener ahead of administration. They should also be informed on how the results will be viewed and what actions will be taken to support those students determined to be at risk or below expected levels.

Important Reminder

If a child is suspected of having an educational disability or if there is concern regarding the mental health of a student, the team must refer the student for additional assessment. The parents of the student must be involved and provide informed, written consent for any additional assessment to occur. Mental health concerns should be diagnosed only by a qualified mental health professional. RTI²-leadership teams should consider recommendations of mental health professionals if a diagnosis has been established.

If at any time an educator suspects a student may be in crisis, the situation should be reported to administrators, parents, and district staff, and the district emergency plan for students in crisis should be followed (see component 7).

Component 3: Tier I Procedures

3.6 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures

The school's RTI² leadership team, which will meet regularly (e.g., monthly) to evaluate student progress. The team makes and monitors data-based decisions, which may include the following data points: universal screening data, fidelity of implementation, office discipline referral data, survey data, and survey data related to perceived importance of the behavior (i.e., social validity data).

Typically, the RTI² meetings are designed to examine student outcome data—academic and behavioral—to ensure that Tier I instruction and practices are meeting the needs of approximately 80–85 percent of students, that Tier II interventions are meeting the needs of approximately 10–15 percent of students, and that Tier III is meeting the needs of approximately 3–5 percent of students. This also involves looking at school data to evaluate the fidelity of implementation of effective practices at Tiers I, II, and III. As all three tiers are developed and implemented, the school should use internal and external coaches to guide the implementation of RTI²-B (See the roles and responsibilities defined in Component 1).

	Progress Monitoring	Fidelity	Evaluating Outcomes
Tier I 80–85 percent of total student population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office discipline referrals (ODRs) Universal screener data Survey data School climate survey Social validity data Attendance data 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review results of fidelity measures Share information with stakeholders to determine next steps and or improvement plan Evaluate indicators of successful implementation Increased parent involvement Reduce repeat discipline referrals Improved attendance rate Increased participation in school activities
Tier II 10–15 percent of total student population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected daily or weekly Monthly fidelity of intervention and review of student progress Standardized, general procedures applicable to most behaviors (e.g., Check In/Check Out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) External coach Internal coach Primary Intervention Rating Scale (PRIS) 	
Tier III 3–5 percent of total student population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected daily or weekly Progress monitor target behavior and replacement behavior Student specific plan 		

Component 3: Tier I Procedures

3.7 Students Entering Mid-Term

Procedures should be in place for students who enter mid-term or any time after the universal screening is completed. A plan should be in place for conducting universal screening for academic and behavioral difficulties for these students. The plan should include what decisions will be made based on the screening data and who will make these decisions.

Additionally, students must be taught the school-wide behavioral expectations and routines. Assuming a student knows the expectations is risky and can set the student up for failure. The behavior expectations vary for each school, even within districts, so any student new to a school will benefit from clear, explicit instruction on the behavior expectations.

Each individual is responsible for maintaining a positive school climate and culture. For a student who has not previously attended a school implementing RTI²-B, this level of individual responsibility may be a new experience. Use of peer mentors or members of the student leadership team can help entering students understand their role in creating a positive environment for all as well as develop their own leadership skills.

3.8 Professional Development for Tier I Instruction

School RTI²-B leadership teams should take time to develop a professional development plan while they organize and structure each tier of the RTI²-B Framework. They should develop procedures for training all faculty and staff to implement each feature or intervention. A needs assessment may be a powerful tool in the selection of topics and development of the training timeline. Once schools are implementing RTI²-B, the leadership team should use fidelity data to plan continued professional development.

Tier II Pr

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Component 4: Tier II Procedures

4.1 Overview of Tier II



SOME TIER II

In addition to Tier I, interventions are provided for students for whom internalizing and/or externalizing behaviors are impacting the student's success in learning, including participation as a valuable member of the school learning environment. These interventions are usually provided for a small group and are not necessarily daily, although data may occur daily. Progress monitoring each student ensures data-based decision making related to intervention effectiveness and student needs.

Tier II addresses the needs of approximately 10–15 percent of students struggling with behavioral, social, or emotional skills despite receiving strong Tier I instruction, which includes positive school climate, clear school-wide behavioral expectations, and strong classroom management. Tier II interventions are provided in addition to the Tier I supports in place for all students in the school.

Interventions at Tier II are typically systematic, evidence-based interventions that target students' identified areas of deficit (e.g., self-management, coping, organization). These interventions should be:

- efficient,
- easily accessible for students,
- provided as soon as possible upon identification that the student is at risk or struggling, and oftentimes,
- implemented among small groups of students who exhibit similar behavior concerns.

One goal of Tier II interventions is to address student needs and teach socially successful behaviors before inappropriate behaviors create major concerns and the need for more intensive intervention. In turn, this promotes a positive school climate where students are identified as needing additional support earlier and are taught self-monitoring and other behaviors necessary to succeed in school.

Tier II key features should include:

1. similar implementation across students targeted for Tier II;
2. continuous availability and quick access to the interventions;
3. consistent training on referral procedures and intervention implementation, when appropriate;
4. consistency with school expectations;
5. flexibility based on consideration of behavior function; and
6. continuous progress monitoring.

Component 4: Tier II Procedures

4.2 Implementing Tier II Intervention

School-level RTI² teams should establish entry criteria for placement in specific Tier II behavioral interventions. The criteria should require consideration of multiple sources of data including:

- academic and behavior universal screening;
- survey level data;
- attendance;
- academic performance (e.g., grades and achievement test scores);
- student discipline and behavioral data;
- teacher, family, or student requests for assistance; and
- instructional and classroom and/or behavior management practices already in place.

Please note: Any screening for mental health concerns requires written parental consent.

Once a student is identified as in need of Tier II supports, the team should identify interventions and/or strategies to address the student's target behavior by developing recommendations for positive behavior supports in relevant school environments and/or identify appropriate Tier II interventions.

Strategies or practices used in Tier II interventions usually include:

- focus on additional instruction and practice, and
- increased structure for academics and/or behavior.

Some evidence-based practices used within Tier II are:

- token economy,
- social skills clubs,
- peer-based support or peer tutoring,
- check in/check out (CICO),
- increased adult or peer role model contact,
- increased modeling of set routines, and
- mentoring.

(Crone, Horner, & Hawken, 2003)

For additional resources and/or interventions, visit the [MTSS webpage](#).

Students are often supported in Tier II interventions and strategies by a number of adults throughout the school day. To ensure fidelity of implementation, the team should ensure teachers and support staff (e.g., paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers) are provided training, support, and materials to implement recommendations or intervention procedures. The training may need to include data collection procedures or a schedule for informing the team of the student's progress.

Component 4: Tier II Procedures

4.3 Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is used to assess students' performance or responsiveness to intervention as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention. When additional intervention is being provided in Tier II, the effectiveness of the intervention should be monitored to ensure that it is helping the student reach a goal. This is accomplished through frequent data collection. While the universal screening tool measures student internalizing and externalizing behaviors, progress monitoring requires measures that are specific to measuring the students' identified behavior need and growth toward their goal.

Progress monitoring in Tier II may include:

- intervention artifacts,
- observations, and
- data sheets.

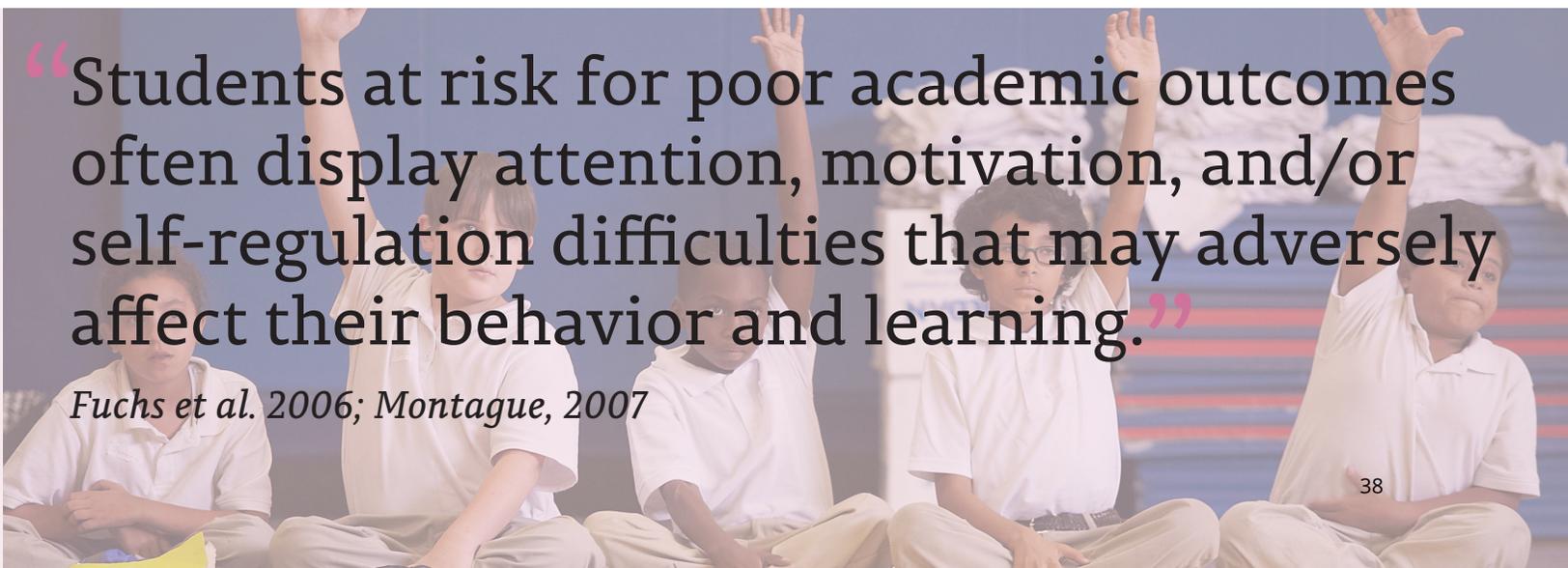
4.4 Data-Based Decision Making

Students receiving Tier II interventions require interventions and/or strategies beyond what can be provided in Tier I alone. During Tier II intervention, a student's progress should be monitored closely to measure the effectiveness of interventions and check student progress toward goal(s). If students are not making adequate progress in Tier II, the intervention may need to be changed. Changes may include but are not limited to:

- increasing frequency of intervention;
- changing interventions;
- changing intervention provider; and/or
- changing the skill(s) targeted for intervention.

If needed, district- and school-wide RTI² leadership teams should consult with their district-level RTI²-B coach or their TBSP provider to request support or training in selecting and/or using behavioral progress monitoring tools, and establishing decision rules for Tier III.

For more information, please refer to Data-Based Decision Making Table in Component 3.7



“Students at risk for poor academic outcomes often display attention, motivation, and/or self-regulation difficulties that may adversely affect their behavior and learning.”

Fuchs et al. 2006; Montague, 2007

Component 4: Tier II Procedures

4.5 Professional Development

Professional development opportunities for Tier II should focus on the following topics: determining appropriate interventions, progress monitoring, fidelity measures for Tier II supports, and intervention-specific trainings. Resources for training are available through the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project and/or the Division of Special Populations professional development opportunities.



Tier III Pr

procedures

Component 5: Tier III Procedures

5.1 Overview of Tier III



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TIER III

In addition to Tier I, interventions are provided for students for whom internalizing and/or externalizing behaviors are significantly or chronically impacting the student's success in learning to a degree that Tier II intervention were not effective or sufficiently intensive. These interventions are usually provided on an individual basis and often occur daily including daily monitoring. Progress monitoring each student ensures data-based decision making related to intervention effectiveness and student needs.

Tier III interventions address the needs of the 3–5 percent of students who either:

- received Tier II interventions with fidelity but continue to engage in levels of challenging behavior that interfere with their academic and social progress in school;
- have been identified through a screening to need individualized, intensive interventions;
- have experienced trauma recently or are still significantly impacted by trauma; or
- engage in extremely aggressive or dangerous behaviors to self and/or others at a level of intensity above that of Tier II.

The defining features of Tier III interventions include (a) a greater level of intensity relative to Tiers I and II and (b) specifically designed intervention to address the function or the behavior and simultaneously teach a replacement behavior.

