Mississippi Department Of Education

Response to Intervention (RtI)
Best Practices Handbook

Tom Burnham, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Education
June 2010
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rtl Handbook Committee

Tanya Bradley Mississippi Department of Education
Eric Dickson Southeast Regional Resource Center
Trecina Green Mississippi Department of Education
Jennifer Griffin, Ph.D. Biloxi School District
Terrie Johnson, Ed.D. Mississippi Department of Education
Kristin Johnson-Gros, Ph.D. Eastern Illinois University
Kris Kaase, Ph.D. Mississippi Department of Education
Meagan Medley Mississippi State University, Student Intern
Joe Olmi, Ph.D. The University of Southern Mississippi
Rhonda Smith Mississippi Department of Education

External Review Committee

Angela Bolden, Ph.D. Desoto County School District
Beverly Brahan Mississippi Association of Educators
Collett Cross, Ph.D. The University of Mississippi
Charletta Dill Hinds County School District
Joy Hogge, Ph.D. Parents for Public Schools
Jerrelyn Jackson Kosciusko School District
Georgene Johnson Biloxi School District
Ron Morrison Madison County School District
Rachel Powell Mississippi Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Suzie Rosser Mississippi Speech-Language-Hearing Association
Gina Sanderson Webster Public School District
Kelli Speed Meridian Public School District
FOREWORD

Our vision is that Response to Intervention (RtI) will provide a framework that will result in higher student achievement, improved student outcomes, and a transformed educational process in our state. Specifically, we envision:

Educator Skills for Excellent Instruction for All Students
By 2013, we expect to see veteran teachers as well as new teachers and all administrators to be skilled in relevant data collection and analysis. They will routinely make data-based decisions about student needs and determine what research-based instruction and interventions are appropriate to the three tiers of RtI that will allow for each student’s ongoing progress. We envision educators who know what does and does not work for students’ different needs, who are highly effective in managing both behavioral and academic instruction and interventions, who have access to well developed school and classroom level supports, and who clearly understand the difference between learning disability/special education issues and cultural/language differences. We anticipate our schools and school districts will use the information in this handbook as a means of self-improvement and consistent continuous implementation of RtI.

Measurable Indicators of RtI Effectiveness
We envision clear, data-verified progress on MDE/State Board of Education goals, including: improved student achievement in targeted areas, as measured by statewide, high-stakes tests; a reduction in the number of students referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST); elimination of improper/invalid identification of students having a Specific Learning Disability (SLD); and a reduction in teacher turnover rates.

Coordinated Professional Development System
We anticipate seeing a highly developed system to ensure all teachers, new and experienced, are prepared to implement RtI. Important aspects of this will be the establishment of a technical assistance network for RtI as well as the offering of
statewide, coordinated pre-service training and professional development training grounded in research-based programs.

**Expansion of RtI Model and Effects beyond Traditional Education**

The application of RtI is to serve students in all educational settings including, but not limited to, detention centers and alternative settings. We know this will require us to “think outside the box,” and encourage us to reconfigure existing resources and people in order to extend RtI practices to serve a broader base of students.

**Inclusive Internal and External Communication**

We look toward a network system of communication across all levels–state, district, school, and community. We also hope for the use of a “common language” for all who are involved in RtI implementation–Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) staff, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) faculty, district and school administrators and staff, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders.

In joining this vision, the reader is asked to keep these general themes in mind.

1. RtI provides a mechanism for educational staff with opportunities to learn new and different ways to provide quality services to children.

2. RtI is a process that involves the early identification of students who need assistance with academics or behavior, provides scientific, research-based efforts to help students, and monitors progress of their responses to those efforts.

3. Finally, RtI is not a unidirectional process but is a bidirectional process in that any student may move throughout the three tiers several times in his or her educational career. However, this is not an indication of a need for special education services.

This document serves as a guide to aid in the implementation of RtI in support of the State Board of Education’s Policy on Intervention (Policy 4300). The processes and
outcomes of RtI should be evaluated annually at the state and local levels and adjusted as necessary to better serve the needs of students. As we all learn from this process, we will become more effective in serving ALL children.
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RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI) BEST PRACTICES HANDBOOK

Tom Burnham, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Education

Lynn J. House, Ph.D., Deputy State Superintendent
Office of Instructional Enhancement and Internal Operations

Trecina Green, Bureau Director, Office of Curriculum and Instruction

Rhonda Smith, Division Director, Office of Curriculum and Instruction
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Director, Office of Human Resources
Mississippi Department of Education
359 North West Street
Suite 203
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
601-359-3511
OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

I. Response to Intervention (RtI)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to schools and school districts as they implement Response to Intervention. It describes in detail best practices based on the research for the implementation of RtI. This document is devoted to explaining the core components of RtI and its systematic implementation in schools. Schools are encouraged to implement RtI within broader school reform and school improvement efforts to improve the learning and achievement of all students, while meeting the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), and least restrictive environment (LRE) requirements. It is intended to help the reader increase his/her understanding of the various aspects of RtI and to identify areas that warrant future development within his/her school. RtI is a useful framework for guiding instruction for all students by means of a continuum of services. This document references suggested essential elements and forms for the process. The forms include data that are indicative of the information needed to drive the intervention process in a sequential manner. School districts may utilize any format to streamline the process at the local level.

RtI is steeped in history and empirical research that supports many of the elements that are embedded in the process. It is based on a national understanding that NCLB and IDEA of 2004 are companion laws dictating the use of scientifically based research (SBR) curricula/instructional practices and setting high expectations for improvement for all students, including those with disabilities.

Each element of RtI is part of an interrelated process, which should be applied to every student. Essentially, instructional practices are evaluated and adjusted based on results of reliable, valid, and sensitive indicators. If any piece is missing, the process breaks down. RtI practices merely represent appropriate practice in educating students. Although an administrative decision to classify a child as having a disability may be necessary under some conditions, within an RtI framework,
assessment is conducted first and foremost to improve instruction and to ensure that every child is provided with quality core instruction as well as any needed interventions. According to the U.S. Department of Education, in considering alternative models, we believe that the focus should be on assessments that are related to instruction and should promote intervention.

II. Why Schools Should Use RtI

When implemented properly, RtI provides a significant opportunity for educators to come together in a consistent decision-making process to address children’s learning by focusing first on students’ instructional needs and only secondarily on eligibility decisions. RtI represents a philosophical shift in how schools identify and respond to students’ academic and/or behavioral difficulties. In this light, RtI is more about what will be done than where it will be done. Also, it is more about how the job will get done and less about who will do it. RtI requires educators to change how they view student difficulties and disabilities. RtI procedures turn attention away from identifying deficits within the student (e.g., processing difficulties) and toward evaluating progress over time based on age-appropriate comparisons and rates of learning with grade-level peers. Therefore, a student’s performance is compared to the performance of other students in the school/district or against some other more representative criterion of performance. Student learning is evaluated based on how quickly that student acquires instructional material. The effect is that it forces educators to focus on how much and what types of instruction students need, which emphasizes student learning.

RtI is intended to improve many of the problems associated with the “wait to fail” model. Under such procedures, many students do not receive intervention services until concerns become severe. Thus, the RtI process is preferable for the following reasons as it:

- Utilizes materials and methods supported by SBR;
- Uses teacher input in a problem-solving approach;
• Creates a record of interventions to track student progress;
• Creates relationships between assessment procedures and interventions;
• Links assessment and instruction to interventions;
• Supports MDE State Board Policy 4300;
• Provides emphasis on prevention and Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS);
• Creates a timeline to provide assistance for at-risk students; and
• Has been demonstrated to reduce over-identification of minority populations in special education.

As schools become more aware of the need for prevention and early intervention, the “wait to fail” approach to verification has been increasingly seen as unacceptable. When schools use RtI, each student receives interventions as soon as a need is identified. Intervention is intensified progressively if the assessment data suggest that the student is not responding. Specific methods for the RtI process are described in detail in the subsequent sections of this handbook.

With implementation of RtI, schools no longer have to wait until students fall far behind their peers before they receive the kind of instruction they need. At the same time, the process involves an intense case study of each child with repeated assessments over time, which should reduce decision errors when the data are applied correctly in making eligibility decisions. Finally, because assessments involve sensitive indicators of effects, the results directly inform educators of strategies that work and do not work with a particular student.
III. The Relationship between Response to Intervention and Coordinated Early Intervening Services

The term “Coordinated Early Intervening Services” refers to a broad application of support services and includes activities such as professional development, evaluation, and support for students who are not eligible for services under IDEA 2004. RtI is the process of gathering and examining data for use in developing, analyzing, and implementing, research- or evidence-based interventions used with students in the context of intervening with, and possibly evaluating, a student who may be at risk, academically or behaviorally. The RtI process for developing and analyzing the
effectiveness of such interventions with an individual student occurs within the broader context of coordinated early intervening services.

This handbook is dedicated to providing educators with a comprehensive outline of the RtI process as well as guidance on the implementation of each component in the process. Each component in the process is defined. In addition, outcome measures that are needed before entering or obtaining additional services are described.
RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Mississippi’s model for RtI is a comprehensive, problem-solving, and multi-tiered strategy to enable early identification and intervention for ALL students who may be at academic or behavioral risk. The multiple tiers provide increasingly intense student-focused interventions. RtI should be applied to decisions and result in a well-integrated system of instruction with interventions guided by student outcome data. It is a systematic determination of how students respond to curricula and instructional procedures that are:

- Demonstrated in applied research as highly robust in producing improved outcomes for all students;
- Viewed as an educational initiative encompassing general education, remedial education, and special education; and
- Viewed as a school-wide process that provides, as its core, universal screening of all students, the provision of effective instruction in a core curriculum supported by SBR, and the provision of immediate interventions based on student needs.

The Mississippi Department of Education is moving forward to support schools in their use of RtI to improve student performance. The hallmarks of Mississippi’s Three-Tiered RtI process include the following:

- **Tier 1 Quality Classroom Instruction**, which describes the school-wide efforts and practices that are available to all students, has 14 essential elements including:
  1. universal screening of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency (i.e., rate), and/or comprehension, if applicable;
2. universal screening of counting, quantity discrimination, number identification, sequential ordering, mathematical fluency, and mathematical reasoning, if applicable;

3. universal screening for students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II;

4. universal screening of behavior;

5. instructional delivery supported by scientifically based research;

6. differentiated instruction;

7. curricula and instructional materials aligned to state standards;

8. classroom and behavior management;

9. system of behavioral support (school and district level);

10. instructional leadership;

11. system of instructional support;

12. system of classroom observations to determine integrity of implementation;

13. follow-up procedures in place for instructional staff who have not met minimal instructional and behavioral criteria; and

14. parental/family and community involvement.

Students who are successful at Tier 1 are making expected progress in the general education curriculum and are demonstrating behavioral expectations. With Tier 1 school-wide practices in place, data should indicate when and where a student is experiencing difficulty.
- **Tier 2 Strategic/Targeted Intervention and Supplemental Instruction** is designed for those students who are not progressing or responding to Tier 1 efforts as expected. In these cases, instruction and/or behavior management within the general classroom setting may not be sufficient for these students, and additional strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction may be necessary. There are 12 essential elements for Tier 2, which include:

1. progress monitoring of the target area(s);
2. documentation of progress in target area(s) through a graphical display;
3. appropriate decision making;
4. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency (i.e., rate), and/or comprehension;
5. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in counting, quantity discrimination, number identification, sequential ordering, mathematical fluency, and mathematical reasoning;
6. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research for students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II;
7. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in behavioral/emotional concern(s);
8. documentation of intervention implementation with integrity;
9. system of instructional support;
10. system of behavioral support (school and district level);
11. instructional leadership; and

12. parental/family and community involvement.

- **Tier 3 Intensive Interventions** are the academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies, and practices designed for students who are having significant difficulties with the established grade-level objectives in the general education curriculum or who demonstrate significant difficulties with behavioral and social competence. Tier 3 interventions are more intensive than those in Tier 2 and are introduced when data suggest that a student has failed to make progress or respond to the interventions in Tier 2 or the rate of progress or growth and level is such that the student is unlikely to narrow the performance gap. Students may receive Tier 3 interventions by “skipping” Tier 2 when the school can demonstrate through data that the students’ current level of performance is highly discrepant from peers. Finally, State Board Policy 4300 states specifically which students should be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST) to determine if Tier 3 interventions are needed.