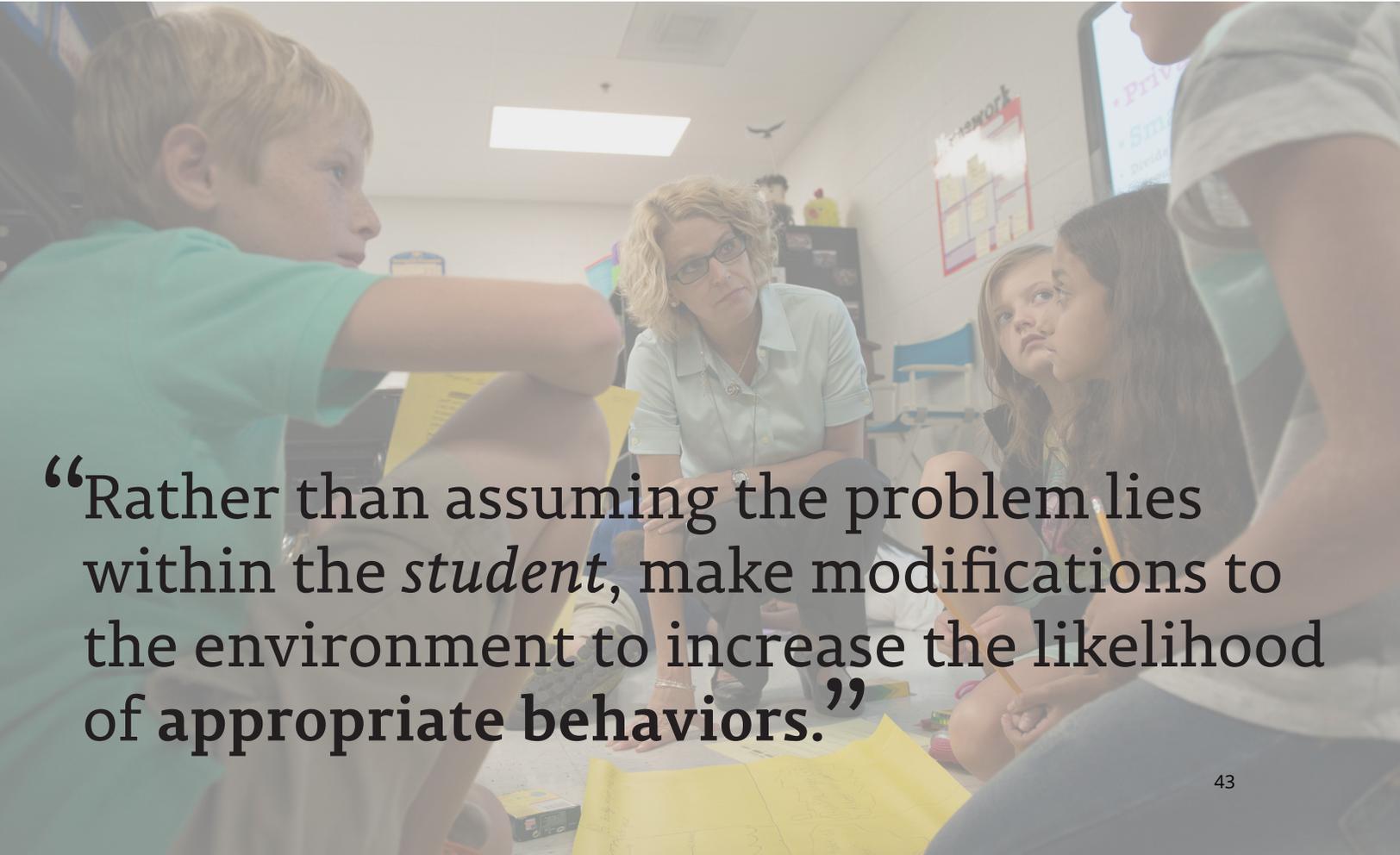
Tier III interventions promote positive school climates by ensuring that the students with the greatest support needs receive a level of support that allows them to thrive in school. Tier III interventions should positively impact school climate by maximizing the extent to which these students participate academically and socially in school. Interventions should focus on teaching and strengthening pro-social behaviors that will benefit the student long term, while simultaneously decreasing challenging behaviors in the short term. A positive, problem-solving approach assumes that challenging behavior is an indication of a mismatch between the needs of an individual student and the conditions of their educational environment.

Component 5: Tier III Procedures

5.2 Implementing Tier III Interventions

Tier III Interventions are individualized to specifically address the needs of the individual student. The progress monitoring at Tier III is often more frequent with multiple data points taken weekly, sometimes even daily, in order to identify gradual changes in behavior—both inappropriate and appropriate behavior. The interventions are customized to address externalizing behaviors (e.g., physical or verbal aggression, self-injury, or disruption) and/or internalizing behaviors (e.g., feelings of anxiety, a depressive mood, or being withdrawn), as well as other behaviors identified by the team. In some cases, a wrap-around model of services, both internal and external to the school, may be the best approach.

At this level, a student’s behavior is likely adversely impacting his or her educational performance. Interventions at this level address multiple issues that have an impact on student success. For students who “cannot” perform an academic task or behavioral skill due to a deficit, specific academic remediation and/or teaching of replacement behaviors may be required. A functional behavior assessment (FBA) is a powerful tool to assist the team in defining the target and replacement behaviors, determining the function of the behavior or what the student gains from the inappropriate behavior, and identifying appropriate intervention(s). Ongoing data collection is critical for the selection and implementation of evidenced-based intervention(s). Behavior assessments can include record reviews, interviews, observations, and checklists designed to be synthesized into a comprehensive plan regarding the student’s target behaviors (Roberts, Marshall, Nelson, & Albers, 2001).

A photograph of a teacher with blonde hair and glasses sitting at a table with several students. They are looking at a large yellow sheet of paper, likely a behavior plan or assessment. The setting is a classroom with educational posters on the wall and a computer monitor in the background.

“Rather than assuming the problem lies within the *student*, make modifications to the environment to increase the likelihood of appropriate behaviors.”

Component 5: Tier III Procedures

5.2 Implementing Tier III Interventions (continued)

Evidence-based interventions to support desired behaviors address three major components:

- antecedent interventions,
- teaching new behaviors, and
- consequence strategies.

The use of evidence-based practices to support students in reducing challenging behaviors and improving engagement in academic and social life can ultimately remove the barriers to academic success.

For a student needing Tier III support, school staff members might need to scaffold the behavior intervention plan in order to gradually bring the student to the desired behavior rather than an immediate jump from their current behavior to the desired behavior.

For instance,

consider a student who runs out of the school building when presented difficult or non-preferred tasks. The Tier III intervention may consist of a smaller step towards the goal of remaining in class. For example, the student's support team may work on teaching the student to identify when they are becoming stressed through direct instruction, model signaling to the teacher, and then, practice escaping while remaining within the building by running to a designated "safe" location. While the student's running to the "safe" location is still not commensurate with his or her peers, it is a step towards responding to the need to escape in a manner that is safe, instead of running into oncoming traffic. Continued prompting and acknowledgement of the student selecting the "safe" location will support the student in becoming independent in that behavior. The team will continue to scaffold the intervention and behavioral expectations, monitoring for continued progress until the student is successful with the desired behavior.

The RTI² leadership team will identify interventions and/or supports aligned to the student's individual needs. Here are a few options currently used within Tennessee schools:

- Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)* and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)
- Individual counseling
- Discipline contracts
- Modified day or schedule
- Option to work within a separate setting

*In some cases, an FBA is legally mandated, and schools need to be knowledgeable of those regulations. However, even if the situation does not mandate an FBA, the team may choose to complete one.

Component 5: Tier III Procedures

5.3 Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)

Behavior is complex and is shaped by the individual's interpretation of the world. For students with complex behavior, the team may need to collect further data to determine what the events and/or stimuli (antecedents) are that occur prior to the behavior and what the student receives by engaging in the behavior (function). A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a powerful way to collect and analyze this data. While traditionally used only with students who have an IEP, an FBA can be used as an assessment for any student for whom there is a significant behavior concern. *Please note: FBAs are evaluation assessments, so written, informed parental consent is required.*

In order to maximize the information used during the FBA, all staff who work with the student should be interviewed, and the student should also be interviewed.

An FBA should include the data necessary to provide the following information:

- Antecedents present when the student is engaging in the undesirable behavior
- Antecedents present when the student is engaging in a preferred behavior
- The frequency of the undesired behavior
- Information related to when and where the undesired behavior occurs most often including the setting, course/content, task (i.e. independent, small group, whole group), peer or adult interactions, etc.
- The function of the behavior

Behavior plans can be designed in a plethora of informal ways, but in some cases, a formal Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is required in order to develop and communicate clearly the intensive intervention plan. A BIP will often outline:

- The result of the FBA including the hypothesis for the target behavior
- Replacement behavior
- Positive reinforcement
- Environmental strategies
- Clearly defined consequences
- A crisis plan
- A data collection plan
- Roles and responsibilities of staff members

For students with an IEP, a BIP should be considered for any student:

- who has been removed from the educational setting through ISS, OSS, or expulsion and has had an FBA due to a manifestation determination; and/or
- with chronic behavior that removes them from the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Component 5: Tier III Procedures

5.4 Progress Monitoring

As with Tier II, progress monitoring is used to assess students' performance or responsiveness to an intervention as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention. When additional intervention is being provided in Tier III, the effectiveness of the intervention should be monitored to ensure that it is helping the student reach a goal. This is accomplished through frequent data collection. Progress monitoring procedures should be sensitive to change.

Progress monitoring in Tier III may include:

- intervention artifacts,
- observations,
- data sheets, and/or
- data from the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

5.5 Data-Based Decision Making Procedures

Data-based decisions are an important part of any MTSS framework. Students receiving Tier III interventions demonstrate a higher level of need and therefore may require Tier III intervention for a longer period of time before meeting growth expectations.

During this extended support in Tier III intervention, a student's progress should be monitored closely so that any needed changes to the intervention can be made. The student's progress should guide the data team in making these changes to the intervention.

A plan should be in place to respond to the student's progress, lack of progress, or increased need and may include:

- increasing/decreasing the intensity of the intervention;
- increasing/decreasing the frequency of intervention;
- changing interventions;
- changing intervention provider; and/or
- changing the skill(s) targeted for intervention.

For more information, please refer to Data-Based Decision Making Table in Component 3.7.

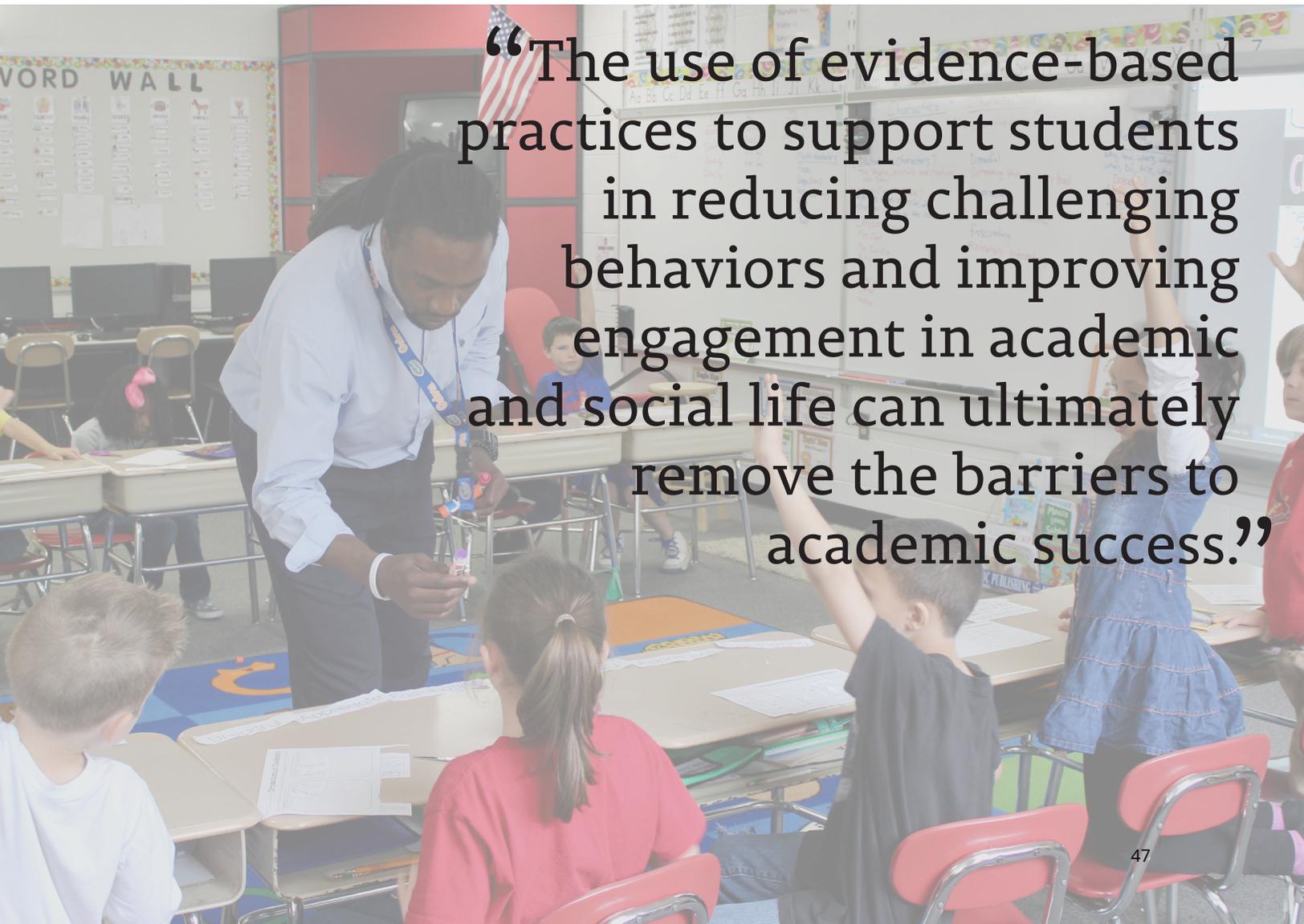
Component 5: Tier III Procedures

5.6 Professional Development

Professional development opportunities for Tier III should focus on the following topics: functional behavior assessments, development and implementation of behavior intervention plans, intensive interventions, progress monitoring, fidelity measures for Tier III supports, and intervention-specific trainings. Resources for training are available through the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project and/or the division of special populations' professional development opportunities.

5.7 Consideration for Special Education

Through assessment, intervention, progress monitoring, data review, and continuing refinement of the intervention, many students will become increasingly independent within the school, and there will be a reduction in the undesired behavior and an increase in the desired behavior. However, for a very few students, even Tier III supports are not sufficient. For these students, special education referral should be considered. The referral process as well as all subsequent processes and procedures within special education are outlined within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Tennessee Special Education Framework.



“The use of evidence-based practices to support students in reducing challenging behaviors and improving engagement in academic and social life can ultimately remove the barriers to academic success.”

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Component 6: Special Education Intervention

6.1 Overview of Special Education Intervention

Special education is considered the most intensive intervention designed for students with a variety of disabilities. Students with disabilities are likely to benefit from additional services, such as: explicit instruction, the use of technology, or deficit-based intervention. Integrating behavior strategies and interventions should be proactive and include a range of resources.

RTI²-B is a problem-solving system for providing all students with the instruction, intervention, and supports they need. Students receiving special education services may also receive Tier II or Tier III intervention.

For example, suppose a student meets eligibility criteria for a specific learning disability in reading. For this student, special education intervention is provided daily. Additionally, the student has difficulty with peer interactions and is aggressive toward peers. To provide intervention in peer interactions, the student attends a Tier II social skills intervention two times a week and completes a daily check-in/check-out form. Coordination and communication between all staff supporting the student will increase the student benefit and success from all the interventions provided.

For students who are eligible for special education due to the impact of a disability in which behavior is an associated area of deficit, Tier II and Tier III are most likely not sufficiently intense. As the student learns and uses the skills previously identified, he/she may benefit from Tier II or Tier III intervention in a less restrictive setting. The IEP team will need to determine the least restrictive environment based on the student's current level of performance and any additional data the team may need to consider.

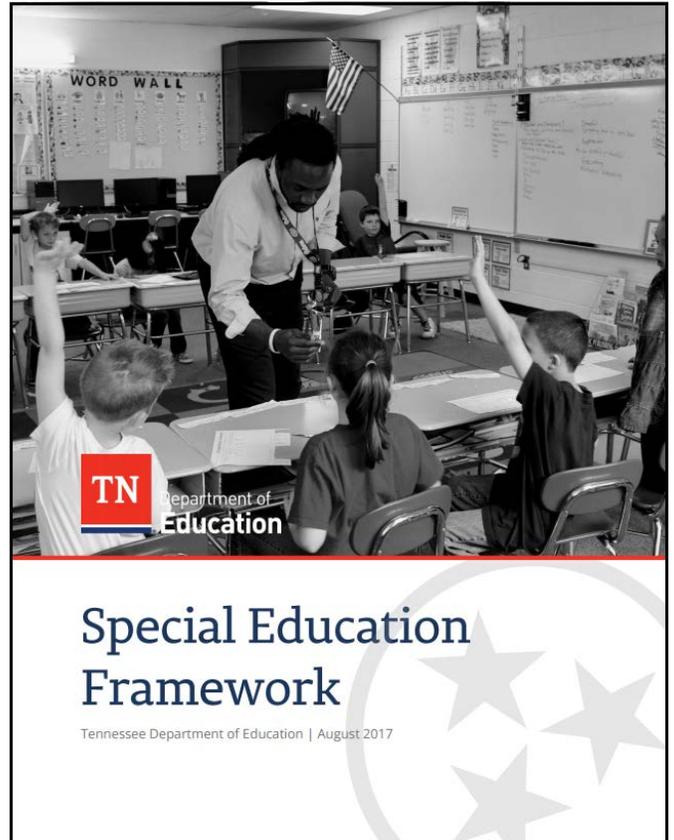
Component 6: Special Education Intervention

6.2 Special Education Framework

To learn more about special education intervention specifically, please closely review the revised [Special Education Framework](#) (Aug. 2017). The purpose of the *Special Education Framework* is to support educators in writing instructionally appropriate IEPs. The framework is organized into two sections:

1. general information about special education and
2. writing IEPs.

Other significant improvements include a component on the development of writing short-term objectives, additional clarification around service delivery, and links to resources for the IEP team. The *Special Education Framework* provides valuable information for IEP teams on developing IEPs that will set up students for success in their K–12 academic careers and open pathways for postsecondary and career options. Looking ahead, the next revision of the framework will include a third section on the implementation of IEPs—with a clear delineation between best practices and legal requirements.



Crisis Man

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Management Team

Component 7: Crisis Management Team

7.1 School-wide Crisis Management

Schools should consider a crisis management plan as part of a comprehensive school safety plan. The school counselor should assist in the development of the crisis management plan as well as implementation, training, and support to adults and students. The most important considerations are student and staff health, safety, and welfare. The emphasis should be placed on prevention factors, such as but not limited to: scheduling, programming, school culture, discipline policies, and practicing emergency preparation drills (e.g., fire evacuation). A crisis management plan may be necessary to deal with the onset of extreme circumstances for students and staff to provide a step-by-step, problem-solving approach for managing individual situations when dangerous behaviors occur. Strategies should prevent, de-escalate, and help manage severe behaviors that present a risk of injury to self or others.

Reasons for crisis management may include, but are not limited to:

- a seriously ill student (e.g., cancer, cystic fibrosis),
- the death of a student or staff member,
- a suicidal student,
- a student with intent to harm self and/or others,
- an external school threat (e.g., shooting at neighborhood business, kidnapping),
- military deployment of many parents,
- natural disasters, or
- incarceration of a family member.

A school-wide crisis management team may use a crisis management program to guide them, such as the PREPARE program, or develop a plan outlining procedures related to:

- communication with parents and families,
- communication with the community/stakeholders,
- support of school personnel,
- support of students,
- referral procedures to outside agencies of support and expertise, and
- follow up with individuals.

Component 7: Crisis Management Team

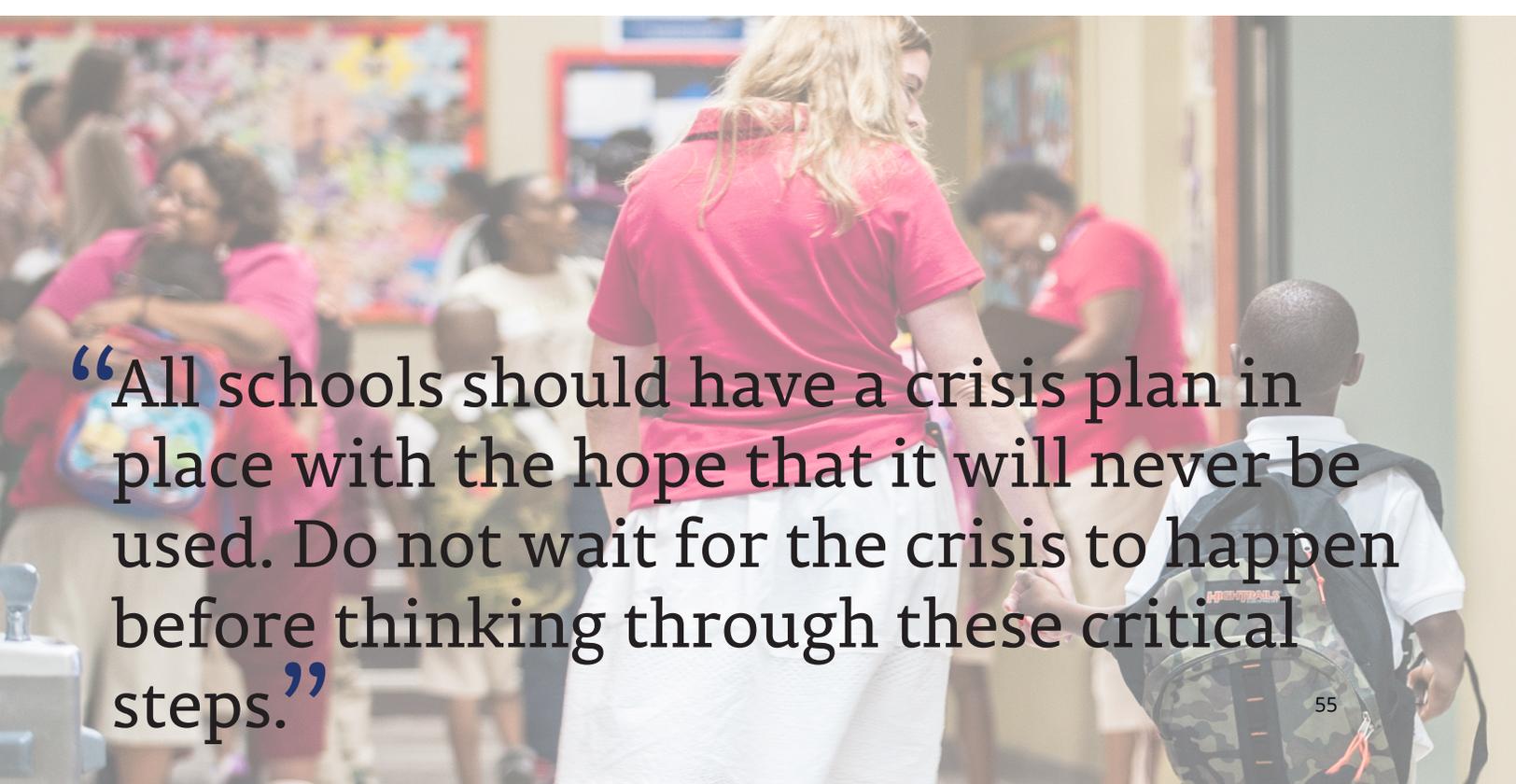
7.2: Students in Crisis

Additionally, for students who become unsafe to themselves or others, schools should have a crisis management system and staff members that are trained in de-escalation procedures and crisis prevention.

A crisis management system should be clearly outlined, including the roles and responsibilities of all members of the team. For schools that receive training from a vendor on restraint, many necessary procedures are included in the training. In most cases, staff members must follow procedures recommended by the vendor in order to maintain certification and/or be protected in the case of a legal proceeding. For schools that do not use a vendor for training or if the training is focused solely only on restraint techniques, care should be taken to ensure that staff members use a proactive problem-solving approach to avoid escalation and support students during de-escalation. All schools should have a crisis plan in place with the hope that it will never be used. Do not wait for the crisis to happen before thinking through these critical steps.