There are 14 essential elements for Tier 3, which include:

1. Teacher Support Team process;

2. progress monitoring of the target area(s);

3. documentation of progress in target area(s) through a graphical display;

4. appropriate decision making;

5. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency (i.e., rate), and/or comprehension;

6. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in counting, quantity discrimination,
number identification, sequential ordering, mathematical fluency, and mathematical reasoning;

7. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research for students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II;

8. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in behavioral/emotional concern(s);

9. documentation of intervention implementation with integrity;

10. system of instructional support;

11. system of behavioral support (school and district level);

12. instructional leadership;

13. parental/family and community involvement; and

14. Teacher Support Team outcomes.

As noted above, Tier 3 provides the more intensive interventions needed by some students to make progress academically or to demonstrate social competence in the general education setting. However, Tier 3 also represents the stage in the RtI process in which educators begin to make decisions that may lead to further evaluation if specialized services are needed for individual students through Special Education.
Tier 1: Quality Classroom Instruction

At Tier 1, the MDE has identified 14 essential elements that have been developed to provide guidelines for school districts so that effective Tier 1 strategies and practices are implemented. These elements are:

1. universal screening of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency (i.e., rate), and/or comprehension, if applicable;
2. universal screening of counting, quantity discrimination, number identification, sequential ordering, mathematical fluency, and mathematical reasoning, if applicable;
3. universal screening for students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II;
4. universal screening of behavior;
5. instructional delivery supported by scientifically based research;
6. differentiated instruction;
7. curricula and instructional materials aligned to state standards;
8. classroom and behavior management;
9. system of behavioral support (school and district level);
10. instructional leadership;
11. system of instructional support;
12. system of classroom observations to determine integrity of implementation;

13. follow-up procedures in place for instructional staff who have not met minimal instructional and behavioral criteria; and

14. parental/family and community involvement.

Each element is described below in detail to provide guidance to the LEA for implementation.

I. Universal screening of academic skills and behavior (Essential Elements 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Essential Elements 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Tier 1 address universal screening of all students in reading, mathematics, Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) content courses, and behavioral/emotional areas, respectively. To implement each of the four areas addressed in these essential elements, the school should:

- Conduct screening of all students, K–8 and those who will be/are taking SATP content courses, 3-4 times per year at approximate equal intervals;

- Use screening assessments/tools that measure the same skill(s) each time with the exception of K–1 and those who will be/are taking the SATP content courses; and

- Use screening assessments/tools that measure all applicable skills.

Universal screening is one of the foundational and critical components of Tier 1 and is addressed in Essential Elements 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Tier 1 Matrix. The primary purposes of screening are to increase overall achievement of students and to identify those students who are likely to have academic or behavioral problems within the school environment and who need appropriate preventative intervention.
Universal screening provides an indication of potential deficits impacting the educational progress of students in a particular classroom. The results of the screening should indicate if, and to what degree, the class is benefiting from Tier 1 instruction. If a significant percentage of a class is experiencing academic or behavioral problems, two questions should be asked. Namely, is the curriculum supported by SBR in place, and is that curriculum being presented in the manner that would benefit all students in the class? Used in this manner, universal screening provides information about the educational environment of the child. This provides beneficial information that would aid educational administrators in determining whether an educational disadvantage is present. This would also substantiate whether poor instruction and/or core curriculum is/are the source of an academic problem (Ardoin et al., 2004).

Screening serves as the first data point in a multitude of data, indicating implementation of intervention and student progress or lack thereof. It is important that an initial screening precede intervention and other assessments. Universal screening provides a process whereby struggling students are identified so they can be provided with intervention (VanDerHayden, Witt, & Naquin, 2003). Screening followed by intervention and progress monitoring provides reliable identification of those students who are truly discrepant from peers relating to achievement and progress. While RtI can improve the general education environment by providing educators with functional and usable data and continuous intervention plans (VanDerHayden, Witt, & Barnett, 2005), it can become another wait-to-fail model if universal screening is not actively utilized (Berninger, 2006).

For optimal results in the implementation of RtI and to meet the expectations of the MDE on Essential Elements 1, 2, 3, and 4, schools should begin with universal screening of all students as part of the general education program. The first universal screening each year should be completed within the first month of school to immediately identify those students who are not at grade level or rate of progress commensurate with peers in any academic or behavioral area. Universal screening, at a minimum, should include all students in grades K–8 and those students who will
be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and U.S. History. Additionally, it should be conducted with all students 3–4 times per year at approximate equal intervals such as fall, winter, and spring. However, those schools that are utilizing a block schedule may universally screen three times within a semester.

A. Academic screening tools (Essential Elements 1, 2, and 3)

Screening tools encompass a wide variety of measures including academic skills and readiness and behavioral/emotional functioning. Universal screening tools are used to identify school readiness, to identify children to whom early preventative intervention should be offered, and to make informed educational decisions and plans for individual children.

There is no widely accepted measure or instrument at this point in time to measure school readiness, academic skill deficits, or behavioral/emotional concerns. However, several appropriate screening tools and methods are used in schools in Mississippi and nationally that may be helpful to school professionals implementing RtI.

Many of the screening tools and probes are based on several procedures collectively called Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA) that have been offered as an alternative and acceptable solution to traditional assessment methodologies (Shapiro & Eckert, 1994; Shinn, 1988). CBA models are characterized as testing procedures, which mirror the curricular hierarchy and can be derived from curriculum materials (Fuchs, L. S., & Fuchs, D., 1986). Each of the different models of CBA is constructed to address different questions related to assessing academic performance (Shapiro, 2004). One can employ a single method or model of CBA when trying to address a very specific question about the academic performance of one student or a group of students.

CBA procedures should try to meet the same requirements as the traditional assessment methods (Shinn, 1988). First, the CBA procedures need to show technical adequacy, reliability, and validity. Second, the procedures need to have set standards. Third, the set standards and procedures should be effective in making
educational decisions (Shinn, 1988). When evaluating the various CBA models that have been offered as solutions, only one model has met the above-mentioned criteria. The accepted model is Deno and Mirkin’s (1977) Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM).

CBM is a model that falls under the umbrella of Curriculum Based Assessment and is an objective, ongoing measurement system that is designed to examine student outcomes and to aid in instructional planning (Fuchs et al., 1993). With CBM, there is frequent administration of skill probes. CBM can provide repeated measurement as well as progress monitoring of the student (Shapiro, 2004). There are several screening instruments that can be utilized with CBM including oral reading fluency, mazes, basic computation, mathematical reasoning, spelling, and written expression.

CBM formats are generally well specified with short test durations. Written expression, spelling, and mathematics assessments can be administered in group or individual settings. Reading measures should be administered individually. Explicit directions are provided for creating measurement materials for all areas. Administration and scoring are standardized. Scores are a general reflection of speed and accuracy, which are translated into a number of correct responses per unit of time (i.e., number of words read correctly per minute, correct letter sequences) (Shinn, Rosenfield, & Knutson, 1989).

CBM is generally recognized as a valid and reliable indicator of student performance. Sufficient evidence for CBM use in progress monitoring has been shown useful in formative evaluations of skills. Other benefits of CBM include:

- Data that can be compared at the classroom, building, or district level;
- An effective means of pinpointing difficulties and the instructional level of students;
- A method for assessing current performance and rate of growth;
• A mechanism to repeatedly evaluate the effects of interventions and accommodations;

• Evidence of a discrepancy in achievement level and rate of progress (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998); and

• A common measurement process that can track mastery of a skill to frustrational aspects of a skill.

B. Implementation of universal screening: appropriate practices

(Essential Elements 1, 2, and 3)

Generally, the screening takes place in the fall, winter, and spring at equal intervals as indicated in Essential Elements 1, 2, and 3. However, another method is to screen all students at the beginning of the academic year and then at each quarter (i.e., 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, and 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarters). To implement universal screening as expected by MDE, school personnel should identify the screening tools/materials, train the individuals who will administer the screening, and schedule the logistical procedures. The screening dates should be scheduled in advance for the entire year. Trimester or quarterly universal screening is recommended (Shinn, 1988; Stewart & Kaminski, 2002). Standardized administration and scoring, along with monitoring integrity of the administration through checklists, are also key features in reliable data collection (Stewart & Kaminski, 2002).

When universal screening involves screening every student with the same measure 3–4 times a year, then these data can be used for the establishment and implementation of local norms. These local norms can then be used to project student performance for both level and trend (Shinn, 1989).

Local norming has several advantages:

1. Local norms can decrease bias in decision making because they represent a meaningful comparison group (Stewart & Kaminski, 2002). The comparison
group is likely to reflect the age, grade, race, educational background, and geographic and socioeconomic factors relevant to the population being normed.

2. Local norms can decrease bias in decision making because the results assist in the identification of educational needs, individually and collectively, which in turn can lead to a problem-solving orientation.

3. Local norms also provide the school district flexibility for developing comparison data on educational outcomes and tasks in the curriculum to which the students have been exposed.

4. Local norms operationalize the expectations for student performance. Thus, the outcomes of the local norms can be used to develop a decision-making framework for educational programs.

5. Normative data can also aid in decision making regarding whether a student needs to move into Tier 2 or if those students in Tier 2 or Tier 3 can be removed from the respective tier (Stewart & Kaminski, 2002).

The data collected through the universal screening process can be summarized into ranges of scores, medians, rank ordering, district percentile ranks, descriptive statistics, within grade frequency distributions, and across grade comparisons (Stewart & Kaminski, 2002). Scores for each assessment period are organized by grade using means, standard deviations, and rates of growth (Shinn, 1988). The table below is an example of local normative data using CBM. The lines represent the bottom 25th percentile and the top 25th percentile. The box represents the 25th to 75th percentile. There are three boxes and lines per grade level representing normative data across the year. The first one is taken in the fall, the second one in the winter, and the third in the spring. For example, a child in the second grade that read below 40 words in the fall would need to be identified for further evaluation at Tier 1, which includes evaluating the instructional environment. If all the essential elements have been met at Tier 1, then the child may need to receive Tier 2 interventions.
C. Universal screening for students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II (Essential Element 3)

In this essential element, there should be a preliminary discussion about prerequisite skills. Educators in Mississippi have often commented that if students can fluently read and comprehend, then teachers can teach the skills required for high school exit exams. Educators should check for fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and computation prior to screening for content skills in the core areas. Without these skills, students cannot possibly pass or achieve success. These skills are foundational to the content areas. (See previous sections on CBM for further guidance on universal screening.)

To meet the requirements of Essential Element 3, there are some criteria that are outlined in the Essential Elements Matrix. Schools should conduct screenings of all...
students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II. Screenings should be conducted 3–4 times per year to establish growth, trends, and patterns. The screenings should also be at approximate equal intervals (i.e., fall, winter, spring). The assessment tools should measure all applicable skills that pertain to the content area. Finally, the school should ensure that the screenings are implemented with integrity.

**D. Universal screening of behavior (Essential Element 4)**

As in the case with academic performance under an RtI model, universal screening of behavior is also important in order to identify students who may be in need of intervention early in the behavioral cycle. Universal screening is conducted 3–4 times per year (i.e., typically early fall, mid winter, and late spring or quarterly). There are several methods (i.e., surveys, direct observations, and office discipline referrals) that can be employed collectively or individually. However, the recommendation is to use more than one method to evaluate behavior and school climate.

**Surveys**

Conducting surveys is an excellent way to gather information due to the anonymity of the questionnaires. The leadership team (e.g., a group of selected or nominated individuals including, but not limited to, the principal, assistant principal, teachers, other staff members, parents) surveys the staff and students every year. If this is not feasible, survey the staff every year and the students every other year. There are several questionnaires or surveys available including, but not limited to, the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; 1992), the Effective Behavior Support (EBS) Team Implementation Checklist (Sugai, Horner, & Todd, 2000), and the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET: Sugai, Horner, & Todd, 2000).

The SSBD is completed by teachers relative to all students taught by the respective teacher. Nomination processes that ask teachers to rank the top internalizing and externalizing students in their classrooms, such as the one used in the SSBD system (Walker & Severson, 1992), appear to hold much promise for identifying students at
risk of or exhibiting significant behavioral problems. The SSBD is applicable to students in grades K–6.

The EBS Survey is used by school staff for initial and annual assessment of effective behavior support systems in their school. The survey examines the status and need for improvement of three behavioral support systems: (a) school-wide discipline, (b) non-classroom management systems (e.g., cafeteria, bus, hallway, playground), and (c) systems for individual students engaging in chronic behaviors. Survey results are summarized and used for a variety of purposes including the following:

1. Annual action planning;
2. Internal decision making;
3. Assessment of change over time;
4. Awareness building of staff; and
5. Team validation.

The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) is designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of school-wide effective behavior support across each academic school year. The SET results are used to:

1. Assess features that are in place;
2. Determine annual goals for school-wide effective behavior support;
3. Evaluate ongoing efforts toward school-wide behavioral support;
4. Design and revise procedures as needed; and
5. Compare efforts toward school-wide effective behavior support from year to year.
Information necessary for this assessment tool is gathered through multiple sources including review of permanent products, observations, and staff (minimum of 10) and student (minimum of 15) interviews or surveys.

**Direct observation**

The leadership team is tasked with observing hallways, bathrooms, playgrounds, cafeterias, and bus and car entrances and exits—every place on the school property that students have access. The team should recruit teachers and other staff members to directly observe common areas and report the behaviors they encounter. Teachers should observe these zones for a sufficient amount of time at the beginning and end of each day.

**Disciplinary referral patterns**

Office discipline referrals (ODRs) have been widely used by schools to evaluate student behavior. They have been found to be not only sensitive measures, but they were also found to be valid indicators of school climate and overall effectiveness (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004). Wherever patterns of misbehavior exist, there is an opportunity to employ preventive measures. The leadership team should analyze disciplinary referrals and determine if patterns exist, form hypotheses about what is shaping those patterns, and then craft universal practices that will prevent or at least minimize disciplinary problems.