Behavior at the crisis level is traumatic for all involved, including staff members and students. For example, often a student will become anxious once asked to return to the classroom after a crisis. The crisis plan should outline a process that includes rapport repair between the staff member(s), the student, and the student's peers. Additionally, immediately following a crisis, an individual may be at high risk or in danger of escalating quickly to high risk due to a raw emotional state. Because of this, de-escalation may need to occur over an extended period of time.

Finally, any plan for a student in crisis should include a communications plan between the school and the student's parents.



“All schools should have a crisis plan in place with the hope that it will never be used. Do not wait for the crisis to happen before thinking through these critical steps.”

Glos

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Glossary

Antecedent: An event, activity, or environmental stimulus preceding a behavior immediately before, or an accumulation of previous events, or a collection of events.

Attendance: Positive school climate helps students be motivated to come to school and participate in class. Chronic absenteeism has a negative effect on student academic success. Schools should adopt a multi-tiered, problem-solving system of supports for attendance, with some supports available to all, others to a more targeted group, and some individualized interventions for the students who need the most support. Similarly, schools should review attendance data frequently to ensure that efforts are successful and all students are being supported. Attendance Works (January 2014).

Bullying prevention: A positive school climate allows students to feel safe, secure, and free from bullying. Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, harassment, threats, or intimidation when one person has greater status or power than the other. A growing number of bullying prevention programs are available to schools, and these programs can be integrated within a multi-tiered framework to improve school climate. In addition to their focus on prevention, addressing bullying behavior can be included among the RTI²-B practices to support student behavior. Prevention efforts of these programs include, but are not limited to, teaching specific skills and strategies to all students, removing triggers of bullying behavior, acknowledging desired behavior, examining discipline data to look for trends, individualizing support based on responsiveness, and building a positive and predictable school climate.

Character education: A learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about, and act on core values. RTI²-B and character education both strive to enhance school climate. As an effort to improve the educational experience of students, both initiatives focus on meeting students' needs by developing autonomy, a sense of belonging, and competency (Schwartz 2009). Character education curricula can be incorporated as part of the Tier I instruction within a school.

Comprehensive school counseling program: Driven by student data and based on standards in academic, postsecondary and career, and personal/social development, comprehensive school counseling programs promote and enhance the learning of all students. Effective school counseling programs are a collaborative effort between the school counselor, administrator, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders to create an environment that promotes students achievement. The framework of a comprehensive school counseling program consists of four components: foundations, management, delivery, and accountability. School counselors provide services to students, parents, school staff and the community through the school counseling core curriculum, individual student planning and responsive services. Support services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselor's interaction with others including referrals for additional assistance, consultation, and collaboration with stakeholders. School counselors use data to show the impact of the school counseling program on student achievement, attendance, and behavior, and analyze school counseling program assessments to guide future action and improve future results for all students.

Data-based decision making: The process of using appropriate data collected to inform and drive each instructional decision.

Fidelity: The extent to which the prescribed instruction or intervention plan is executed. Fidelity includes addressing the deficit area, using the type of intervention prescribed, maintaining an appropriate group size, length of session, following intervention procedures, etc.

Fidelity monitoring: The systematic monitoring by a responsible member of the school-wide RTI² leadership team to determine the extent to which the delivery of instruction or an intervention adheres to the protocols or program models originally developed. Fidelity monitoring has increased significance for evaluation and treatment effectiveness. The fidelity of implementation per intervention and instruction should be assessed throughout the process as per the guidelines in the manual.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Function-based Behavioral Intervention: A functional behavioral assessment includes procedures for gathering information about a student's behavior in order to develop a hypothesis about the function (i.e., purpose) of the student's problem behavior. FBA procedures may include: direct observation in the setting where the problem behavior typically occurs; interviews with student, family, teachers; rating scales; review of academic, medical, mental health, or other records. FBAs are typically conducted by individual student support teams and should include relevant school staff, representatives from appropriate internal or external support services, and family/student. The resulting hypothesis about the function of the problem behavior should be used to develop an individualized behavior intervention plan that is based on the function of the student's problem behavior. Although FBAs are required in the case of suspension and/or expulsions of more than 10 days, the FBA is not a disciplinary tool. Rather is a systematic way to collect, analyze, and use data.

RTI²-B internal coach: An individual within the school who leads the RTI² implementation, monitors fidelity, ensures implementation, and provides expertise in RTI²-B.

Mental health: A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Model of Demonstration: Schools and/or districts that will be identified using criteria developed by the state leadership team as schools that implement the principles of RTI²-B with a high level of fidelity. Model of Demonstration schools or districts will be considered for mentorship of neighboring schools and districts who are working towards implementation.

Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs): One source of student discipline data that RTI² leadership teams and school support teams can use to evaluate the overall effectiveness of RTI²-Behavior, to drive continuous improvement, to screen for behavior problems, and/or to monitor students' behavioral progress. To collect and use ODR data, school support teams should have clear definitions of problem behaviors and clear procedures for problem behaviors which should be office-managed (e.g., major problem behaviors) and which should be classroom-managed (e.g., minor problem behaviors). School teams should collect and analyze students' ODRs by problem behavior, location in which they occur, and the time of day they occur.

Progress monitoring: Progress monitoring is used to assess students' academic or behavioral performance, to quantify students' rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction and intervention, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

RTI² leadership team: Each district will have a RTI² leadership team to support the implementation of RTI². This team will review district-wide data related to student outcomes (academic and behavioral) and to evaluate the fidelity of implementation of RTI² across the district. A district level RTI²-Behavior coach will be available to provide ongoing support and consultation to school-wide RTI² leadership teams.

RTI²-B TBSP provider: The Tennessee Behavior Supports Project will provide technical assistance (i.e., training, consultation, and/or external coaching) to school and district teams to implement RTI²-Behavior. There are three projects (from the University of Memphis, Lambuth, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Tennessee) assigned to provide technical assistance to districts and schools in west, middle, and east Tennessee, respectively.

Screening: Screening may include a quick checklist, survey, or probe used to provide an initial general indicator of levels of academic performance or behavioral risk. Screenings may also include diagnostic assessments to gain more information about a student's academic or behavioral strengths and/or areas of concern.

Statewide RTI²-B leadership team: The state-wide leadership team for RTI²-B consists of state representatives from the Tennessee Department of Education. The state-wide technical assistance team consists of three regional support contracts known as the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (TBSP): University of Memphis-Lambuth, Vanderbilt University, and University of Tennessee-Knoxville. The state-wide leadership team has allocated time and resources through a five-year training grant (2015-2020) to assist in scaling up RTI²-B efforts throughout the state.

The Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (TBSP): The Tennessee Behavior Supports Project will provide technical assistance (i.e., training, consultation, and/or external coaching) to school and district teams to implement RTI²-Behavior. There are three projects (from the University of Memphis, Lambuth, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Tennessee) assigned to provide technical assistance to school districts in west, middle, and east Tennessee, respectively.

Universal screening/screener: Universal screening helps to identify which students are performing at or above the level considered necessary for achieving long-term success (general outcome measures) and helps to identify students who are at risk for academic or behavioral difficulties. Universal screening data can also serve as a benchmark for measuring the improvement of a group, class, grade, school or district (e.g., a reduction in the percentage of students identified to be at risk for academic and/or behavioral difficulties as an indicator of improvement for the group, class, grade, school, or district).

Wraparound services: Individualized community-based services that focus on the strengths and needs of the child and family. Wraparound services are developed through a team-planning process, where a team of individuals who are relevant to the well-being of the child (such as family members, service providers, teachers, and representatives from any involved agency) collaboratively develop and implement an individualized plan of care, known as a wraparound plan.

Apper

Indices

Appendix A: Behavior Matrix Examples *Pages 64–66*

	Responsibility	Optimism	Accountability	Respect
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your time wisely. • Take care of materials in your workspace. • Organize your own personal materials. • Ask for help when needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your best. • Strive to meet goals • Turn in assignments when due. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring all supplies. • Be in your assigned seat. • Focus on directions given. • Complete assigned task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen while someone else is talking. • Use property as it is intended to be used. • Keep hands to self.
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep neat and clean. • Go directly to assigned area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a friend. • Use kind words (please, thank you). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have signed agenda. • Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Level 0-2 • Stay to your right. • Keep hands and feet to ourselves.
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean your area after eating. • Stay in seat. • Eat your own food. • Walk to line up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return tray to counter. • Throw away your trash in bin. • Say thank-you to cafeteria staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have ID and money ready. • Get utensils/all food items before being seated. • Sit at assigned table. • Raise your hand before getting up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Level 0-2 • Chew with mouth closed. • Eat with utensil. • Wait your turn.
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in assigned area/seat. • Keep bus clean. • Notify driver of problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a positive role model to younger students. • Tell bus driver thank you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the bus number and driver's name. • Be on time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Level 0-2 • Keep hands and feet to self.
Restroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify staff of problems. • Flush the toilet. • Wash your hands. • Throw trash in bin. • Turn off water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete business. • Return to assigned area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use during assigned time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Level 0-2 • Honor privacy.
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return items in the same condition. • Wait patiently to check books in and out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend a book to others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return books and materials on time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Level 0-1 • Keep up with library book. • Enter and exit quietly.
Gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place all equipment back in designated spot. • Report issues to staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay active. • Have fun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear appropriate footwear. • Keep food and drinks off the court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Level 1-2 • Listen to directions before participating in activities.
Arrival/Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the dress code. • Arrive and dismiss on schedule. • Have supplies packed and ready for dismissal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ready and willing to learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring all supplies and homework to school. • Leave on assigned bell. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice Level 0-1 • Enter and exit quietly.

Bramble Middle Expectations

	BE SAFE	BE RESPECTFUL	BE PREPARED
CAFETERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wait in line for your turn -Walk in and out of the cafeteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Speak at an appropriate volume -Follow adult directions -Show good table manners -Have appropriate conversations with your friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Throw away your trash and recycle plastic bottles -Clean your area after eating -Stay at your designated area
TECHNOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visit school appropriate sites only -Report inappropriate content -Use equipment with care and obtain permission before using 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leave equipment the same as you found it -Speak at an appropriate volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep food and drinks away from computers -Use technology for academic purposes only
HALLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Walk with your feet moving in the flow of traffic; stay on the right side of the hall and stairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep hands off walls and pick up trash -Keep hands to self -Use quiet voices -Follow adult directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Go directly to where you need to go -Be efficient and arrive to class on time
ARRIVAL/ DEPARTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Respond immediately when teachers/adults call -Stay in designated area -Walk both inside and outside of school grounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Speak at an appropriate volume both inside and outside of school building -Resolve conflicts with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Arrive on time -Go directly to destination
CLASSROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself -Appropriate responses to adults and peers at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pay attention to the speaker -Follow directions -Work well with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complete all classwork -Be present with all materials ready -Ask questions as needed
RESTROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep restrooms clean -Report any problems or misbehaviors to staff (graffiti, fighting, horseplay, bullying, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Honor privacy -Wait patiently for your turn -Keep restrooms clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use restroom quickly, and use the time between classes -Return to classroom promptly and quietly -Use soap and water for washing hands
GYM/PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use equipment appropriately -Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Follow teacher directions -Use appropriate language and tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Put equipment away -Be on time and present
BUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stay in your seat -Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself -Report any misbehavior to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use a quiet voice -Follow bus driver directions - Use appropriate language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Get to bus on time -Walk on and off quickly -Clean up after yourself
ASSEMBLIES/ SPECIAL EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listen to adult directions -Sit in assigned area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stay positive -Use appropriate volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enter quickly and quietly -Listen while speakers are talking

HAWKS' EXPECTATIONS



Hawks' Pride	I Can Be Respectful	I Can Be Safe	I Can Be a Learner
In the classroom, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Directions Cooperate with others Listen and pay attention to the speaker Respect materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands, feet, and objects to myself Follow all rules Use self-control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring your required materials Participate in class activities Complete work with best effort Turn in finished work Use time wisely
In the Cafeteria, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Quiet voices Follow directions 1st time given When lights are off listen silently for directions Use your table manners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk to and from Lunch quietly Stay in your assigned seat Throw away trash in garbage when called 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise hand if you need anything Get all items the 1st time Clean up your area when you leave
In the restrooms, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect everyone's privacy Get in and get out Flush toilet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use proper washing habits (soap, water, paper towels) Report any problems or misbehaviors to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the floor clean of paper and water Stay clear of areas with "out of order" signs
In the hallways, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands, feet, and objects to self Respect student and teacher work on the walls Keep the floors clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk on the right side of the hall in a single file line Walk through doorways on the right-hand side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greet others with a silent wave Listen for directions in the hall by being quiet
In the library and with computers, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be kind to library books, computers, and furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computers are for academic use only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep food and drinks away from library and all computers
On the playground, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite others to play Share/take turns using the equipment Be kind to each other Respond immediately when teacher/adult calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the equipment appropriately Play only in approved areas Tell your teacher if you need to leave the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the rules of school approved games Leave rocks, sticks, and wood chips on the ground Control your temper
During car and bus duty, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen quietly for name/bus to be called Respond immediately to teacher on duty Get to your bus/car quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands, feet, objects to self Report problems to teacher or bus driver Stay in assigned area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in assigned seat Keep materials and personal items in backpack Go quickly to/from class when called by office
At assemblies, Hawks will....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and follow directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands and feet to self Sit with your assigned teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show HAWK pride and spirit

DO WHAT'S RIGHT

MUSTANG PRIDE	SHOW RESPECT	ACT RESPONSIBLY	TAKE PRIDE
In the classroom, Mustangs...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions Cooperate with others Listen and pay attention to the speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remain in classroom the entire class period Bring your required materials Turn in finished work, including work from absences Exercise self-control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in class activities Complete work with best effort Remain on task Use time wisely
On buses and in cars, Mustangs...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use quiet voices Use appropriate/positive words and actions Speak to others in a polite manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to directions Get to your car/bus quickly and safely Keep hands, feet, and objects to self Report problems to the bus driver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep belongings to self Clean up after yourself Know your bus number and driver's name Be a positive representative of Spring Station Middle School
In the cafeteria, Mustangs...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use quiet voices Follow directions Show respect to cafeteria staff by saying please and thank you Walk to and from lunch quietly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know your lunch number Stay in your assigned seat Handle food as it is meant to be handled Get all items the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throw trash in garbage Clean up your area (wipe tables and sweep floor) Stack your trays appropriately
In the restroom, Mustangs...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect everybody's private space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use proper washing habits (soap, water, paper towels) Keep classroom materials out Report any problems or misbehaviors to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flush toilet Keep floor clean of paper and water
In the hallways, stairwells, and at the lockers, Mustangs...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be kind to your locker neighbor Use quiet voices Keep your belongings in your locker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get your materials quickly and move on Refrain from horseplay Walk with the flow of traffic; stay on the right side in the hall and stairwells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the floors clean (even if it's not yours, pick it up) Are on time to class Keep your lockers closed and locked
In the library and the computer lab, Mustangs...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use quiet voices Are kind to library books, computers, and furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring agenda for checkout Return unwanted books to circulation desk for re-shelving Know that computers are for academic use ONLY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up after yourself Keep food and drinks out of the library and computer lab
At assemblies, Mustangs...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and follow directions Sit with assigned teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter quickly and quietly Keep hands and feet to self Load from bottom up; unload from top down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show appropriate school spirit Stay positive



Appendix B: Teacher Surveys *Pages 67—69*



Dear teachers,

We value your feedback. Please fill out the following survey to help us develop a school-wide professional development plan. We appreciate your participation!

Your Principal

AREA OF SERVICE	QUALITY RATING
OVERALL IMPRESSIONS	
Our school is doing an excellent job of supporting students':	Choose an item.
Social Skills	Choose an item.
Study Skills	Choose an item.
Leadership	Choose an item.
Self-Advocacy	Choose an item.
Self-Regulation	Choose an item.
BEHAVIOR	
Students in our school show respect for each other.	Choose an item.
Our school's discipline policies are fair and effective.	Choose an item.
Students, Teachers, and Parents in our school demonstrate sensitivity to racial and ethnic issues.	Choose an item.
Our school provides students and teachers with a safe and orderly environment.	Choose an item.
Students at our school demonstrate genuine concern for the wellbeing of fellow students.	Choose an item.
TIER II	
I understand how to implement and support students using Check In Check Out.	Choose an item.
I understand how to progress monitor my students who are receiving Tier II supports.	Choose an item.
TIER III	
I understand how to support my students who are currently receiving Tier III supports.	Choose an item.
I feel confident when participating in a FBA.	Choose an item.
I feel confident in my implementation of a student's BIP.	Choose an item.
MORE COMMENTS?	
Please expand upon your assessment of any areas in which our school could improve. We welcome your suggestions and will hold an open house later this fall to discuss the results of this survey.	
Optional comments, suggested trainings	
[Comments]	

Professional Development Needs Assessment

Potential Topic	Really Want	Want	Okay	No Thanks
Classroom Management Strategies				
Restorative Practices				
Class Meetings				
Screenings, Progress Monitoring, and Data				
Behavior Contracts				
Social Skills Training				
Organization and Study Skills				

Survey

Planning our days together!

We are currently planning our professional development for next school year and want to support the work we have been doing related to RTI²-B. Please provide you feedback using this survey so we can select the topics of most interest to you. Thank you.

Please rate your understanding of schoolwide incentives.

1 2 3 4 5

Beginner

Advanced

Please rate your understanding of the behavioral expectations matrix.

1 2 3 4 5

Beginner

Advanced

Do you want more information on...

Tier I Yes | No

Tier II Yes | No

Tier III Yes | No

Please rate your understanding of behavior contracts.

1 2 3 4 5

Beginner

Advanced

Please rate your understanding of Functional Behavior Assessments

1 2 3 4 5

Beginner

Advanced

Please rate your understanding of Behavior Improvement Plans.

1 2 3 4 5

Beginner

Advanced

Please rate your understanding of our school crisis plan.

1 2 3 4 5

Beginner

Advanced

Appendix C: Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) Pages 70—79

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT (FBA) INSTRUCTIONS

Referral

The decision whether or not to perform an FBA should be made by the IEP team. If an FBA is NOT to be done, explanation/reasons should be detailed on a separate sheet.

Teacher Interview

Behaviors need to be very specific. Make sure what you list as a behavior is something that you can *see* and *count*. Don't forget to list student strengths as well as weaknesses. For example, question 9 (the 'student's favorite things to do') deals with desired reinforcers, not misbehavior.

Parent Interview

This can be done by phone or in person.

Student-Assisted Interview

If the student's reading and writing level does not allow him/her to read the questions, an adult having good rapport with the child should read them and write the answers. Record student comments, affect, and disposition in "interviewer comments."

Functional Behavior Assessment Form

These pages are to be completed by the assessment team after student observations have been made, interviews conducted, and all information gathered and interpreted. Be sure to list strengths as well as weaknesses. List all team members. Attach all student observations to the FBA form. (Various observation forms are included at the end of the packet. Systems should choose the most appropriate form for each observation.)

Hypothesis

This page should be completed after the FBA form is finished. *Specific strategies* to teach "positive behaviors" A-D are not included on this page.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT REFERRAL

Student _____ SS# _____

Grade _____ Teacher _____ DOB _____

School _____ Today's Date _____

Referring Person _____ Position _____

Current Service _____ Hours/Week _____

Agencies Involved _____

Reason for Referral _____

Frequency of Problem Behavior _____

Duration of Problem Behavior _____

Length of Time Exhibited _____

Interventions Used That Have Not Worked _____

Interventions Currently Being Used _____

The Functional Behavior Assessment will be done _____ (date)

The Functional Behavior Assessment will not be done. (Please state the reason.)

TEACHER INTERVIEW

Student _____ SS# _____
Grade _____ Teacher _____
School _____ Date _____

1. What specific behaviors occur in school that interfere most with this student's learning/social relationships? (Describe the ACTUAL behavior. For example, instead of "aggressive," you should write "hits," "kicks," "trips others," etc.)

2. When are these behaviors most likely to occur?

3. Are there certain persons, events, or situations that consistently trigger the onset of these behaviors?

4. Student strengths
Academic:

Social:

5. Student weaknesses
Academic:

Social:

6. Does the student attend school willingly and consistently?

7. Have you had a conference with parent/guardian about this problem behavior?

Date of conference:

Results/Changes made:

8. Describe previous interventions and indicate the degree of success of each, including rewards and punishments:

9. What are the student's favorite things to do? (possible reinforcers)

10. Reinforcers that do not work with this student:

PARENT INTERVIEW

Student _____ SS# _____
Grade _____ Teacher _____ School _____
Parent Name _____ Date _____

1. What does your child like to do in his/her free time?
2. What does he/she dislike in free time?
3. With whom does he/she like to spend time?
4. Does your child enjoy school?
5. Does your child experience problems at school?
6. Does your child experience problems at home?
7. Is your child currently on medication?
Name(s) of meds:
Dosage and frequency:
Prescribed for:
8. In general, does your child seem happy?
9. Does your child express feelings easily? With whom?

STUDENT-ASSISTED INTERVIEW

Student _____ SS# _____
Grade _____ DOB _____ Teacher _____
School _____ Interviewer _____

A=Always, S=Sometimes, N=Never

1. In general, is your work hard? A S N
2. In general, is your work easy? A S N
3. When you ask for help appropriately, do you get it? A S N
4. Do you think work periods for each assignment are too long? A S N
5. Do you think work periods for each assignment are too short? A S N
6. When you do seatwork, do you do better when someone works with you? A S N
7. Do you think people notice when you do a good job? A S N
8. Do you think you get the rewards you deserve when you do well? A S N
9. Do you think you would do better in school if you received more rewards? A S N
10. Are there things in the classroom that distract you? A S N
11. Do you like to go to school?
12. Do you have problems, or get into trouble, at school?
13. When do you have problems at school?
14. Why do you have problems at that time?
15. When are your best times at school?

16. Why do you have no problems during those times?

17. What changes could be made so you would have fewer problems at school?

18. What kind of rewards would you like to earn for good behavior or good school work?

19. Who encourages you to do your best in behavior and classwork?

20. What are your favorite activities at school?

21. What are your favorite activities at home?

22. If you had the chance, what activities would you like to do that you don't have the opportunity to do now?

Interviewer comments (on back): Please describe the attitude of student, willingness to complete this task, etc.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT

Student _____ SS# _____
Grade _____ Teacher _____ DOB _____
School _____ Today's Date _____
Person completing form _____ Position _____
Current Service _____ Hours/Week _____
Certification _____ Date of Last Eval. _____

Relevant medical information:

Relevant social history:

Student communicates by:

List student's strengths and weaknesses:

Academic:

Social:

Describe the problem behavior(s):

Frequency and duration of problem behavior(s):

When and where does the problem behavior(s) occur?

_____ With a certain person? Who? _____

_____ Certain area of the school? Specify _____

_____ Certain time of the day? (e.g. subject, lunch, recess, hall, bathroom)

Specify _____

_____ Certain activity? (e.g. whole vs. small group, seatwork, transition)

Specify _____

_____ In response to direct request or instruction

_____ In response to reprimand

_____ When left alone

_____ When ignored

_____ When denied certain activity/privilege

_____ When routine is changed unexpectedly

Other:

Describe what actually happened (the consequences) as a result of the problem behavior(s):

As a result of the problem behavior(s), the student:

Got:

_____ Attention

_____ Activity/Tangible

_____ Sensory Stimulation

Avoided:

_____ Difficult task

_____ Teacher/Adult demand

_____ Certain activity/person

Academic skills that need to be addressed in order for this student to be successful include:

Members of Assessment Team

Position

HYPOTHESIS

Student _____ SSN# _____
Grade _____ DOB _____ Teacher _____
School _____ Date _____

1. Behavior to be changed:

2. Perceived function of the behavior:

3. Positive behaviors to be taught:

A.

B.

C.

D.