Once the leadership team has discovered the pattern of spikes in student misbehavior, which often correlate to holidays and special events, it can establish a calendar for precorrection procedures. Reading the rules once at the beginning of the school year is not sufficient.

While ODRs are necessary for identifying students with high rates of externalizing behaviors, they are not sufficient for identifying all students in need of Tier 2 supports. Students who have internalizing behaviors and students who have less severe externalizing behaviors are often not captured in school-wide ODR information (Clonan, McDougal, Clark, & Davison, 2007; Nelson, Benner, Reid, Epstein, & Currin,
The needs of these students should be addressed in order to prevent future behavioral problems and to facilitate school-wide academic achievement.

E. Summary of universal screening procedures (Essential Elements 1, 2, 3, and 4)

1. Universal screening data can determine adequacy of instruction.

2. The task set forth in Tier 1 is to evaluate the district’s curriculum and instruction and potentially enhance general instruction in a manner that effectively addresses students’ deficits in a whole-group setting.

3. Steps for successful implementation of a Tier 1 process include the following:
   a. The process is institutionalized for assessing entire grade levels by trained leadership, ensuring integrity of the instructional components.
   b. Data are collected three to four times a year and presented in a user-friendly manner in a graphical context. A team (e.g., teachers by grade level or subject area) designated by the school administrator meets at least three to four times per year to use the data to make instructional or environmental changes.
   c. Students are identified using universal screening scores. Measurable goals are established for the class and for students’ deficits within the classroom.
   d. The data are collected at equal intervals.
   e. The measure assesses the same skills each time as developmentally appropriate.
   f. The screening measures all the skills required (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, mathematical fluency, mathematical reasoning, and behavior).
4. Universal screening data are collected to determine which students, by grade, have failed to perform within expected levels, academically and/or behaviorally.

5. For behavior, the school may use office disciplinary referrals, teacher nominations, peer nominations, or a formal process, such as Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders, as a measure to assess students for social/emotional/behavioral concerns.

II. Instructional delivery supported by scientifically based research (Essential Element 5)

Essential Element 5 of the Tier 1 Matrix focuses on scientifically based research instructional delivery and effective classroom instruction for all students. With effective classroom instruction including differentiated instruction, 80%–90% of students should be successful in the general education setting without Tier 2 or 3 interventions. To meet the criteria for this element, schools should demonstrate high quality classroom instruction in 80%–94% of the classrooms observed on the Tier 1 Classroom Observation Form (Model Form 3) or the district’s observation form. The following section entails the behaviors to be observed and their corresponding definitions for the model form.

Effective classroom instruction is comprised of (a) students actively engaged in material, (b) content at instructional level, (c) students answering questions correctly, (d) students asking questions, (e) teacher communicating the expectations of the lesson, (f) teacher questions that measure students’ understanding of the prerequisite concepts, (g) teacher questions that measure students’ understanding of new concepts, (h) teacher questioning students to think critically concerning previous concepts, (i) teacher making verbal statements to think critically concerning new concepts, and (j) teacher reviewing prerequisite knowledge needed for the lesson.
A. Students are actively engaged in material.

Active engagement with instructional tasks leads to higher student learning and should be incorporated into the classroom (Bost & Riccomini, 2006). Increased academic engagement can occur through effective lesson delivery and design, culturally and instructionally relevant selection of interesting materials, increased opportunities for appropriate responses from the students, and student reinforcement for his/her classroom participation (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). Active engagement is DEFINED as student engagement in exercises or activities that include, but are not limited to, writing, answering questions, and participating in discussions at least 80% of the time. It is NOT passive listening or silent reading.

B. Content is at instructional level.

High student engagement with the material is defined as the students’ exposure time to significant, worthwhile, and appropriate level of material (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Reynolds & Muijs, 1999; Roelofs & Veenman, 1994; Weiss & Pasley, 2004). Providing successful experiences for students is assessed by how well students engage in their learning environment. Students with positive success rates have positive learning outcomes; those students with negative success have negative learning outcomes. Teachers should design the engaged time students have with materials in order to produce successful experiences. For example, changing the materials to a more instructionally appropriate level for a struggling student may create outcomes that are more successful. Lack of success is also highly correlated with student dropout rates (Bost & Riccomini, 2006).

C. Students answer questions correctly.

This behavior should be observed for 80%–90% of the students who answer a question correctly. The teacher should ask questions frequently to assess ongoing understanding of both old and new concepts. This can be done by calling on one student at a time for an answer; but a better way to obtain student knowledge is either through choral responding, white boards, chalk boards, or some other technology.
This allows the teacher to assess all students throughout the process and not just a select few. For example, re-teaching can occur when the entire class responds below 80% so the students do not continue to make errors.

D. Students ask questions.

Students should ask questions throughout a lesson and other group and independent seatwork. This demonstrates that the student may feel comfortable with asking questions but also may indicate when a student needs more help. The students should frequently ask all types of questions throughout the instructional hierarchy (acquisition, maintenance, generalization, etc.) as well as critical thinking questions.

E. Teacher communicates the expectations of the lesson.

Teachers should provide assistance in making sense of the content by communicating clear explanations throughout the lesson (Weiss & Pasley, 2004). Methods to teach explicitly include stating goals, structuring the entire lesson in a format obvious to the student, and presenting information clearly (Bost & Riccomini, 2006). Lessons should also be in alignment with state curriculum (Howard & Rice-Crenshaw, 2006).

F. Teacher questioning measures students’ understanding of the prerequisite concepts, new concepts, and critical thinking.

The teacher should state learning goals as well as review knowledge needed in order to complete the skills or learn the new concept and teach those skills explicitly (Bost & Riccomini, 2006; Roelofs & Veenman, 1994). In addition, the teacher should actively seek to engage all learners in all aspects of classroom interaction and instruction leading to equal access for all students (Weiss & Pasley, 2004). Effective teacher questioning should be utilized. This gives a general measure of the students’ understanding of new and old concepts and leads to asking questions of the students to think critically and deeper (Weiss & Pasley, 2004).
III. Differentiated instruction (Essential Element 6)

Essential Element 6 of the Tier 1 Matrix addresses the use of differentiated instruction in all classrooms in the school. To meet the criteria for this element, schools should demonstrate differentiated instruction at 80%–94% in all the classrooms observed on the Tier 1 Classroom Observation Form (Model Form 3) or the district’s observation form. The following section will provide an overview of differentiated instruction and the items that are observed on the Model Form 3 for differentiation.

Overview of Differentiation

The purpose of differentiated instruction is to teach responsively to student differences while working toward the same desired outcome for all students. Differentiation without a focus on the desired learning outcome for students simply becomes differentiation without a purpose. The process of differentiated instruction allows educators to provide appropriate instruction for students within the same classroom and meet the needs of the individual student (Hall, 2002). Tomlinson (2001) identified four key elements that aid in the differentiation of classroom instruction which include, but are not limited to, the following:

Content

- Use of additional materials to provide available access to the education content, including generalizations, concepts, acts, etc.;

- Alignment of classroom tasks with instructional goals to allow for a clear development of skills;

- Presentation of tasks within the classroom that are concept-focused and principle-driven;

- Presentation of concepts that are broad in nature and essential for all students to learn; and
• Instruction that differs in the complexity based on the needs of students within
  the classroom (Tomlinson, 2001).

Additionally, the process, assessment, and strategies used in the classroom can be
adjusted to provide for greater differentiation in the classroom.

Process

The process used within the classroom is a key area/element of differentiated
instruction. Within the classroom, flexible grouping provides students opportunities to
work together and interact with peers. Grouping may be whole-class, small group, or
pairs. The general education teacher, special education teacher, and/or assistant may
provide support to groups during activities. These groups are not fixed and may be
adjusted by the educational staff based upon student need and the task assigned. A
key element essential to the process involved in differentiated instruction is that of
classroom management. Classroom organization and effective instructional delivery
are needed to effectively use differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2001).

Assessments

The products or outcomes involved in differentiated instruction are key elements of
evaluating the process. Within the classroom, initial and ongoing assessments are
needed to evaluate the students’ readiness and growth. These assessments aid the
development of instruction, the complexity of tasks and instructional objectives, and
may include interviews, surveys, performance assessments, and formal assessment
procedures. Within differentiated instruction, the student is an active responsible
explorer. The teacher should utilize interesting and engaging tasks that will challenge
the student. Measures to assess student performance may be differentiated to allow
students to demonstrate mastery of the same learning outcome. Differentiating
assessment allows for students to present varied means of expression and/or varied
levels of difficulty (Tomlinson, 2001). See example observation form for effective and
differentiated instruction (Model Form 3).
**Strategies**

Classroom teachers have been shown to perceive that the strategies associated with differentiated instruction are effective. Teachers have indicated that strategies, such as grouping techniques, utilization of different materials (i.e., leveled books), reinforcing academic attempts, and giving optional oral or written instruction may be effective in the classroom. These strategies, however, differed in perceived use in the classroom. Teachers also indicated that strategies, such as giving systematic feedback, modeling difficult tasks, and using different grouping techniques were more likely to be used within the classroom (Wertheim, 1996).

Tomlinson (2001) has identified multiple strategies to utilize within the classroom to differentiate readiness and interest. Readiness may be differentiated by incorporating strategies such as tiered assignments, alternative assessments, learning centers, and anchoring. Readiness and interest may be differentiated by using tiered products and choice boards. Strategies such as thought/production focused cooperative tasks are effective for use when differentiating interest. Additionally, low-end readiness may be differentiated using drill-focused and cooperative tasks. Examples of each of these strategies are provided in Table 1.
Table 1: Differentiated Instruction Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy for Differentiation</th>
<th>Primarily Used to Differentiate</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiered Assignments</td>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Give assignments for various ability levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiered Products</td>
<td>Readiness, Interest</td>
<td>Assess projects for various ability levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drill-focused Cooperative Tasks</td>
<td>Low-end Readiness</td>
<td>Use flash cards to instruct and obtain mastery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought/Production Focused Cooperative Tasks</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Allow higher level students to decipher through a difficult dilemma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Assessments</td>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Allow student to write a poem rather than take a test on the poem’s components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated Rubrics</td>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Develop a plan with a student to reach a particular academic goal by a specified time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice Boards</td>
<td>Readiness, Interest</td>
<td>Give the student a choice between three activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Centers</td>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Have students do math drills at one center, graph at another, and work on an assignment at another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchoring</td>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Allow students to read, write in journals, manage a portfolio, and practice while others are still working on their assignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations for Differentiated Instruction

The observation has 10 behaviors that have been identified to observe the teacher in the classroom, as he/she (a) uses acts to support instruction; (b) aligns tasks to learning goals; (c) varies engagement with students as the needs of the students differ; (d) provides guided practice in learning new concepts; (e) provides modeling for learning new concepts; (f) uses concepts to support instruction; (g) uses content to support instruction; (h) uses groups for students to work on instructional components; (i) provides prompt feedback to students concerning performance; and (j) assists students in preparation for assignments, long-range projects, and tests.
A. Teacher uses acts to support instruction.

There are types of acts generally used that support instruction, which are advance organizers, introductions into lessons, and closure to a lesson.

An advance organizer is information that is presented prior to learning and that can be used by the learner to organize and interpret new incoming information (Mayer, 2003). Advance organizers that serve to make appropriate prerequisite knowledge available to the learner by providing new information are called expository organizers. “Advance organizers that serve to build external connections with existing knowledge that is relevant to the new information by reminding the learner about prior knowledge are called comparative organizers” (Mayer, 2003, p. 128).

An advance organizer helps to organize new material by outlining, arranging, and sequencing the main idea of the new material based on what the learner already knows. Advance organizers use familiar terms and concepts to link the students’ prior knowledge to the new information that will be presented in the lesson, which aids in the process of transforming knowledge and creatively applying it in new situations. This process helps to embed the new information into long-term memory. Advance organizers don’t have to be lengthy or complex, just clearly understood and related to the material.

Advance organizers place the most general and comprehensive ideas at the beginning of a lesson and progress to more structured and detailed information. They can be useful devices at the start of a unit, before a discussion, before a question-answer period, before giving a homework assignment, before student reports, before a video, before students read from their textbook, before a hands-on activity, and before a discussion of concepts based on students’ experiences.

What advance organizers are not:

- A review of what was covered in the previous class session;

- A simple overview;
• Recalling what was done last week or last year;

• Telling the students about tomorrow;

• Recalling a personal experience and relating it to what will be learned; or

• Stating the objectives of the lesson.

An introduction into lessons is sometimes called a "hook" to grab the student's attention. An introduction is defined as actions and statements by the teacher to relate the experiences of the students to the objectives of the lesson to do the following:

a) to focus student attention on the lesson;

b) to create an organizing framework for the ideas, principles, or information that is to follow (e.g., the teaching strategy called "advance organizers"); and

c) to extend the understanding and the application of abstract ideas through the use of example or analogy used any time a different activity or new concept is to be introduced.