Appendix D: Behavior Support Plan *Pages 80—81*

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN

Student _____ SS# _____
Grade _____ Teacher _____ DOB _____
School _____ Today's Date _____

1. Description of problem behavior and the function of this behavior:

2. Positive behavior(s) to be taught which will serve the same function, how they will be taught, and who will teach them:

3. Positive reinforcement that will occur when the new behavior is exhibited, or when the problem behavior is avoided:

4. Environmental/curricular strategies/modifications to be used:

5. Negative consequences that will occur when the problem behavior is exhibited:

6. Crisis management plan, if the problem behavior presents a risk or harm:

7. How and when will success be measured? (increase in appropriate behavior or decrease in problem behavior)

8. List team members, function, and responsibility:

Appendix E: OSEP Dear Colleague Letter, 2016 *Pages 82—97*



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

August 1, 2016

Dear Colleague:

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is committed to ensuring that all children with disabilities have meaningful access to a State's challenging academic content standards that prepare them for college and careers. Consistent with these goals, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) entitles each eligible child with a disability to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet the child's unique needs.¹ 20 U.S.C. §§1412(a)(1) and 1400(d)(1)(A). Under the IDEA, the primary vehicle for providing FAPE is through an appropriately developed individualized education program (IEP) that is based on the individual needs of the child. 34 CFR §§300.17 and 300.320-300.324. In the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, the IEP Team must consider – and, when necessary to provide FAPE, include in the IEP – the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior. 34 CFR §§300.324(a)(2)(i) and (b)(2); and 300.320(a)(4).

The Department has determined that this letter is significant guidance under the Office of Management and Budget's Final Bulletin for Agency Good Guidance Practices, 72 Fed. Reg. 3432 (Jan. 25, 2007). See www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/merandora/fy2007/m07-07.pdf. Significant guidance is non-binding and does not create or impose new legal requirements. The Department is issuing this letter to provide LEAs and other responsible public agencies with information to assist them in meeting their obligations under the IDEA and its implementing regulations.

If you are interested in commenting on this letter, please email us your comment at iepgosals@ed.gov or contact Lisa Pagano at 202-245-7413 or Lisa.Pagano@ed.gov. For further information about the Department's guidance processes, please visit www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/significant-guidance.html.

Recent data on short-term disciplinary removals from the current placement strongly suggest that many children with disabilities may not be receiving appropriate behavioral interventions and

¹While this letter focuses on requirements under the IDEA relating to FAPE in the least restrictive environment, students with disabilities also have rights under two civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability—Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Title II). The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education enforces Section 504 in public elementary and secondary schools. Also, in this context, OCR shares in the enforcement of Title II with the U.S. Department of Justice. More information about these laws is available at: www.ed.gov/ocr and www.ada.gov.

supports, and other strategies, in their IEPs.² During the 2013-2014 school year, 10 percent of all children with disabilities, ages 3 through 21, were subject to a disciplinary removal of 10 school days or less, with children of color with disabilities facing higher rates of removal.³ For instance, nineteen percent of black children with disabilities, ages 3 through 21, were subject to a removal of 10 school days or less within a single school year.⁴ In light of research about the detrimental impacts of disciplinary removals,⁵ including short-term disciplinary removals, the Department is issuing this guidance to clarify that schools, charter schools, and educational programs in juvenile correctional facilities must provide appropriate behavioral supports to children with disabilities who require such supports in order to receive FAPE and placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE). As a practical matter, providing appropriate behavioral supports helps to ensure that children with disabilities are best able to access and benefit from instruction.

The IDEA authorizes school personnel to implement a short-term disciplinary removal from the current placement, such as an out-of-school suspension, for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct. 34 CFR §300.530(b)(1). The Department strongly supports child and school safety, and this letter is not intended to limit the appropriate use of disciplinary removals that are necessary to protect children. Rather, the letter is a part of the Department’s broader work to encourage school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning, where educators actively prevent the need for short-term disciplinary removals by effectively supporting and responding to behavior.^{6,7} In keeping with this goal, this letter serves to remind school personnel that the authority to implement disciplinary removals does not negate their obligation to consider the implications of the child’s behavioral needs, and the effects of the use of suspensions (and other short-term removals) when ensuring the provision of FAPE.⁸

² For purposes of this letter, we use “behavioral supports” to generally refer to behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies to address behavior.

³ U.S. Department of Education, ED Facts Data Warehouse (EDW), OMB #1875-0240: “IDEA Part B Discipline Collection,” 2014.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Public Policy Research Institute. (2011). Breaking schools’ rules: a statewide study of how school discipline relates to students’ success and juvenile justice involvement. Available at http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Breaking_Schools_Rules_Report_Final.pdf

⁶ “The Act and the regulations recognize that school officials need some reasonable degree of flexibility when disciplining children with disabilities who violate a code of student conduct. Interrupting a child’s participation in education for up to 10 school days over the course of a school year, when necessary and appropriate to the circumstances, does not impose an unreasonable limitation on a child with a disability’s right to FAPE.” 71 Fed. Reg. 46717 (Aug. 14, 2006).

⁷ More about the Department’s work is available at www.ed.gov/rethinkdiscipline

⁸ This letter does not address the obligations of school personnel following a disciplinary change in placement, including obligations to provide behavioral supports. This letter is intended to supplement the June 2009 Questions and Answers on Discipline Procedures (as revised) from OSERS, which provided guidance on discipline policies for school-age children to personnel in State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs), and parents. Further, as the obligations of school personnel covered in this letter also apply to school personnel serving children with disabilities in juvenile correctional facilities, this letter is also intended to supplement the December 5,

Additionally, this letter provides alternatives to disciplinary removal which schools can apply instead of exclusionary disciplinary measures.

We are issuing this guidance to clarify that the failure to consider and provide for needed behavioral supports through the IEP process is likely to result in a child not receiving a meaningful educational benefit or FAPE. In addition, a failure to make behavioral supports available throughout a continuum of placements, including in a regular education setting, could result in an inappropriately restrictive placement and constitute a denial of placement in the LRE. While such determinations are necessarily individualized, this guidance is intended to focus attention on the need to consider and include evidence-based behavioral supports in IEPs that, when done with fidelity, often serve as effective alternatives to unnecessary disciplinary removals, increase participation in instruction, and may prevent the need for more restrictive placements.

This letter is organized into five areas:

- IDEA’s procedural requirements regarding evaluations, eligibility determinations, IEPs, and behavioral supports;
- IDEA’s IEP content requirements related to behavioral supports;
- Circumstances that may indicate potential denials of FAPE or of placement in the LRE;
- Implications for short-term disciplinary removals and other exclusionary disciplinary measures;⁹
- Conclusion, including additional information for parents and stakeholders.

I. IDEA Procedural Requirements Regarding Evaluations, Eligibility, IEPs, and Behavioral Supports

The IDEA and its implementing regulations require IEP Teams to follow certain procedures to ensure that IEPs meet the needs, including the behavioral needs, of children with disabilities. See 20 U.S.C. §1414(d) and 34 CFR §§300.320-300.324. Those needs are generally identified during the initial evaluation or reevaluation, which must, among other matters, use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, and assess the child in all areas related to the suspected disability,

2014 OSERS Dear Colleague Letter on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements that apply to the education of students with disabilities in correctional facilities. The June 2009 guidance can be found at http://idea.ed.gov/object/fileDownload/model/QaCorner/field/PdfFile/primary_key/7 and the December 5, 2014 letter can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/index.html>

⁹ For purposes of this document, we use “exclusionary disciplinary measures” as a descriptive term to discuss the range of actions that school personnel implement – in response to a child’s misbehavior or violation of a code of student conduct – where the child is removed and excluded from their classroom, from school grounds, or school activities either formally (e.g., suspension) or informally (e.g., asking the parent to keep the student at home for a day or more). Additional information regarding exclusionary disciplinary measures may be found in Section IV of this document.

including, if appropriate, social and emotional status. 34 CFR §§300.304(b) and 300.304(c)(4); see also 34 CFR §§300.304-300.311. Further, the evaluation must use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical and developmental factors. 34 CFR §300.304(b)(3). Parents, classroom teachers, and other service providers will also have formal and informal information about an eligible child's current functional (e.g., behavioral) performance for the IEP Team's consideration. 34 CFR §§300.321 and 300.324. Once the IEP is developed, IEP Teams must: (1) review the child's IEP periodically, but not less than annually, to determine whether the child's annual goals are being achieved (34 CFR §300.324(b)(1)(i)), and (2) revise the IEP, as appropriate, to address any lack of expected progress towards the annual goals in the child's IEP and in the general education curriculum, the child's anticipated needs, or other matters. 34 CFR §300.324(b)(1)(ii).

There are a number of special factors that IEP Teams must consider in developing, reviewing, or revising a child's IEP. The IDEA specifically requires IEP Teams to consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address behavior for any child with a disability whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others. 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(3)(B)(i). This requirement applies to all IEP Teams, regardless of the child's specific disability, and to the development, review, and revision of IEPs (34 CFR §300.324(a)(2) and (b)(2)). Incidents of child misbehavior and classroom disruptions, as well as violations of a code of student conduct, may indicate that the child's IEP needs to include appropriate behavioral supports. This is especially true when a pattern of misbehavior is apparent or can be reasonably anticipated based on the child's present levels of performance and needs. To the extent a child's behavior including its impact and consequences (e.g., violations of a code of student conduct, classroom disruptions, disciplinary removals, and other exclusionary disciplinary measures) impede the child's learning or that of others, the IEP Team must consider when, whether, and what aspects of the child's IEP related to behavior need to be addressed or revised to ensure FAPE. If the child already has behavioral supports, upon repeated incidents of child misbehavior or classroom disruption, the IEP team should meet to consider whether the child's behavioral supports should be changed.

In general, IEP Team meetings provide parents (who are required members of the team) critical opportunities to participate in the decision-making process, raise questions and concerns regarding their child's behavior, and provide input on the types of behavioral supports their children may need to facilitate their child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. 34 CFR §§300.320(a), 300.321(a)(1), and 300.324(a)(1)(ii). Parents have the right to request an IEP Team meeting at any time, and public agencies generally must grant a reasonable request from a parent for an IEP Team meeting.¹⁰ See 20 U.S.C.

¹⁰ Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, Final Rule, 64 Fed. Reg. 12406, 12581 (Mar. 12, 1999) explains, in response to public comment, that "A[regulatory] provision is not necessary to clarify that public agencies will honor 'reasonable' requests

§1414(d)(4)(A)(i)(III) and 34 CFR §300.324(b)(1)(ii)(C). We believe it would be appropriate for a parent to request an IEP Team meeting following disciplinary removals or changes in the child’s behavior that impede the child’s learning or that of others, as these likely indicate that the IEP, as written or implemented, may not be properly addressing the child’s behavioral needs.¹¹ Whenever appropriate, the child with a disability should also be present during IEP Team meetings. 34 CFR §300.321(a)(7).

When an IEP Has Already Been Developed for a School Year

In instances where a child with a disability is subject to a disciplinary removal after the IEP for that school year has been developed and the parents and the relevant school officials agree that the IEP needs to be revised to address the behavior, but circumstances prevent the IEP Team from convening prior to the child’s return to school, the IDEA regulations permit the parent and public agency to agree not to convene an IEP Team meeting and instead to develop a written document to amend or modify the current IEP. 34 CFR §300.324(a)(4)(i). This option could be used to provide the child with the necessary behavioral supports upon the child’s return to school. However, if changes are made to the child’s IEP in this manner, the agency must ensure that the IEP Team is informed of those changes. 34 CFR §300.324(a)(4)(ii).

II. IDEA’s IEP Content Requirements Related to Behavioral Supports

Research shows that school-wide, small group, and individual behavioral supports that use proactive and preventative approaches, address the underlying cause of behavior, and reinforce positive behaviors are associated with increases in academic engagement, academic achievement, and fewer suspensions and dropouts.¹² In short, children are more likely to achieve when they are directly taught predictable and contextually relevant school and classroom routines and expectations, acknowledged clearly and consistently for displaying positive

by parents for a meeting to review their child’s IEP. Public agencies are required under the statute and these final regulations to be responsive to parental requests for such reviews.”

¹¹ T.K., S.K., individually and on behalf of L.K. v. New York City Department of Education, Brief of the United States as Amicus Curiae Supporting Appellees (2015). Available at <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2015/03/16/tknycdobrief.pdf>

¹² Christle, C. A., Jolivet, K., & Nelson, C. M. (2005). Breaking the school to prison pipeline: identifying school risk and protective factors for youth delinquency. *Exceptionality*, 13(2), 69-88. See also Crone, D. A., & Hawken, L. S. (2010). *Responding to problem behavior in schools: the behavior education program*. Guilford Press. See also Liaupsin, C. J., Umbreit, J., Ferro, J. B., Urso, A., & Upreti, G. (2006). Improving academic engagement through systematic, function-based intervention. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 29, 573-591. See also Luiselli, J. K., Putnam, R. F., Handler, M. W., & Feinberg, A. B. (2005). Whole-school positive behaviour support: effects on child discipline problems and academic performance. *Educational Psychology*, 25(2-3), 183-198. See also Putnam, R., Horner, R. H., & Algozzine, R. (2006). Academic achievement and the implementation of school-wide behavior support. *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Newsletter*, 3(1), 1-6.

academic and social behavior, consistently prompted and corrected when behavior does not meet expectations, and treated by others with respect.¹³

However, when a child with a disability experiences behavioral challenges, including those that result in suspensions or other exclusionary disciplinary measures, appropriate behavioral supports may be necessary to ensure that the child receives FAPE. In the same way that an IEP Team would consider a child's language and communication needs, and include appropriate assistive technology devices or services in the child's IEP (34 CFR §300.324(a)(2)(iv) and (v)) to ensure that the child receives a meaningful educational benefit, so too must the IEP Team consider and, when determined necessary for ensuring FAPE, include or revise behavioral supports in the IEP of a child with a disability exhibiting behavior that impedes his or her learning or that of others. 34 CFR §§300.320(a)(4) and 300.324(a)(2)(i).

Therefore, as part of the development, review and, as appropriate, revision of the IEP, IEP Teams should determine whether behavioral supports should be provided in any of three areas:

(1) special education and related services, (2) supplementary aids and services, and (3) program modifications or supports for school personnel. 34 CFR §300.320(a)(4).

IEPs should contain behavioral supports supported by evidence—IDEA specifically requires that both special education and related services and supplementary aids and services be based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable. 34 CFR §300.320(a)(4). As a matter of best practice, we strongly encourage schools to consider how the implementation of behavioral supports within the IEP could be facilitated through a school-wide, multi-tiered behavioral framework, described at greater length below.

Special Education and Related Services

Behavioral supports provided as part of a child's special education and related services may be necessary to ensure that the child's IEP is designed to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals specified in the IEP, to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum, and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. 34 CFR §§300.320(a)(4)(i) and (ii). Interventions and supports that could assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education may include instruction and reinforcement of school expectations, violence prevention programs, anger management groups, counseling for mental health issues, life skills training, or social skills instruction. Please see the end of this section for additional tools and resources to assist with the implementation of behavioral supports.

¹³ Algozzine, B., Wang, C., & Violette, A. S. (2011). Reexamining the relationship between academic achievement and social behavior. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 13, 3-16. See also McIntosh, K., Chard, D. J., Boland, J. B., & Horner, R. H. (2006). Demonstration of combined efforts in school-wide academic and behavioral systems and incidence of reading and behavior challenges in early elementary grades. *Journal of Positive Behavioral Interventions*, 8, 146-154.

Supplementary Aids and Services

Public agencies must comply with the requirement to make available a continuum of alternative placements as required under 34 CFR §§300.114-300.116, which includes the provision of supplementary aids and services (e.g. behavioral supports) throughout the continuum. Under 34 CFR §300.42, supplementary aids and services are defined to include aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with 34 CFR §§300.114-300.116.

Appropriate supplementary aids and services could include those behavioral supports necessary to enable a child with a disability to be educated in regular classes or the setting determined to be the child's appropriate placement in the LRE. Such behavioral supports might include meetings with a behavioral coach, social skills instruction, counselor, or other approaches. In general, placement teams may not place a child with a disability in special classes, separate schooling, or other restrictive settings outside of the regular educational environment solely due to the child's behavior when behavioral supports through the provision of supplementary aids and services could be provided for that child that would be effective in addressing his or her behavior in the regular education setting.¹⁴ 34 CFR §§300.114-300.116. Children with disabilities may only be removed from the regular educational environment when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. 34 CFR §300.114(a)(2)(ii).

Program Modifications or Supports for School Personnel

In addition to the behavioral supports that may be provided directly to children with disabilities, program modifications or supports for school personnel, provided on behalf of the child, may also be necessary to support the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, advancement towards attaining the annual goals specified in the IEP, and participation in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. 34 CFR §§300.320(a)(4)(i) and (ii). School personnel may need training, coaching, and tools to appropriately address the behavioral needs of a particular child. Supports for school personnel may be designed, as appropriate, to better implement effective instructional and behavior management strategies and specific behavioral interventions that are included in the child's IEP.

¹⁴ We refer to the "placement team," rather than the IEP Team, as IDEA's implementing regulations specify that placement decisions must be made by a group of persons, including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options. 34 CFR §300.116(a)(1).

Implementation of a Multi-Tiered Behavioral Framework

Research shows that implementing evidence-based, multi-tiered behavioral frameworks can help improve overall school climate, school safety, and academic achievement for all children, including children with disabilities.¹⁵ In general, behavioral supports are most effectively organized within a multi-tiered behavioral framework that provides instruction and clear behavioral expectations for all children, targeted intervention for small groups not experiencing success, and individualized supports and services for those needing the most intensive support. In recent years, the Department has disseminated a number of tools and resources to assist schools in the creation of safe and supportive school climates conducive to learning, including the implementation of effective alternatives to disciplinary removal. These resources include:

- *Supporting and Responding to Behavior: Evidence-based Classroom Strategies for Teachers*, a document summarizing evidence-based, proactive, and responsive classroom behavior support and intervention strategies for teachers.¹⁶
- *Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports: Implementation Blueprint and Self-Assessment*, a guide to develop local capacity for sustainable, culturally and contextually relevant, and high-fidelity implementation of multi-tiered practices and systems of support.¹⁷
- *2014 School Discipline Guidance Package*, including guidance on how public elementary and secondary schools can meet their legal obligations to administer discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin and a set of guiding principles to assist communities in improving school climate and school discipline.¹⁸

These and other resources can be found at www.ed.gov/rethinkdiscipline and <http://ccrs.osepideasthatwork.org>.

III. Circumstances that May Indicate Potential Denials of FAPE or of Placement in the LRE

It is incumbent upon IEP Teams to implement IDEA's procedural and substantive requirements to ensure that children with disabilities receive the behavioral supports they need to enable them to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals specified in their IEPs and to be

¹⁵ Bradshaw, C., Koth, C.W., Thornton, L.A., & Leaf, P.J., (2009). Altering school climate through school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports: findings from a group-randomized effectiveness trial. *Prevention Science* 10(2), 100-115.

¹⁶ Available at <https://www.osepideasthatwork.org/evidencebasedclassroomstrategies/>

¹⁷ Available at <http://www.pbis.org/blueprint/implementationblueprint>

¹⁸ Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/fedefforts.html#guidance>

involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum.

20 U.S.C. §§ 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(IV); 1414(d)(3)(B)(i) and 1414(d)(3)(C). A failure to implement these procedural requirements or provide needed behavioral supports to a child with a disability could result in the child not receiving a meaningful educational benefit, and therefore constitute a denial of FAPE and/or a denial of placement in the LRE (i.e., an unduly restrictive placement).

A determination of whether there is a denial of FAPE is a fact-based determination, to be made on a case-by-case basis. Factors to consider include: whether the public agency has failed to follow the procedures IDEA requires when developing, reviewing, or revising the child's IEP, or has failed to consider and/or provide a child with a disability with necessary behavioral supports when the child's behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others; or whether the child's IEP is reasonably calculated to provide a meaningful educational benefit in the absence of behavioral supports.

Circumstances that may indicate either a procedural or substantive failure in the development, review, or revision of the IEP include, but are not limited to, the following¹⁹:

- The IEP Team did not consider the inclusion of positive behavioral interventions and supports in response to behavior that impeded the child's learning or that of others;
- School officials failed to schedule an IEP Team meeting to review the IEP to address behavioral concerns after a reasonable parental request;
- The IEP Team failed to discuss the parent's concerns about the child's behavior, and its effects on the child's learning, during an IEP Team meeting;
- There are no behavioral supports in the child's IEP, even when the IEP Team determines they are necessary for the child;
- The behavioral supports in the IEP are inappropriate for the child (e.g., the frequency, scope or duration of the behavioral supports is insufficient to prevent behaviors that impede the learning of the child or others; or consistent application of the child's behavioral supports has not accomplished positive changes in behavior, but instead has resulted in behavior that continues to impede, or further impedes, learning for the child or others);
- The behavioral supports in the child's IEP are appropriate, but are not being implemented or not being properly implemented (e.g., teachers are not trained in classroom

¹⁹ Under 34 CFR §300.513(a), a hearing officer's determination of whether a child received FAPE must be based on substantive grounds. In matters alleging a procedural violation, a hearing officer may find that a child did not receive FAPE only if the procedural inadequacies: (1) impeded the child's right to FAPE; (2) significantly impeded the parent's opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding the provision of FAPE to the parent's child; or (3) caused a deprivation of educational benefit. 34 CFR §300.513(a)(2)(i)–(iii). Although best viewed as a procedural requirement, a failure to follow 34 CFR §300.324(a)(2)(i) could result in a substantive denial of FAPE if any of the circumstances in 34 CFR §§300.513(a)(2)(i)–(iii) are present. As this is a fact-based determination, Section III provides examples of facts and circumstances that may indicate that a procedural failure has resulted in a denial of FAPE.

management responses or de-escalation techniques or those techniques are not being consistently implemented); or

- School personnel have implemented behavioral supports not included in the IEP that are not appropriate for the child.

Circumstances that may indicate that the child’s IEP is not reasonably calculated to provide a meaningful educational benefit include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The child is displaying a pattern of behaviors that impede his or her learning or that of others and is not receiving any behavioral supports;
- The child experiences a series of disciplinary removals from the current placement of 10 days or fewer (which do not constitute a disciplinary change in placement) for separate incidents of misconduct that impede the child’s learning or that of others, and the need for behavioral supports is not considered or addressed by the IEP Team;²⁰ or
- The child experiences a lack of expected progress toward the annual goals that is related to his or her disciplinary removals or the lack of behavioral supports, and the child’s IEP is neither reviewed nor revised.

A determination of whether there is a denial of placement in the LRE is also a fact-based determination. Factors to consider include whether the child’s IEP is designed to enable the child to be educated and participate with nondisabled children in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities in the absence of behavioral supports. Circumstances that may indicate that the child’s placement in the LRE may not be appropriate include, but are not limited to, a scenario in which a continuum of placements that provides behavioral supports is not made available (e.g., behavioral supports not provided in the regular educational setting), and, as a result, the IEP inappropriately calls for the child to be placed in special classes, separate schooling, or another restrictive placement outside the regular educational environment (e.g., home instruction, home tutoring program, or online learning program).

IV. Implications for Short-Term Disciplinary Removals and Other Exclusionary Disciplinary Measures

Schools should note that recent research demonstrates that disciplinary measures such as short-term removals from the current placement (e.g., suspension), or other exclusionary disciplinary measures that significantly impede the implementation of the IEP, generally do not help to

²⁰ Under 34 CFR §300.536 a series of disciplinary removals that constitute a pattern is a change in placement. A pattern of removals is a series of removals that total more than 10 school days within a school year, for behavior that is substantially similar to the child’s behavior in previous incidents that led to removals, with consideration for additional factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

reduce or eliminate reoccurrence of the misbehavior. In fact, there is a growing awareness that school suspensions produce unintended and undesirable results. Longitudinal studies, for example, have found that suspension from school does not deter misbehavior. These studies found a high rate of repeat offending in out-of-school suspension, ranging from 35% to 42%.²¹ Research also shows that suspension from school is associated with significant adverse consequences for the children suspended.²² Suspensions from school are consistently associated with lower academic performance.²³ As a suspended child's education is interrupted, he or she is more likely to fall behind, to become disengaged from school, and to drop out.²⁴

Removals from the current placement generally do not address the needs of a child with a disability for positive behavioral interventions and supports. Accordingly, we remind States, LEAs, and IEP Teams that while 34 CFR §300.530 explicitly permits school personnel to implement short-term disciplinary removals from the current placement, such removals may indicate a need to review and revise the child's IEP to address his or her behavioral needs. In addition, exclusionary disciplinary measures that do not constitute a removal from the current placement may also indicate the need to review and revise the child's IEP.