Closure to a lesson is defined as those actions or statements by a teacher that are designed to bring a lesson presentation to an appropriate conclusion. Closure is used to help students bring things together in their own minds in order to make sense out of what has just been taught. The teacher stating, "Are there any questions? No. OK, let's move on." is not closure. Closure is used for the following:
a. to cue students to the fact that they have arrived at an important point in the lesson or the end of a lesson;

b. to help organize student learning;

c. to help form a coherent picture, to consolidate, and to eliminate confusion and frustration; and

d. to reiterate the major points to be learned to help establish the network of thought relationships that provide a number of possibilities for cues for retrieval.

Closure is the act of reviewing and clarifying the key points of a lesson, tying them together into a coherent whole, and ensuring their utility in application by securing them in the student's conceptual network.

B. Teacher aligns tasks to learning goals.

The teacher should align the classroom tasks with instructional goals to allow for a clear development of skills. It is important to remember that goals are concept- or principle-driven so tasks are aligned with not only the content standards but also the larger concepts. There should not be “filler” work in that students are completing tasks that are not related to the goals or curriculum.

C. Teacher engagement with students varies, as the needs of the students differ.

Instruction differs in complexity based on the needs of students within the classroom. The teacher should give tiered assignments and assessments to allow for various ability levels. The teacher should allow higher level students to decipher through a difficult dilemma. To accommodate various levels of needs for example, the teacher can have students do math drills at one center, graph at another center, and work on an assignment at another center all while monitoring progress around the room and providing instruction.
D. Teacher provides guided practice and modeling in learning new concepts.

The teacher models the way a problem comes to a solution. In some ways, it’s the easiest part of the lesson. If you are teaching about fractions, you would show the way to do the learning objective only later to release them (independent practice) to do it on their own. An important part of this step is “checking for understanding” (CFU). An opportunity for each student to demonstrate grasp of new learning is by working through an activity or exercise under the teacher's direct supervision. The teacher moves around the room to determine the level of mastery and to provide individual remediation as needed. [Fred Jones, “praise, prompt, and leave” is suggested as a strategy to be used in guided practice.]

For example:

a. Watch how I do it (modeling).

b. You help me do it (or we do it together).

c. I’ll watch you do it or praise, prompt, and leave (guided practice).

d. You do it alone (independent practice).

E. Teacher uses concepts and content to support instruction.

Presentation of tasks within the classroom should be concept-focused and principle-driven. Presentation of concepts should be broad in nature and essential for all students to learn.

F. Teacher uses groups for students to work on instructional components.

Within the classroom, flexible grouping provides students opportunities to work together and interact with peers. Grouping may be whole-class, small group, or pairs. The general education teacher, special education teacher, and/or assistant may
provide support to groups during activities. These groups are not fixed and may be adjusted by the educational staff based upon student need and the task assigned.

G. Teacher provides prompt feedback to students concerning performance.

When a student is learning and prompted to perform a task, it is imperative that the educator and/or teacher provide prompt and continuous feedback about performance. The feedback should be given to all students during the instructional period and not delayed until written responses are graded. It is also recommended that feedback be given verbally and through modeling for correction. The more quickly the teacher can catch a student’s inappropriate problem solving, the easier it is to remediate the problem. If the teacher waits a day or even a longer time period to correct the responses, the student has had ample practice completing the activity incorrectly. Thus, the problem is more difficult to correct. However, feedback should not be limited to corrective feedback.

The feedback should also be given for correct response. These praise statements (e.g., “nice job,” “way to go,” “you did it!”) can be brief or can come in the form of asking the student to provide additional information as to how he or she arrived at his or her answer so that he or she can reflect and share with the rest of the students in the classroom. These behaviors from the teachers should be frequent and ongoing throughout whole group, independent, and small group work.

H. Teacher assists students in preparation for assignments, long-range projects, and tests.

The teacher should develop a plan with a student or group of students to reach a particular academic goal by a specified time. The teacher should allow students to read, write in journals, manage a portfolio, and practice while others are still working on their assignment. The motto in the classroom should be “we are never done.” This will aid in transitional times and also allow students to work at their own pace.
IV. Curricula and instructional materials aligned to state standards
(Essential Element 7)

Essential Element 7 of the Tier 1 Matrix requires that curricula and instructional materials used in each classroom of the school are aligned with state standards. This is to be demonstrated through the implementation of the district’s instructional management plan, teacher lesson plans, and teacher interviews. Through the district’s instructional management plan, the school or district should demonstrate that appropriate curricula are in place and delivered with integrity. The local educational agency (LEA) should map the state standards with instructional practices. Any educational staff member should be able to observe any classroom at any time and be able to determine exactly what standards are being taught through the effective instruction. Instruction and instructional materials must be clearly connected to the state standards at the appropriate grade level of the classroom observed.

Effective teachers will be in constant need of support in all areas of effective instruction. A means should be available to teachers to ensure that opportunities are available to analyze a variety of lessons exemplifying high-quality instruction and incorporating required curriculum within lesson plans (Howard & Rice-Crenshaw, 2006; Weiss & Pasley, 2004). In addition, learning goals and expectations of student progress should be made clear to them by the administration (Weiss & Pasley, 2004).

V. Classroom and behavior management (Essential Element 8)

Essential Element 8 of the Tier 1 Matrix addresses both classroom and behavior management. Classroom management plays vital roles in overall school discipline by creating a positive school climate and enabling enhanced student achievement. Effective classroom management establishes a learning environment that enables academic and other activities to run and transition smoothly (Reynolds & Muijs, 1999). It also establishes and maintains clear expectations and consequences for behavior, as well as learning goals (Marzano, R. J., & Marzano, J. S., 2003; Stage & Quiroz, 1997). Stages of effective classroom management have been identified as the first
day, the first few weeks, and throughout the year (Rancifer, 1993), and include setting, instructing, rehearsing, and maintaining clear rules, expectations, and consequences.

To meet the requirements of this element, at a minimum, 80%–94% of classrooms observed in the school should demonstrate high quality classroom instruction on the Tier 1 Classroom Observation Form (Model Form 3) or the district’s observation form. The following are the elements to be observed in the classroom on the Model Form 3:

A. Smooth transitions;

B. Clearly communicated rules;

C. Clearly communicated procedures;

D. Active supervision component: scanning to monitor student behavior;

E. Active supervision component: moving to monitor student behavior;

F. Active supervision component: interacting to monitor student behavior;

G. Consequences for positive behavior; and

H. Consequences for negative behavior.

**A. Smooth transitions**

The teacher should:

- Display efficient management of classroom materials and paperwork (i.e., new material or instruction is readily available and can be started with 1 minute of time);

- Provide transition activities for students who complete work before others (i.e., clear expectations for students to turn in work and get another activity or assignment); and
- Prevent students from wandering around with no evident purpose or goal, watching other people, engaging in unassigned activities, playing with materials, or staring out the window.

**B. Clearly communicated rules**

School and classroom rules should be posted in all locations in the classroom/school that are visible to all students. These rules should be a component of the school’s Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) program. The teacher should give both verbal and gestural reminders to the students about the rules. In addition, teachers should provide a verbal review of the rules prior to an infraction and when a student has engaged in breaking one of the rules.

**C. Clearly communicated procedures**

Procedures are those steps that are required to fulfill a task. They are not necessarily related to the rules. For example, the students lining up to go to the library is a procedure. Another example of procedures is morning work steps that are required to complete the assignment.

Precorrection procedures should be utilized for the classroom expectations as well as prior to transitioning to a different setting in the school. Precorrection is defined as an antecedent intervention that aims to reduce predictable problem behaviors and increase appropriate replacement behaviors through the daily verbal review of setting specific procedures prior to being released into that setting or beginning a new activity.

**D. Active supervision components to monitor student behavior**

Monitor students’ behaviors by engaging in active supervision in all locations of the school. Active supervision includes the following components:

- **Scanning**: visually examining the area (e.g., classroom, hallway, lunchroom, break area, playground, and restroom) for rule followers and rule violators;
Moving: physically moving on a consistent basis (e.g., walking, if in small groups, then physically leaning or moving towards) around the location or room, especially in areas where problems are more likely to occur; and

Interacting: initiating brief pro-social interactions with students (e.g., brief praise, smile, and pat on the back). This interaction is not based upon the teacher instructing, requesting, or commanding the student to do something; but rather non-contingent interaction for appropriate behaviors.

E. Consequences for positive and negative behavior

There should be more positive interactions than negative interactions between the teacher and students. A school and/or class-wide PBIS program should be used as a response to appropriate behavior. School and class procedures should be followed for inappropriate behavior.

Positive consequences are defined as providing a reward or “reinforcer” to the child immediately after the appropriate behavior has been displayed. The only way a teacher can know if something is reinforcing or rewarding is if the desired or appropriate behavior is more likely to occur in the future. For example, if the teacher instructs a child to sit in his or her seat and the child completes the task within 3–10 seconds, then praise the child by saying, “good job,” “thank you,” or “way to go.” If the student increases the sitting in seat behavior, then the teacher knows that the social praise is rewarding or reinforcing.

Negative consequences are defined as providing a negative response immediately after the inappropriate behavior has been displayed. The only way a teacher can know if something is negative is if the undesired or inappropriate behavior is less likely to occur in the future. For example, if the teacher instructs a child to sit in his or her seat and the child does not complete the task within 3–10 seconds, then the teacher gives a verbal reprimand. If the student decreases the out of seat behavior, then the teacher knows that the reprimand is effective (i.e., reducing the undesirable behavior).
However, caution should be NOTED in that a teacher or any educational staff SHOULD ALWAYS use positive consequences prior to negative consequences. As stated previously, the ratio of positive consequences should be 5–7 times more than negative consequences.

VI. System of behavioral support—school and district level (Essential Element 9)

Essential Element 9 of the Tier 1 Matrix addresses the use of a district and school-wide behavior management support system. Systems of school-wide positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) have been utilized in many elementary and middle schools to aid in the reduction of discipline problems as well as to promote positive behaviors and positive school environments. A vital part of classroom and behavior management at Tier 1 is ensuring that a system of behavioral support is implemented at both the school and district level. To meet this element, each school should have a school-wide behavioral support plan that addresses the elements of positive behavior interventions and support.

Rationale and conceptual definition for Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)

Effective behavior management in schools encompasses many aspects of the instructional environment, extending far beyond the classroom to other school settings and situations including, but not limited to, recess, cafeteria/lunch, hallway, loading/unloading zones, and extracurricular activities. Effective behavior management is not separate from academic instruction, but rather an essential component. Combined, effective classroom instruction and behavior management play a vital role in overall school discipline, thereby creating a school climate conducive to teaching and student learning.

Pursuant to Mississippi Code (37-11-18.1, 37-11-54) local school districts are called to implement effective behavior management strategies that utilize “evidence-based practices and positive behavioral intervention [and] supports” in an effort to prevent
student behavior problems as well as to effectively address presenting student problems. Within an RtI framework, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS; http://www.pbis.org/) or a “PBIS-like” program is a process that addresses behavior across ALL students, across ALL settings, and should function across ALL tiers in an RtI framework. Sugai and colleagues (2000) describe PBIS as “a general term that refers to the application of positive behavioral interventions and systems to achieve socially important behavior change” (p. 133).

PBIS, sometimes referred to as School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), is now implemented in many school districts and is used as an application of behaviorally-based systems and approaches to enhance different environments such as the school, the family, and the community (Sugai et al., 2002). PBIS is a wide range of universal and individualized strategies developed for use with all students to achieve important social and learning outcomes while concurrently preventing problem behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002). PBIS or a similar positive behavior support model should operate as the Tier 1 program for a school district and individual buildings within a school district, effectively meeting the needs of 80%–90% of the student population and should include school- and classroom-wide systems. PBIS has three levels of need for students that correspond to the continuum of supports for the prevention of problem behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002a; Walker, Cheney, Stage, & Blum, 2005). The first level is the primary level in which the program is designed to meet the needs of all students. Approximately 80% of students will need no further intervention and can explain what is expected of them and give behavioral examples (Sugai & Horner, 2002a; Walker et al., 2005). This proactive level of prevention is directed toward all students and includes behavioral screening techniques mentioned in the preceding universal screening section.

Oftentimes, valuable instructional time is lost in dealing with inappropriate student behavior. Scott and Barrett (2003) assessed the average amount of time spent by administrators, teachers, and students in the discipline process. A discipline referral was determined to cost an administrator a minimum of 10 minutes and a student 20 minutes, with a suspension costing 45 minutes of administrator time and up to 6 hours
of student time. Loss of student instructional time has been correlated with lower student achievement (Scott & Barrett, 2003).

Bohanon and his colleagues (2006) evaluated the effects of SWPBS in an urban high school on school-wide discipline outcomes. The high school represented a culturally diverse population of students including 36% African American, 36% Hispanic, 16% Asian American, 8% Caucasian, 2% Native American, and 2% from other cultural backgrounds. Bohanon et al. sought to measure both the process and outcome of implementing SWPBS in the high school. Process measures included the use of the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET; Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai, & Boland, 2004) and the Effective Behavior Support (EBS; Sugai, Horner, & Todd, 2000). Outcome measures included office disciplinary referrals (ODRs) and climate survey data. Using a pre-post design, the investigators compared the effects of SWPBS between baseline (Year 2) and implementation (Year 3). Bohanon et al. indicated that by Year 3 of the study, the high school had reached an overall level of 80% implementation across five domains of the SET. The most impressive result of this investigation was the decrease in ODRs after the implementation of SWPBS. The investigators noted that a 20% reduction of average daily ODRs was obtained during the first year of implementation with demonstrated decreases in both minor infractions (e.g., dress code violations) and major infractions (e.g., serious disobedience of authority). Bohanon et al. reported a decrease in students having multiple discipline referrals after the implementation of PBIS, noting that 32% of students in Year 2 as compared to 25% of students in Year 3 had two to five discipline referrals and 21% of students in Year 2 as compared to 16% of students in Year 3 had six or more discipline referrals (2006).

In summary, classroom management extends beyond the classroom into other non-instructional areas such as recess, the lunchroom, hallway, and buses. Problems in these areas can greatly affect instructional time in the classroom. The same components of appropriate classroom management are viable solutions to these areas including instructing, rehearsing, establishing/maintaining rules, expectations, as well as positive and negative consequences. PBIS incorporates a wide range of
universal and individualized strategies developed for use with all students to achieve important social and learning outcomes while concurrently preventing problem behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002b). PBIS is also designed to prevent problem behavior by altering the educational environment while also teaching appropriate alternatives (Safran & Oswald, 2003; Walker, Cheney, Stage, & Blum, 2005).

**Steps to creating a PBIS Model**

An essential factor throughout the early stages of creating a PBIS plan is having full administrative support. It is important for administrators to understand that they have a leadership role throughout the entire process (Kasper, 2004). They should identify team leaders in each building, schedule and attend team meetings, and facilitate regular discussions at staff meetings. Steps to creating a PBIS model include the following:

1. Develop a school-wide Leadership or PBIS team (e.g., can include, but not limited to, the principal, assistant principal, teachers, other staff members, parents) as well as a mission to guide the process and creation of the PBIS plan. This team is created to review the school’s data, develop outcome goals, create a plan that has demonstrated efficacy in achieving those goals, execute the plan, and continue to evaluate the plan throughout the course of implementation (Sugai, Flannery, & Bohanon-Edmonson, 2004). The inclusion of a variety of school personnel on the team is essential to the PBIS process (Safran & Oswald, 2003). The members of the team can include, but are not limited to, the following: administrators, general education teachers from each grade, special education teachers, other teachers (e.g., music, physical education [PE]), assistant teachers, school psychologists, speech language pathologists, counselors, parents, and students.

2. Analyze data from current and previous years (if available) for baseline information.
a. Collect and analyze Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs). ODRs are most often used as the outcome measure for the efficacy of school-wide interventions. ODRs were found to be not only sensitive measures of the effects of intervention, but they were also found to be valid indicators of intervention effectiveness (Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004).

b. Conduct a Needs Assessment or School-Wide Survey [Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; 1999), The Effective Behavior Support (EBS) Team Implementation Checklist (Sugai, Horner & Todd, 2000), and School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET)]. All staff should complete the survey, which should then be used in the development of the initial plan. This is done not only to determine the needs of the individual school but also to determine the current behavioral practices in place in the school. This should be administered each school year and should be used for comparison and determination of improvement each year.

3. The School PBIS Team should review the data and develop a plan to target the specific needs of the school or district. The following components should be included and individualized based on the specific needs of the school:

a. Common purpose and approach to discipline;

b. Three to five positively stated expectations (e.g., Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe) that are location specific. A matrix can be developed to specify appropriate behaviors for each location (e.g., playground, hallway);

c. Procedures for teaching expected behaviors in the classroom as well as outside the classroom;

d. Classroom and/or non-classroom contingency-based program to reinforce appropriate and pro-social behaviors; and

e. Procedures for ongoing progress monitoring.
4. Conduct training for all faculty and staff. The school team should present the plan to their fellow faculty to aid in the overall buy-in from everyone. Again, it is essential to have administrative support throughout each meeting.

5. Develop a plan to teach expected behaviors to all students. The steps to teaching expected behaviors are as follows (Glover, 2004):
   a. Define and visibly post school-wide expectations across settings;
   b. Teach expectations to students (approximately 10–15 minutes each school day);
   c. Present examples as well as non-examples of the appropriate behaviors;
   d. Give students an opportunity to practice the skills; and
   e. Acknowledge when students exhibit appropriate behaviors.

These teaching procedures should be utilized in multiple settings (e.g., classroom, playground, hallway, and cafeteria) to aid in the acquisition of the skills by the students (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Additionally, these teaching procedures should be conducted throughout the school year, not just at the beginning of the year.

6. Develop school-wide and classroom responses to positive behavior. As part of the teaching process, a reinforcement system (e.g., tickets, tokens) should be created and explained to the students. The purpose of the reinforcement system is to increase the occurrence of appropriate behaviors while developing an environment that is positive, preventive, effective, and predictable (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

7. Collect data (i.e., ODRs) throughout the course of the year. ODRs should be gathered each month and analyzed in order to make monthly comparisons. These data should be presented to the faculty periodically (e.g., every 2–3 months). It is important to remind all members of the faculty that drastic
differences may not be noticed immediately, but over the course of a few years, gradual differences may start to appear (Kasper, 2004).

8. Ongoing, data-based decision making should occur. Regular meetings should be scheduled with the school PBIS team in order to conduct ongoing evaluation of the PBIS plan.

In summary, a well-designed PBIS model contains the following essential characteristics:

1. Administrative support at the district and building level for such efforts;

2. A broad representative team of teachers with a mission to guide the process to improve the behavioral and instructional climate of the district/building;

3. Faculty commitment to the mission of the aforementioned team;

4. Effectively designed discipline procedures including, but not limited to, a documented discipline process including reporting and tracking procedures, behavioral definitions of major and minor offenses that are consistent across building sites, effective assortment of responses to minor offenses, and effective assortment of responses to major offenses;

5. Data tracking system and data collection procedures that can be used for analysis of office discipline referrals;

6. Agreed upon expectations of behavior with accompanying rules across the different settings within a school building;

7. Acknowledgement systems that are used to respond to students when they are exhibiting behavioral expectations and complying with rules associated with those expectations;

8. Lesson plans for teaching the expectations and accompanying rules;

9. An implementation plan;
10. A crisis plan; and

11. Program evaluation procedure to assess implementation integrity and program outcomes on student behavior.

PBIS systems promote a positive climate within a school by changing the focus from solely utilizing punitive approaches to using more positive approaches that acknowledge and support appropriate behavior. These essential characteristics are further delineated in the assessment tools (i.e., the School-wide Benchmarks of Quality and the School-wide Evaluation Tool) located at [http://www.pbis.org/](http://www.pbis.org/).

### VII. Instructional leadership (Essential Element 10)

Essential Element 10 of Tier 1 is instructional leadership, which is demonstrated through a district/school improvement plan that:

- Connects with professional development that exhibits growth, knowledge, and fidelity towards implementation;

- Addresses areas of needs/concerns based on data (i.e., state test scores, subject area assessment scores, discipline data, classroom assessment data); and

- Demonstrates a direct correlation of allocation of resources to the needs.

The seven possible leadership positions include instructional leadership, cultural leadership, managerial leadership, human resources leadership, strategic leadership, external development leadership, and micro-political leadership. Instructional leadership is defined as guaranteeing the quality of instruction, modeling teaching practices, supervising curriculum, and aiding with the acquisition of quality teaching resources. Principals may designate instructional leadership responsibilities to a lead or experienced teacher, while continuing to communicate criteria that define effective instruction.
As the instructional leader, principals have the capacity to create organizational structures that promote educators’ instructional leadership skills and develop instructional leadership among the faculty as a whole. Collaborative problem-solving teams are an example of an organizational structure that will allow a principal to define instructional leadership by sharing it. A principal’s approach to instructional leadership contributes heavily to the culture of the school.

Administrators have tremendous impact on collaborative problem-solving teams. The relationship between principal characteristics and administrative supports overlap because principal characteristics influence the type of administrative supports available as well as three important school characteristics—a culture of change, high student learning expectations, and teacher professionalism—as shown in the literature (Rafoth & Foriska, 2006). Based on the literature, schools with these characteristics have more effective team functioning, higher participant satisfaction rates, and more successful student outcomes. Problem-solving teams support a culture of change, reinforce high student outcome expectations, and increase teacher professionalism. Similarly, these factors interactively contribute to teacher empowerment, and the literature suggests that teacher empowerment is influenced by effective team functioning and successful student outcomes. Finally, teacher empowerment suggests an interactive exchange between the principal and teacher. Thus, the literature as it currently exists does not suggest a direct link between any specific administrative supports and effective team functioning, higher satisfaction rates, and successful student outcomes. Rather, the relationship appears to be more complex. Hypothetically, the support system and leadership should first affect the culture of the school and its faculty in order to have an impact on team functioning.

For implementation, the LEA should provide a district/school improvement plan, which connects with professional development that exhibits growth, knowledge, and fidelity toward implementation; addresses areas of needs/concerns based on data (i.e., state test scores, universal screening data, discipline data); and demonstrates a direct correlation of allocation of resources to the needs. The school improvement plan should include documentation of teacher professionalism (e.g., evaluation,
observations, ongoing systematic professional development, parent notes and letters) allocation of resources (e.g., staff, time, materials), and support for screening, assessment, and interventions (e.g., expenditure reports, teaching allocation units).

VIII. System of instructional support (Essential Element 11)

Essential Element 11 of Tier 1 involves the provision of a system of instructional support to ensure that school staff members receive the support and assistance needed to improve their practice and to provide quality classroom instruction and management. To meet this element, each LEA should have an instructional management plan, which includes data-driven professional development and evidence of formative and summative observations to improve instructional practices. For example, evidence of a good system of instructional support would include, but not be limited to, a mentoring program, peer planning, evidence of data-based professional development, department meetings, peer coaching team meetings, collaborative team meetings (not TSTs), and/or a reading sufficiency plan.

Professional development provided to teachers and schools to address learning needs for implementation of quality instruction and behavior and classroom management should be guided by the National Staff Development Council Standards. These standards provide direction for designing a professional development experience that ensures educators acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Additionally, they emphasize that staff development should be results-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded.

IX. System of classroom observations to determine integrity of implementation and follow-up procedures in place for instructional staff who have not met minimal instructional and behavioral criteria (Essential Elements 12 and 13)

For Essential Element 12 in the Tier 1 Matrix, the school and district should have a system of classroom observations to determine if the educational staff are
implementing the strategies previously outlined with integrity. Educators should embrace continued education through learning from others and obtaining feedback on performance in order to improve instructional practices and thereby increase student performance. As teachers begin or continue to implement quality classroom instruction with effective instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, and behavior management, they should have a system to obtain and receive feedback on these areas. Administrators (including superintendents) should be seen as the instructional leaders of the school/district committed to ensuring implementation of these practices with high integrity. One way for administrators to learn from other administrators and schools in the district is to have the administrators observe teachers in another school at least once a year. This provides administrators with additional information that could be incorporated into their school but also ensures an integrity system without bias from the home-based administrator. There are certain elements that should be in place to meet the criteria for this element. A system should be in place to ensure that all classrooms are observed 3-4 times a year at equal intervals.

For RtI to be successful, teachers should have support and procedures in place to address any areas of concern in implementing quality instruction and classroom and behavior management. For this to occur, the instructional leadership should have follow-up procedures that provide feedback to instructional staff members to assist them in improving their practice. Essential Element 13 of the Tier 1 Matrix addresses procedures for following up with instructional staff that have not met minimal instructional and behavioral criteria. To meet the requirements of this element, schools should be able to demonstrate that procedures have been established that provide feedback to instructional staff members through a scheduled conference, written information about problematic key features of the checklist, a Tier 1 Action Plan for each identified teacher, and follow-up teacher observations demonstrating appropriate implementation. Documentation of implementation of this element may include written artifacts of the above components (See Model Forms 3 and 4).
X. Parental/family and community involvement

(Essential Element 14)

Essential Element 14 of Tier 1 addresses the involvement of parents, families, and the community in the educational process. First, schools should identify outcomes for family participation versus complaining about the fact that parents/guardians are not involved. Second, school teams should clearly define what participation looks like across the three tiers. Third, school teams should identify and implement strategies to actively engage families in the process. Finally, schools should acknowledge incremental increases toward meeting their set goals. Several considerations should be made when school teams deliberate to define “family participation.” “Family” should be broadly defined to include any and all caregivers in the home, not limiting the definition to the traditional two parents and siblings. In addition, there is no universal definition of family participation or involvement. Schools should define family participation relative to presenting issues, which range from little or no family presence in the school to the other extreme, too much parental presence to the point of disrupting the school day.

Understanding the family environment is key; therefore, schools should provide training and information relative to typically developing student family ecology. Information should be provided such as developing partnerships, interacting in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner, as well as understanding how at-risk children or children with disabilities create unique family stressors (Boettcher, Koegel, McNerney, & Koegel, 2003; Fox, Vaughn, Wyattte, & Dunlap, 2002; Frea & Kasari, 2004; Koegel, Koegel, Boettcher, Brookman-Frazee, 2005; Lucyshyn & Albin, 1993; Smith-Bird, Turnbull, & Koegel, 2005). An emphasis should be placed on the “strengths” of the family and not just problems or needs (Vaughn, White, Johnston, & Dunlap, 2005).