Authority of School Personnel under 34 CFR §300.530

Under IDEA and its implementing regulations, school personnel have the authority to remove a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for up to 10 consecutive school days in a school year, to the extent those alternatives are applied to children without disabilities, and for additional removals of up to 10 school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, provided that the additional removals do not constitute a change of placement. 34 CFR §§300.530(b) and 300.536.²⁵

While the IDEA and its implementing regulations recognize that school officials need some reasonable degree of flexibility when disciplining children with disabilities who violate a code of student conduct and that school safety is paramount, the Department cautions that the use of short-term disciplinary removals from the current placement may indicate that a child's IEP, or

²¹ Skiba, R.J., Shure, L.A., Middelberg, L.V., & Baker, T.L. (2012). Reforming school discipline and reducing disproportionality in suspension and expulsion. In Jimerson, S.R., Nickerson, A.B., Mayer, M.J., & Furlong, M.J. (Eds.) *Handbook of School Violence and School Safety*, 2nd Ed. New York: Routledge.

²² Lee, T., Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Xitao, F. (2011). High suspension schools and dropout rates for black and white students. *Education & Treatment Of Children*, 34(2), 167-192. See also Brooks, K., Schiraldi, V., & Zeidenberg, J. (2000). *School house hype: two years later*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute / Covington, KY: Children's Law Center. See also Civil Rights Project. (2000). *Opportunities suspended: the devastating consequences of zero tolerance and school discipline policies*. Cambridge, MA.

²³ Id.

²⁴ Id.

²⁵ Disciplinary removals of more than 10 consecutive school days or a series of removals that cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year that constitute a pattern are considered a change in placement. 34 CFR §300.536.

the implementation of the IEP, does not appropriately address his or her behavioral needs. This, in turn, may result in the child not receiving a meaningful educational benefit, which could constitute a denial of FAPE. As noted above, these determinations are highly factual, and would be made on a case-by-case basis. We are concerned, however, that some SEAs and LEAs may have erroneously interpreted the IDEA to provide school personnel with the broad authority to implement short-term removals without restriction and without regard to whether the child's IEP is properly addressing his or her behavioral needs. It has come to the Department's attention that there are a number of legal memos and technical assistance documents which have erroneously characterized the 10-day period as "free days."²⁶

This characterization may discourage school personnel from considering whether behavioral supports are needed to address or improve patterns of behavior that impede learning before, during, or after short-term disciplinary removals are implemented. The Department reminds SEAs and LEAs that, under IDEA, IEP Teams have an obligation to develop appropriate IEPs based on the individual needs of each child. Teachers must also be fully informed about their specific responsibilities related to implementation of the child's IEP, including the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the child in accordance with the IEP. 34 CFR §300.323(d). Further, IDEA requires States and LEAs to ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of Part B of IDEA are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. 34 CFR §§300.156 and 300.207. This responsibility would include appropriately training teachers and other school personnel to provide required behavioral supports to children with disabilities. Therefore, a failure to provide appropriate behavioral supports (because they are not offered or because teachers and other staff are not adequately trained to implement such supports) that results in the child not receiving a meaningful educational benefit may constitute a denial of FAPE.

Use of Exclusionary Disciplinary Measures

Schools should take care when implementing exclusionary disciplinary measures that significantly interfere with a child's instruction and participation in other school activities. In some schools, staff are properly trained to implement and document measures such as the use of study carrels, time outs, and restrictions in privileges, in a manner consistent with a child's right to FAPE.²⁷ However, in other schools, staff may not be properly trained in the appropriate use of

²⁶ National Council on Disability. (2015). Breaking the school-to-prison pipeline for students with disabilities. Available at http://www.ncd.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/NCD_School-to-PrisonReport_508-PDF.pdf. This report highlights an excerpt from a legal pamphlet designed for school districts: "Schools have free use of up to 10 school days of short-term removals per school year without IDEA implications. The days can be used in any combination, quickly or slowly, although caution would warrant using the 10 'free' days judiciously over the school year, and avoiding multiple suspension days if at all possible."

²⁷ The Department has previously stated that the use of measures such as study carrels, time outs, or other restrictions in privileges is permissible so long as such measures are not inconsistent with a student's IEP (OSEP Memorandum to Chief State School Officers, Questions and Answers on Disciplining Students with Disabilities, April 1995).

these measures; consequently, their improper use of these measures could rise to the level of a disciplinary removal. These exclusionary disciplinary measures also could include:

- A pattern of office referrals, extended time excluded from instruction (e.g., time out), or extended restrictions in privileges;
- Repeatedly sending children out of school on “administrative leave” or a “day off” or other method of sending the child home from school;
- Repeatedly sending children out of school with a condition for return, such as a risk assessment or psychological evaluation; or
- Regularly requiring children to leave the school early and miss instructional time (e.g., via shortened school days).²⁸

In general, the Department does not consider the use of exclusionary disciplinary measures to be disciplinary removals from the current placement for purposes of 34 CFR §300.530, so long as children with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to continue to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum, receive the instruction and services specified on their IEPs, and participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would have in their current placement.²⁹ It is likely that the exclusionary disciplinary measures listed above, if implemented repeatedly, would constitute a disciplinary removal from the current placement. For example, when school personnel regularly require a child with a disability to leave school early and miss instructional time due to their behavior, it is likely that the child’s opportunity to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum has been significantly impeded; in such circumstances, sending the child home early would constitute a disciplinary removal from the current placement. To the extent that schools implement exclusionary disciplinary measures in a manner tantamount to a suspension – or other removal from the

²⁸ We have deliberately omitted from this list of examples any reference to referrals to law enforcement authorities due to our recommendation to schools, described in the Department’s *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline*, that school resource officers not be involved in routine disciplinary matters. The *Guiding Principles* can be found at www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf

²⁹ The Department would apply the same analysis to the use of exclusionary discipline measures that apply to in-school suspensions, for purposes of 34 CFR §300.530. In the Preamble to the August 14, 2006 final Part B regulations, the Department explained: “It has been the Department’s long term policy that an in-school suspension would not be considered a part of the days of suspension addressed in 34 CFR §300.530 as long as the child is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general curriculum, continue to receive the services specified on the child’s IEP, and continue to participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would have in their current placement. This continues to be our policy.” The explanation concludes by indicating that whether an in-school suspension would constitute a day of suspension would depend on the unique facts and circumstances of each case. 71 Fed. Reg. 46715 (Aug. 14, 2006).

child's current placement – they are required to fulfill their statutory obligation to report such removals,³⁰ and act within the authority of school personnel provided under 34 CFR §300.530.

Further, as we noted earlier, the use of exclusionary disciplinary measures may indicate that a child's IEP, or the implementation of the IEP, does not appropriately address his or her behavioral needs. To ensure that each child receives a meaningful educational benefit, IEP Teams must consider the need for positive behavioral interventions and supports for children with disabilities whose behavior impedes their learning or that of others, and, when determined necessary to ensure FAPE, include or revise needed behavioral supports in the child's IEP. Such behavioral supports also may include supports for school personnel, so that teaching staff are trained in best uses of such behavioral supports.

V. Conclusion

Children with disabilities are at a greater risk of disciplinary removals that significantly interrupt their learning, often unnecessarily. These risks are increased for children of color with disabilities. In many cases, we have reason to believe these removals are due to minor instances of misbehavior that are unrelated to issues of child or school safety, and can and should be addressed through supports and guidance.³¹

When behavioral supports are not provided and, as a result, a child with a disability is repeatedly removed from his or her current placement through suspensions for behavior that impedes his or her learning or that of others, a number of options are available to assist parents in challenging the appropriateness of their child's IEP. First, as noted earlier, parents have the right to request an IEP Team meeting at any time, and public agencies generally must grant a reasonable parental request for an IEP Team meeting. Parents may be particularly interested in making such a request following changes in the child's behavior that result in disciplinary removals. Further, parents, individuals, and organizations may also pursue child-specific or systemic remedies through the State complaint procedures outlined below.

³⁰ IDEA mandates that States provide data each year to the Secretary of Education and the public on the use of long-term suspensions and expulsions (20 U.S.C. §1418(a)(1)(A)(v)(III)) and on the incidence and duration of disciplinary actions, including suspensions of one day or more, by race, ethnicity, limited English proficiency status, gender, and disability category (20 U.S.C. §1418(a)(1)(D)). Further, States are required to collect and examine data to determine whether significant disproportionality based on race and ethnicity is occurring in the State and the LEAs of the State with respect to the incidence, duration, and type of disciplinary actions, including suspension and expulsions (34 CFR §300.646(d)(1)(C)), and whether significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities among LEAs in the State or compared to the rates for nondisabled children within LEAs (34 CFR §300.170).

³¹ Skiba, R. J., Chung, C. G., Trachok, M., Baker, T., Sheya, A., Hughes, R. L. (2014). Parsing disciplinary disproportionality: Contributions of infraction, student, and school characteristics to out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51, 640-670.

When conditions persist and a denial of FAPE is suspected, a parent or a public agency may file a due process complaint to request a due process hearing on any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a child with a disability, or the provision of FAPE to the child. 34 CFR §300.507(a). If the dispute cannot be resolved through the resolution process, the parent or public agency must have an opportunity for an impartial due process hearing. 34 CFR §§300.511(a), 300.512, 300.513 and 300.515.

A second important method for resolving disputes available under IDEA is the mediation process described in 34 CFR §300.506. The mediation process, which must be voluntary, offers a less formal opportunity for parents and public agencies to resolve disputes about any matter, including disciplinary removals, under 34 CFR part 300, including matters arising prior to the filing of a due process complaint. 34 CFR §300.506(a).

Lastly, States are also required to establish and implement their own State complaint procedures, separate from their due process procedures, for resolving any complaint that meets the requirements of 34 CFR §300.153. 34 CFR §300.151(a)(1). Any organization or individual, including one from another State, may file a signed written State complaint alleging that a public agency has violated a requirement of either Part B of the Act or the Part B regulations.

Additional information regarding dispute resolution is available at:

- Questions and Answers on IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Procedures, revised July 2013 (OSEP Memo 13-08)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/accombinedosersdisputeresolutionqafinalmemo-7-23-13.pdf>); and

- Dear Colleague Letter on a public agency's Use of Due Process Procedures After a Parent Has Filed a State Complaint, April 2015

(<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/dcl04152015disputeresolution2q2015.pdf>)

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is committed to ensuring that children with disabilities have access to learning environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to learning. In such learning environments, educators have the skills and tools to prevent disciplinary incidents before they happen, use effective behavioral supports, teach behavioral expectations, and implement other behavioral management strategies. In many schools, effective behavioral supports have been implemented within a multi-tiered behavioral framework to organize school efforts to support children with disabilities and their peers. In this way, schools facilitate the provision of FAPE by providing children with disabilities with the behavioral supports they need to prevent, or bring an end to, disciplinary approaches that may unduly interfere with instruction and the implementation of IEPs. Further, this focus on prevention helps to ensure that educators receive the training, coaching, and other supports they

need to help children with disabilities, and their peers, to focus on learning and succeed in school.

To better develop and implement appropriate IEPs for children whose behavior impedes the child’s learning or that of others, and to ensure that behavioral supports are available throughout the continuum of placements, including in the regular education setting, OSERS has enclosed with this letter two technical assistance documents that we first released in November 2015 as part of the 40th Anniversary of IDEA:

- 1) Supporting and Responding to Behavior: Evidence-Based Classroom Strategies for Teachers:

<https://www.osepideasthatwork.org/evidencebasedclassroomstrategies>

- 2) Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Implementation Blueprint and Self-Assessment:

<http://www.pbis.org/blueprint/implementation-blueprint>

These two documents provide additional information on evidenced-based classroom strategies to support and respond to behavior and on organizing practices in an integrated manner in a multi- tiered system of support.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Office of Special Education Programs Education Program Specialist, Lisa Pagano at 202-245-7413 or Lisa.Pagano@ed.gov.

Thank you for your support and your continued interest in improving education access and opportunity for children with disabilities.

Sincerely,

/s/

/s/

Sue Swenson

Ruth E. Ryder

Acting Assistant Secretary

Acting Director

Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Office of Special Education Programs

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Web Resources

- <http://www.interventioncentral.org/behavioral-intervention-modification>
- <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/behavior-supports>
- <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>
- http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/safe_sch_se_toolkit.pdf