Once schools clearly establish a definition of family participation across the three tiers, it is also important to communicate with parents/guardians the realities of the school
day. These realities of the school day include, but are not limited to, the following issues:

- the central purpose of school is to educate children and youth;
- a protocol to visit or observe may be established;
- an understanding that their child is just as important to the school as he or she is to the parent/guardian but also communicating there are often hundreds of children in the school that also warrant and deserve attention; and
- while school personnel often extend themselves to connect families with other agencies, school personnel themselves typically cannot provide that service (e.g., teachers are not trained counselors).

In no way should this list be interpreted as creating limitations for services and supports provided or excuses for not involving and supporting families. A final consideration in increasing family participation is underscoring the importance of creating supportive “host environments” within school and home settings (Zins & Ponti, 1990). There may be several risk factors within the home environment that may hinder creating, implementing, and maintaining a supportive “host environment.” Although educators do not have the power to change any of the risk factors (i.e., poverty, low socioeconomic status, social isolation, single parenthood, marital discord, and depression or mental illness), awareness and efforts to lessen the impact of any or all of these factors can assist families in creating supportive “host environments” that will then be more receptive to inclusion of effective strategies and fostering partnerships between school and home (Lucyshyn & Albin, 1993; Lucyshyn, Horner, Dunlap, Albin & Ben, 2002; Smith-Bird, Turnbull, & Koegel, 2005; Vaughn et al, 2005).

A universally accepted definition of family participation does not appear in the professional literature (Horner & Koegel, 2005). A working definition is offered to guide schools in their formulation of supports across the three tiers (Lewis, 2007). Three key points are offered for consideration. The first is “awareness” as defined as information flowing between school and home. The second is “involvement” as
defined as family members of students within a given school actively participating in school functions. The third focal point is “support.” Support is defined as the school taking an active role in providing, coordinating, or arranging from a third party, strategies for use by parents/guardians. School teams are encouraged to consider each of the three focal points across the continuum of supports for students but shift emphasis contingent upon the level of the continuum of “universal,” “supplemental/targeted,” or “individual/intensive” supports. However, this section of the handbook will deal exclusively with Tier 1 (Universal Supports).

**Universal Supports**

Universal supports include practices and systems of support that focus on all students, all settings, and all school staff (Sugai et al., 2000). At the universal level, schools should focus primarily on “awareness” relative to family participation but also consider the other two focal points of the working definition. At the universal level, a two-way exchange of information should be the primary focus. Information may include:

- school-wide expectations;
- strategies to teach and support activities; and
- targeted acknowledgement of mastery that is shared with parents/guardians through concise written materials, general meetings, and individual teacher contacts, with information presented in user-friendly formats such as brochures or short, bulleted overviews.

The goal is to increase understanding of the process and targeted student outcomes. Language and readability level should reflect the local community. If meetings are scheduled to share information with parents/guardians, consider three factors that are likely to increase attendance in instances in which most school meetings are poorly attended: (a) offer transportation to the meeting, (b) provide refreshments at the meeting, and (c) provide child-care at the meeting.
Equally important, schools should solicit information from parents/guardians relative to the educational system and their perceptions of access across the continuum. It is important that schools determine the most efficient and effective manner to gather this data. The typical format is a survey that is sent home to parents. However, plan for the possibility that surveys may not be returned, and consider other formats to gather the information (e.g., phone calls to the home, home visits, visits with parents at school functions such as athletic events).

Involvement at the universal level should follow the primary focus of awareness. The goal is to seek active participation on the part of families within the educational process to promote a two-way understanding of what the school is attempting to accomplish, thereby developing partnerships in the effort. Two strategies should be considered. The first is the inclusion of a family member on school teams. The role of the family member is to lend a different voice to the planning and discussion within the team and to advocate the school's strategies among other families.

The second consideration to increase family involvement at the universal level is to extend invitations to all families to participate in school activities. The outcome of participation should continue to be focused on promoting awareness and extending the two-way dialogue about student outcomes. Within schools where levels of family volunteering or participation are often low, consider the following suggestions. First, clearly delineate timelines and expectations of the event. Open calls for family members to volunteer may be met with apprehension based on the impression it will require a lot of time and/or a unique set of skills (e.g., reading tutors or open calls to “volunteer” without provided specifics). Second, across all events, provide training and/or ensure a school staff member will be on hand to assist. Finally, keep the primary focus of the event in mind, to open or continue the dialogue with parents/guardians about supporting their children.

Support at the universal level continues to follow the primary focus of awareness through information dissemination. Information should be shared that (a) outlines the steps parents/guardians should take to refer their child for services, (b) provides
information on how to access community agencies, and (c) lists the range of options available for support across the school district and related community agencies. A second focus within supports should also include a systematic way for families to make connections or receive services between internal and external family supports and the larger school-wide systems. Similarly, local matrices should be developed by the school and/or district with family input and disseminated across the school staff to illustrate how families can enter or access the continuum of services across and within agencies to provide family supports as well as foster awareness. Extending the process to family participation, school teams should continually self-assess their efforts to promote awareness, as well as involvement and support.

To meet this element, the school improvement plan should include parental involvement linked to improving measured student achievement and behavior (e.g., state test scores, universal screening data, office discipline referrals, and SSBD). Overall, the school improvement plan should include the following: a reliable and valid measure of parental/family involvement collected at least once a year; an evidence-based parental involvement component that supports improved student achievement (e.g., notes sent home, tutoring, parent teacher association [PTA], homework center, intervention at family level, parent meeting sign-in sheet, school adopters); opportunities for family learning and development (e.g., good nutrition); nonacademic activities/gatherings for families; multiple avenues to communicate with parents (e.g., Web site updates, newsletters, homework hotlines, teacher web pages, emails); use of parental/family involvement measures to refine the school improvement plan; and parental/community involvement in PBIS efforts.

**XI. Making school-wide Tier 1 decisions**

Educators collect a great deal of data on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. Examples of data collected include, but are not limited to, state assessments, oral reading fluency, computer-assisted programs, attendance, office discipline referrals, grades, grade distribution, teacher recommendations, teacher information, vision screenings, hearing screenings, retention rate, medical records, class schedules,
class size, number of schools attended, daily observations of the students, social behavior observations or ratings, and/or classroom assessments. This section provides examples and suggestions on how to use and analyze data wisely to make informed decisions about instructional and behavioral planning.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation is the application and combination of several empirical techniques (i.e., assessments, observations, etc.) for examining the variable of interest, namely state assessments. By combining multiple observers, methods, and data sources, the intent is to overcome the weaknesses, biases, or problems that exist from using a single observer, method, and/or data source. There are three basic types of triangulation:

- Data triangulation, which involves time, space, and persons.
- Theory triangulation, which consists of using more than one theoretical scheme.

**Note:** Some might believe that innate abilities contribute to the differences in state assessment performance more so than quality of instruction.

- Methodological triangulation, which involves using more than one method and may consist of within-method or between-method strategies. In other words, within-method strategies mean that instruction can be measured the same way, however the delivery method (e.g., independent seatwork versus direct instruction) may vary. Between-method strategies are designed to include two or more strategies (e.g., instruction versus behavior) and how they contribute or detract from the overall student outcome (e.g., statewide assessments).
Figure 2 below is an example of methodological triangulation involving between-method strategies, which is the focus of this section of the handbook.

**Figure 2: Methodological Triangulation (between-method strategies)**

The following sections explain how these methods interact to contribute to student performance on statewide assessments.

A. **Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)**

CBM has been a useful and powerful indicator of global outcomes of achievement for students. CBM assesses early literacy, oral reading fluency, comprehension, spelling, early numeracy, math computation, math reasoning, and written expression. The following sections give the reader guidelines for setting goals in some of these areas. The areas included have the strongest literature base.
B. Oral Reading Fluency

For oral reading fluency (ORF), the national research suggests that 2nd graders with 50–90 words correct per minute (WCPM) passed high-stakes tests in 3rd grade. However, the higher end passed with a better percentage. Third graders with 70–110 WCPM passed the high-stakes tests in 4th grade. Fourth graders with 90–130 WCPM passed the high-stakes tests in 5th grade. Therefore, higher performance in oral reading fluency contributes to higher performance on statewide assessments.

<table>
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<th>Spring</th>
<th>1st Grade</th>
<th>2nd Grade</th>
<th>3rd Grade</th>
<th>4th Grade</th>
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<td>Targeted Oral Reading Fluency Rates</td>
<td>&gt;40 WCPM</td>
<td>50–90</td>
<td>70–110</td>
<td>90–130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 2: Suggested Levels for Oral Reading Fluency by Grade for Spring

C. Comprehension

Correlations have been found between comprehension and ORF in lower grades. The correlation between comprehension and ORF for all grades is .60 to .91. Therefore, comprehension is a good predictor of achievement for all grades.

D. Early Numeracy

Results have shown moderately strong correlations (ranging from .52 to .73) between a brief kindergarten screening measure, the Number Knowledge Test (Okamato & Case, 1996) and a first grade standardized measure of math achievement, the SAT-9. This finding indicates a promising direction for efficient and early identification of students who might require intervention to prevent the diagnosis of learning disabilities in the area of mathematics. Number identification has been demonstrated to be a sensitive indicator of achievement in early numeracy. Number identification scores
increased by 42.1 and 28.1 for kindergarten and first grade students, respectively, from fall to spring. This finding replicates and expands the previous findings, while multiple regression showed statistical significance in predicting spring Number Knowledge Test scores from Quantity Discrimination and Missing Number for kindergarten students in the fall. The role of Number Identification should not be discounted without additional evidence. Number Identification demonstrated the greatest growth over time, and thus its value as a tool to monitor progress should be taken into consideration when designing a measurement net for early mathematics.

E. Math Computation and Application (M-CBM) (Thurber, Shinn, & Smolkowski, 2002)

M-CBM correlated highly with other measures of basic facts (median $r = .82$) and moderately with commercial tools of math Computation (median $r = .61$). Performance on M-CBM also was less related to tests assessing math applications (median $r = .42$). A two-factor model of mathematics assessment, Computation and Applications, were shown as distinct entities, however they were highly related constructs ($r = .83$). Although mathematics theory is not as well documented as reading theory, two broad factors of mathematics emerge from the literature, Computation and Applications. In practice, these two factors typically are viewed as independent. For instance, this multidimensional theory of mathematics is evident in the scope and sequence of traditional mathematics curricula. It appears that skills in one area are necessary for success in the other area.

An area that has been largely ignored in mathematics assessment is the role of reading in mathematics performance. This role has not been well researched, although speculation proliferates, especially with respect to mathematics applications. Correlations between the Reading and Computation (.76) and Reading and Applications constructs (.77) were high. The finding suggests that students who performed well in reading also tended to perform well in mathematics. Conversely, students who were not proficient in reading did not perform well on the mathematics measures. Therefore, results indicate that reading may be a necessary and important
component in overall mathematics competence and should not be overlooked in drawing conclusions about mathematics skills.

**Some CBM Conclusions**

Fuchs, L., Fuchs, D., & Powell (2008) found that on global test of reading comprehension (Stanford Achievement Test), student learning was reliably superior when teachers used the CBM data to instrumentally inform their instructional decision (Effect Size = 0.72). By contrast, when teachers conducted progress monitoring but did not use the data to inform instruction, achievement on the Stanford was not reliably better than when teachers did not monitor progress at all (Effect Size = 0.36).

Supplementary analyses indicated that teachers who had implemented CBM during the previous academic year (as part of another CBM study) were more likely to use the data instrumentally. So, for instrumental use, two elements may be important: ongoing training/support and teacher experience with CBM.

**Other Measures**

There are other data sources that schools frequently use to aid in the instructional decision making. Often schools use computer-based programs to help with this decision-making process. However, some cautionary notes are needed. Frequently, students use the computer-based programs to supplement the core instruction, but at times there is little to no observation to determine if the student is actually using the program the way it was intended. In addition, educators may not be given the proper professional development or understand the research that accompanies the programs to make a determination of whether or not programs are appropriate for their needs. So much information may be provided and consumed that it is difficult to determine what the best decision is for the student population. For more information, view the findings and analyses at What Works Clearinghouse at [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/).

This being said, no one program works for every school. The district or the school should examine its own data to determine the program that will work best, given what the data indicate. A district or school should not purchase a program or endorse a
program that is not supported by evidence. Districts should also consider the need for consistency across grade levels and buildings when selecting programs.

**On-Task Behaviors and Instruction**

On-task/Instruction has been demonstrated to predict student achievement. Students should be displaying between 80%–90% on-task behaviors that are demonstrated through active engagement. In addition, the aforementioned paragraphs outline the necessity for high quality instruction including effective instruction, differentiated instruction, and classroom management. If the principal and teachers can attain these levels of on-task behaviors and instruction, then high-stakes testing and outcomes in Tier 1 will dramatically improve. Finally, if these two behaviors are implemented with a high degree of integrity the number of students requiring Tiers 2 and 3 will decrease.

**Behavior (Sprick, 2008)**

The outcome of classroom management should always be defined by student engagement. The first step in this process is setting a goal for student engagement in the classroom, which should be 90%. Any less than that means the classroom management approach needs improvement. Therefore, the second main step is to conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback to teachers based on observations. Conducting observations once a year is not sufficient! Administrators need to conduct observations 3–4 times a year (at a minimum) to assess how well teachers are keeping their students engaged throughout the year. Whenever patterns of problem behaviors are identified, there is an opportunity to implement preventive measures. Additionally, educators need to form hypotheses about what is creating those patterns and then design universal practices that will prevent and/or minimize disciplinary problems.

**B. Putting the Data Together**

One of the most difficult duties that educators face is the consumption and analysis of an abundance of data that is gathered throughout the year. Data analysis is determining what data to focus on and what the data mean once put together in a
meaningful way. For the remainder of this section, an example will be provided to show how data should be analyzed and used for Tier 1 decision making.

EXAMPLE:

An elementary school (K–3) has collected data on office disciplinary referrals, classroom observations, fluency, content area scheduling, and state assessment data from the previous year. The school has a population of 450 students across the grades with kindergarten being the smallest population. The data are presented first, important questions are asked, follow-up example data are explained, and information on how to write or implement a plan is provided.

The principal has conducted observations throughout the year across the instructional day on all the teachers. The data from classroom observations indicate that about 40% of the teachers have not met 80% of the instructional and behavioral criteria. Sixty percent of the teachers have met 80% of the instructional and behavioral criteria based on the total observations.

The office disciplinary referrals total 600 throughout the school year. The referrals have been categorized into type of referral, time of day, location, and teacher. The data indicate that the majority of referrals were of low level intensity but were high level frequency behaviors such as talking out, talking without permission, etc. There are also patterns with certain teachers having more referrals than other teachers. In addition, there are patterns in time of day and with incidences primarily occurring in the classroom after a transitional time.

The school’s data on statewide assessment demonstrate that 60% of the students are basic or minimal across all areas, 25% are proficient, while the remaining students are in the advanced range. Upon further examination of this data, a majority of students are struggling in both reading and mathematics specifically in fluency and application/comprehension. The progress monitoring or CBM data confirms that fluency for reading and mathematics are well below the standards set forth in the previous sections.
Based on all the data collected and reviewed, the school has several concerns to be addressed. At this point, decisions will have to be made on how to prioritize and address these concerns. In making these decisions, it will be important to consider a number of questions including, but not limited to, the following:

1) Were the teachers below expectations in all content areas or just in one area during classroom observations?

2) Were the teachers below expectations at a particular time of day when observed?

3) Were there patterns across multiple observations that indicated that the teachers were missing key elements?

4) Where were the disciplinary infractions occurring? Classroom, hallway, bathrooms, buses, etc.?

5) What time of day were the infractions occurring? Did the time of day correspond to the concerns identified in classroom observations? Did the time of day relate to content areas being taught?

6) Were there patterns in the school’s statewide assessment data suggesting that students are not mastering particular content areas?

7) In the progress monitoring or CBM data, were there common errors that the students are making in fluency? Application and comprehension should not be addressed at this time but should be analyzed for patterns.

8) In the progress monitoring or CBM data, were the students slow in fluency but accurate and/or slow in fluency and inaccurate?

**Follow-up Example Data**

In the classroom observations, the teachers received lower ratings on reading instruction, which is taught in the morning by all teachers. The teachers were not
addressing key elements in the effective instructional elements and the behavior management domains. Thus, both the instructional deficiencies and disciplinary infractions were occurring in the morning in the classroom but also after bathroom breaks and recess. The progress monitoring or CBM data on fluency for reading, early literacy, and mathematics suggest that there are patterns in the errors being made that correlate with patterns in the school’s statewide assessment data. Given this information, the leadership team should decide whether to begin with behavior or instruction. They will also need to decide if additional information is needed. Since the data definitely suggest concerns with both behavior and instruction, the team will need to decide whether to address both areas at the same time or one at a time.

**Instructional and Behavior Planning**

The recommendation based upon the hypothetical data would be to address behavior in the first semester. However, the leadership team should determine the order and method for best handling the concerns identified. Additionally, the leadership team should present the data to the educational staff and build “buy in” and consensus on the concerns to be addressed. Once this has been done, goals should be set. In this case, the following are some examples of goals that might be set for this particular school.

1) The teachers will improve their performance in instruction and behavior management to meet at least 80% of the observation criteria by the end of the semester.

2) The disciplinary infractions will be reduced by 50% by the end of the semester.

The following are some examples of activities the school might undertake to attain these goals.

1) The staff will be provided professional development on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) on Tier 1.
2) The leadership team will develop a plan to target the areas that are most problematic (i.e., recess, bathroom breaks, etc.).

3) The leadership team will develop a plan to assist teachers in improving the deficient areas of instruction.

4) The leadership team will ensure that technical assistance is provided to follow up on the strategies that are being implemented.

5) The leadership team will analyze and review progress on the target areas (i.e., classroom observations and disciplinary infractions) on a weekly and monthly basis.

6) The leadership team will have monthly meetings with the educational staff to provide updates and obtain feedback.

7) The leadership team will review the latest progress monitoring or CBM data to determine if sufficient improvement has been made and if the goals have been met. If the goals have been met, then new goals should be established. If the goals have not been met, the most recent data should be reviewed and analyzed to determine why they were not met and what further steps should be taken by the school to meet these goals.

While this example has been provided to demonstrate how the process should work, each school is different and presents different concerns and contexts that should be considered. While this is a challenging task, it is most rewarding when it is done thoughtfully and correctly. Schools should have efficient and effective Tier 1 instruction and behavior management before decisions should be made about individual children and their potential needs for Tier 2 strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction or Tier 3 intensive interventions.
XII. Entering Tier 2: Data-based decision making

While universal screening is a Tier 1 element, the data from universal screening is utilized to make decisions regarding which students need Tier 2 supplemental instruction and/or strategic targeted intervention. The approach to the data analysis is similar to Tier 1 in that the school or district needs to examine all the data that was previously discussed. However, the analysis is within the context of identifying individual students who are struggling. This process of universal screening and data analysis should be conducted within the first month of school and repeated in the winter and spring or conducted quarterly.

There are some preliminary discussions about identifying students for Tier 2. First, the school or district should not use one source of data to determine who enters Tier 2. Data that is collected—whether it is from the school’s statewide assessment data, progress monitoring or CBM, other sources, or office discipline referrals—have inherent bias, meaning that there could be some error in using one data source. For example, the school’s statewide assessment data is only collected once a year, and it is only a sample of what a student can do. Therefore, to base a decision solely on this data is problematic. The same can be said for any other measure. Second, grades should not be used as the primary source for identification. Grades have not been shown to reliably predict performance on high-stakes assessments. Thus, this data source should only be used as a secondary resource. These comments are made keeping in mind that Policy 4300 clearly states that students who meet certain criteria must be referred to the Teacher Support Team. However, this section is strictly for identifying those students in need of Tier 2. Third, the data should converge to demonstrate that a student needs help. For example, the student may demonstrate inadequate performance on MCT-2, CBM, and other sources of data. This is another example of methodological triangulation.

As stated previously, the outcome of classroom management should be defined by student engagement. Administrators should conduct multiple observations across time to determine the level of student engagement throughout the year in order to
provide feedback to teachers. Administrators should also analyze office discipline referrals to determine if patterns exist. These procedures of observations and analysis of office discipline referrals can be critical to successful outcomes in behavior.

For example, an elementary school has collected data on disciplinary referrals and classroom observations. The school has a population of 450 students. The principal has conducted observations throughout the year across the instructional day for all teachers. The data from classroom observations indicate that about 40% of the teachers are below the 80% benchmark on effective instruction and behavior management. Sixty percent of the teachers are making the 80% benchmark in the total observations. The office discipline referrals total 600 throughout the school year. There are patterns with certain teachers having more referrals than other teachers, and there are patterns in time of day, primarily occurring in the classroom after a transitional time. The administrator discovers that 60 students had two or more disciplinary infractions that accounted for 50% of the total disciplinary referrals. These students did demonstrate the high frequency behaviors in the classroom and therefore, the administrator should consider supplemental instruction or targeted/strategic interventions at Tier 2.

The next section will discuss how the school or district may identify students for Tier 2. Each method can be used solely, but it is recommended that a combination of methods be used.
**Dual Discrepancy**

When examining the data from CBM or other sources, the school can identify students who are discrepant from peers at data collection point 1 (e.g., fall universal screening) and at each data collection period following. As Figure 3 demonstrates below, the discrepancy continues or becomes larger at point 2 (e.g., winter universal screening). Thus, the school at the time that the fall universal screening was conducted would want to consider examining this student closer to determine if he (Jim, in the example in Figure 3) demonstrates a need based upon whether there is a convergence of data (i.e., multiple sources of data like previous scores) instead of waiting until the winter universal screening.

**Figure 3: Dual Discrepancy Between a Student’s Performance (Jim) and District Performance**
Note: The squares represent Jim’s performance at two different points in time. The circles represent the district’s overall performance at the same two points in time as Jim. The difference between the two lines is the discrepancy.

Rate of Improvement (RoI) and Percentiles

Rate of improvement (RoI) or rate of progress is defined as the rate at which a student demonstrates growth on a measure (i.e., CBM). Generally, the RoI is calculated by the week. The graphic below is a chart on oral reading fluency for the fall and winter universal screening. The student’s RoI from the fall to winter universal screening is indicated in the second to last column. The last column is the average rate of improvement for all students. The well-above average and above average students are not making the average rate of improvement. For Tier 2 consideration, the school in the example chart would want to examine the below average and well-below average students as candidates for Tier 2. However, not all students may warrant Tier 2 instruction or intervention without further convergence of data as they are making better progress than the average student. For example, the students that are displaying an RoI above the average RoI may not be in need of Tier 2 services.
Chart 3: Grade Level Example of Students Performance from Fall to Winter
Universal Screening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Fall WRC</th>
<th>Winter WRC</th>
<th>Winter Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Rate of Progress</th>
<th>Average Rate of Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S, A</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Well Above Average</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K, D</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>Well Above Average</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, M</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H, A</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E, S</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P, A</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K, C</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S, D</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B, C</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E, A</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, B</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R, P</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, W</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G, S</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J, J</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>M, A</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B, J</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P, M</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, D</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, T</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Well Below Average</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, Z</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Well Below Average</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, M</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>Well Below Average</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D, A</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>Well Below Average</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K, A</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>Well Below Average</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A, J</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Well Below Average</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentile scores can be used to identify students in need of additional help.
Typically, schools have used the 25\textsuperscript{th} or 15\textsuperscript{th} percentile to determine the students who will receive Tier 2 services. In addition, another percentile that should be used as an indicator for students needing services are those that do not meet 80\% proficiency (i.e., basic or minimal) on the state assessment in any area. These are students who should be immediately identified as potential candidates for Tier 2. Once again, other evidence sources are always good to substantiate the percentile scores that have been used.
Other Considerations

Other considerations may need to be examined when making decisions about what type of services a student should have in Tier 2 or 3 and/or decisions about what type of additional guidance may be needed from other specialized staff (i.e., Section 504 coordinator, speech/language pathologist, occupational/physical therapist, school psychologist, etc.). The three broad areas that will be discussed further are Section 504, Speech/Language Concerns, and Dyslexia. The overview is to provide some general considerations and guidance. These areas are not discussed in depth. The district/school should consult with other education professionals and related documents for further guidance.

Section 504

A student (preschool to 12th grade) may qualify or be deemed eligible for Section 504 if he or she is displaying or has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more life activities. In addition, the child has a record of such impairment and is regarded as having such an impairment. It is important to note that a disability must be the reason that the student cannot equally access or receive benefit from the school’s programs or services. There are three prongs of the criteria: (a) physical or mental impairment, major life activity, and substantial limitation; (b) record of impairment; and (c) regarded as having such impairment. Section 504 is a civil rights statute NOT a special education statute. Therefore, it is the responsibility of general education staff and administration to implement those practices and procedures necessary for a school to fulfill this law’s requirements.

A student may not need tiered interventions (i.e., remediation) or special education to access and receive general education programs and services successfully. In addition, a student may not be eligible for special education services and may only need accommodations or modifications to be successful. For example, a student may have a documented disability of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and be regarded as having ADHD. In addition, the student, after further evaluation (i.e., not an evaluation for special education eligibility), demonstrated that the disability limited
the student’s life activities and had a substantial impairment. However, the student is successful with accommodations within the general education environment. This example meets all the requirements of Section 504. However, a student who has human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) may not have impacts to major life activities or substantial limitations; thus, may not be eligible for Section 504. For further guidance on policies and procedures, please contact and consult the district’s Section 504 coordinator.

Speech/Language Considerations

Students who may be displaying speech and/or language difficulties may be considered under multiple areas for remediation. If the student is experiencing speech and/or language difficulties, the teacher or the TST should consult the speech/language pathologist to determine if a referral to the multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) is warranted for an evaluation for special education.

A language disorder is a neurologically-based condition that consists of impaired comprehension and/or use of spoken, written, and/or other symbol systems. The disorder may involve (a) the form of language (phonology, morphology, syntax), (b) the content of language (semantics), and/or (c) the function of language in communication (pragmatics) in any combination [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)].

When a parent, district personnel, another agency, or TST suspects that a student has a communication (language) disability, a request should be made to the MET for an evaluation. Interventions for communication, including language, are not required for MET referral or eligibility determination.

Dyslexia

If a student is displaying a dual discrepancy through universal screening or other measures, the teacher or the TST may consider if the student is displaying characteristics that may indicate dyslexia. According to the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin.
It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. Difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and effective classroom instruction. Other consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. These students showing difficulties in reading, writing, spelling, and handwriting may also have difficulties in mathematics.

Dyslexia is not the result of lack of motivation, sensory impairment, inadequate instructional or environmental opportunities, or other limiting conditions, but may occur together with these conditions. If these difficulties in language and mathematics are not successfully remedied, the students’ self image and positive behavior may be affected.

Individuals with dyslexia frequently respond successfully to timely and appropriate interventions in reading, writing, and language with a multisensory, systematic, explicit language based reading program designed for dyslexic students. Thus, the teacher or TST should consider screening for dyslexia by reviewing cumulative records, the Dyslexia Teacher Checklist, and various other data. The reader should refer to the MDE Dyslexia Handbook for complete guidance on assessment and intervention.

**Entering Tier 2: Final Conclusions**

Even though students may be identified for Tier 2 through universal screening, this process should be conducted again in the winter and spring. The rationale is that most students who were identified in the fall will be responders to Tier 2 efforts, thus raising the achievement and behavioral standards. Therefore, new students may be identified in the second and third rounds of universal screening that were not previously identified if the process is working successfully. This will aid in ensuring that students who are beginning to struggle are clearly and quickly identified throughout the year and that a continuous cycle of higher standards is set for
students. If those students are not responding to Tier 2 efforts, the guidelines set forth in later sections (i.e., Tier 3) should be followed.

During the first month of school, the following steps are recommended:

1) Identify those students who have a discrepancy from their peers.
2) Identify those students at or below the 15th–25th percentile on the universal screening.
3) Identify those students who are not making the average rate of improvement.
4) From these lists of potential students, compare or converge the data sources to determine which students are definitely in need of interventions.
5) Make a final list of students, and refer to the Tier 2 or Tier 3 section of the handbook.
6) Repeat universal screening and steps 1–5 above in the winter and spring or quarterly.

**Documentation to Enter Tier 2**

Before a student enters Tier 2, the school should provide documentation to aid the Tier 2 process. The following information should be provided:

1. Student data sheet (Model Form 1)
2. Documentation of appropriate levels of effective instruction, differentiated instruction, and classroom management (Model Form 3)
3. Tier 1 Documentation
   - Universal Screening information
   - Hearing and Vision Screening
- Hearing Screening Guidelines

A hearing screening should be conducted by a health care professional such as the nurse, doctor, speech-language pathologist, or other professionals/paraprofessionals specifically trained in hearing screening protocol.

- Testing Information
- Attendance

4. Action Plan for Teacher if needed (Model Form 4)
Tier 2: Strategic/Targeted Intervention and Supplemental Instruction

For those students who have not positively responded to Tier 1 efforts, instruction and/or behavior management within the general classroom setting may not be sufficient. There are 12 essential elements for Tier 2, which include:

1. progress monitoring of the target area(s);
2. documentation of progress in target area(s) through a graphical display;
3. appropriate decision making;
4. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency (i.e., rate), and/or comprehension;
5. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in counting, quantity discrimination, number identification, sequential ordering, mathematical fluency, and mathematical reasoning;
6. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research for students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II;
7. strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in behavioral/emotional concern(s);
8. documentation of intervention implementation with integrity;
9. system of instructional support;
10. system of behavioral support (school and district level);

11. instructional leadership; and

12. parental/family and community involvement.

Students at Tier 2 require strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction in the areas of concern within the standard classroom instruction, which may include a range of alternatives such as instruction/intervention in specific literacy skills, computation skills, and/or behavior supports. Strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction in Tier 2 is designed to meet the needs of these students by providing additional individual, small group, and/or technology assisted instruction/intervention to support and reinforce skills being taught by the classroom teacher. In Tier 2, the strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction may be provided by the classroom teacher, a specialized teacher, or an external interventionist specifically trained for Tier 2 strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction. However, the responsibility of the outcome and implementation of the instruction lies within general education. Likewise, the instruction/intervention effort may take place within the general education classroom or in a setting outside the general education classroom.

In the following sections, descriptions are provided regarding:

- how and when to progress monitor;
- how to make decisions based on the data gathered;
- how to select appropriate supplemental instruction/interventions supported by SBR;
- what elements should be present in the supplemental instruction; and
- how to determine integrity of implementation.
I. Progress monitoring (Essential Element 1)

Essential Element 1 of Tier 2 requires progress monitoring in the target area(s) of the supplemental instruction or intervention. To meet the standard for this element, schools should conduct progress monitoring of all Tier 2 students twice weekly for at least a 10-week period, at approximate equal intervals that measures the same skill(s) the same way each time and measures all applicable skills. The presence of required progress monitoring may be evidenced through permanent product data that are graphed for individual students.

To assist schools and districts in meeting the requirements of this element, the next section provides information on how to progress monitor, graph, establish goals, and make decisions regarding the student. The following is adapted from: http://www.studentprogress.org/summer_institute/Rti/UsingCBMDetermineRTI/UsingCBMRTI_manual.doc. This manual, Progress Monitoring in the Context of Responsiveness-to-Intervention, was developed and written by Dr. Lynn S. Fuchs and Dr. Douglas Fuchs.

Progress monitoring (PM) aids in determining the effectiveness of the instruction or intervention. PM only measures growth. It is not the intervention. PM is conducted frequently and is designed to:

a. Estimate rates of improvement;

b. Identify students who are not demonstrating adequate progress and therefore require additional or alternative forms of instruction; and/or

c. Compare the efficacy of different forms of instruction and, thereby, design more effective, individualized instructional programs for problem learners.

To investigate whether or not strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction is working, PM must occur throughout the process. PM serves as a useful and necessary tool to gather data and make decisions as to whether or not a student is responding to a strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction.
Ideally, RtI efforts will indicate significant progress toward typical classroom expectancies (Barnett, Daly, Jones, & Lentz, 2004). PM measures should have the following characteristics:

   a. time efficiency;
   b. adequate reliability and validity;
   c. content validity; and
   d. sensitivity to gains in academic performance (Ardoin, 2006).

Appropriate practice for implementing PM procedures begins by selecting measures that are relevant to the target behavior (e.g., percentage of off-task, reading fluency, math fluency, etc.). It is important that there are concrete, operational definitions of the target behavior and how the target behavior should be assessed and a clear designation of who is responsible for assessing student progress on the target behavior. Appropriate data should be collected before the implementation of strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction (baseline) so data collected can be compared to determine estimates of the performance discrepancy.

II. Documentation of progress in target area(s) through graphical display (Essential Element 2)

Essential Element 2 of Tier 2 involves using graphical displays to document progress of students in target area(s) of strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction. To meet the standard, schools should utilize graphical displays that include data (i.e., dependent variable) on the students. In PM, teachers assess students’ performance on a regular basis (twice a week) to determine whether the students are progressing under the strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction. The dependent variable is used to measure the targeted area(s) of concern for the purposes of PM. After the teacher administers the short assessments (each should take only 1–10 minutes), the data are graphed.
Graphing performance data on an individual student graph is a vital aspect of PM. These graphs give teachers an explicit and objective way of reviewing a student’s progress, monitoring the appropriateness of the student’s goals, analyzing the adequacy of the student’s progress, and comparing and contrasting success or lack of success of the student’s strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction.

Graphs should display the current performance level and the goal which tells the teacher how quickly the student needs to progress to achieve the goal. By plotting the student’s scores, teachers can even determine the actual rate/slope at which the student is progressing with a particular strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction method. Graphs allow teachers to use a set of standards to create more ambitious student goals. Also, graphs provide teachers with actual data to help them revise and improve a student’s strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction.

There are several options for creating graphs of student progress during Tier 2 or 3 interventions. One option is for teachers to create their own student graphs using graph paper and pencil. Another option is to create databases or spreadsheet files, such as Excel entry of student data, for ongoing progress monitoring. A third option is to purchase software that graphs student data and assists with data interpretation. A final option is to go to www.interventioncentral.org to use “Chart Dog” as a mechanism to create and enter data for a visual display (i.e., graph).

A. Creating student graphs

A graph should be created for each individual student in Tier 2 so the scores of each student can be reviewed to determine the progress. Thus, a guide on graphing is needed to better utilize and ultimately analyze the data appropriately.

Initially, a master graph should be created, in which the vertical axis accommodates the range of the scores, from 0 to the highest score (e.g., in the class, grade level, district, or national norm). On the horizontal axis, the number of weeks of instruction...
is listed. See example charts below. Once the master graph is created, it can be copied and used as a template for every student. Also, see Tier 2 Model Form 6.

**Chart 4: Graph Labels**

![Graph Labels Diagram]

The vertical axis is labeled with correctly read words per minute. The horizontal axis is labeled with the number of instructional weeks.

1. **Beginning to Chart Data**

   Each time, a datum (i.e., CBM, percentage of on-task behavior, etc.) should be collected, scored, and recorded on the graph. It is helpful to draw a line connecting each data point.
Chart 5: Sample Graph

Setting Ambitious Goals

Once a few scores have been plotted on the graph, it is time to determine the goal for the student. After at least three scores have been graphed, then a performance goal can be established. For students not experiencing academic or behavioral difficulty at the grade level in which the student is being monitored, identify the average rate of weekly increase from a national or local norm table. The LEA may use a local norming table.

For example, a fourth-grade student’s median score from his first three CBM passage reading fluency scores is 29. The oral reading fluency norm for fourth-grade students is 0.90 (see Table 2 below). The 0.90 is the weekly rate of growth for fourth graders. To set an ambitious goal for the student, multiply the weekly rate of growth by the number of weeks left until the end of the year. If there are 16 weeks left, multiply 16 by 0.90: 16 \times 0.90 = 14.4. Add 14.4 to the baseline median of 29 (29 + 14.4 = 43.4). The end-of-year performance goal is 43 words correct per minute.
<table>
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<th>Word Identification Fluency (WIF) Norms</th>
<th>Passage Reading Fluency Norms</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.30</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Hamlett, Walz, & Germann, 1993)

2. Drawing the Goal and the Goal Line on the Graph

After the performance goal for the student is created, the performance goal is marked on the student graph at the appropriate date with an “X.” A “goal line” is then drawn between the median (middle most point) of the initial graphed scores and the performance goal. The goal line shows the teacher and the students the rate of improvement that should be experienced in order to reach the goal.
3. Monitoring the Appropriateness of the Goal

After determining a performance goal and drawing the goal line, student progress is monitored continually (e.g., for Tier 2) and displayed graphically to determine whether progress is adequate. This graph indicates the effectiveness of the strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction for the student. When at least 7–9 scores have been graphed, a trend line is drawn to represent the student’s actual progress. The goal line (desired rate of progress) can then be compared to the trend line (actual rate of progress).

B. Applying decision rules using graphed scores

When analyzing data, one can judge the adequacy of student progress and the need to make changes. Researchers have demonstrated that CBM can be used to improve the scope and usefulness of program evaluation decisions (Germann & Tindal, 1985) and to develop instructional plans that enhance student achievement (Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984; Fuchs, L., Fuchs, D., & Hamlett, 1989a).
After teachers draw graphs and trend lines, the graphs are used to evaluate student progress and to formulate decisions. Standard decision rules should guide decisions about the adequacy of student progress and the need to revise goals and/or the strategic/targeted interventions and supplemental instruction.

**Chart 7: Four Consecutive Scores above Goal Line**

On Chart 7, the most recent four scores are above the goal line. Therefore, the student’s performance is above the goal. The teacher or interventionist should continue with the intervention for the remaining weeks until the 10 weeks are completed or until the goal is met. The teacher or interventionist should continue the intervention with the same intensity, duration, and frequency, as well as integrity as previously implemented. The goal and intervention remain the same throughout the time period unless the student has met the goal prior to the 10-week period for Tier 2, then a new goal can be established as well as a new strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction, if applicable.
On Chart 8, the most recent four scores are below the goal line. Therefore, the teacher should change the student’s instruction/intervention. The goal and goal line never decrease, they can only increase. The instruction/intervention should be altered, modified, or changed in order to improve the student’s scores so that they match or surpass the goal line.

A solid vertical line should be drawn when making an instructional change. This allows teachers to visually note when changes to the student’s instructional program were made. The teacher should re-evaluate the student graph in another 7–9 data points to determine whether the change was effective.
On Chart 9, the trend line is steeper than the goal line. The same principles apply as to Chart 7 in that the intervention and goal do not change until the goal is met. The teacher or interventionist continues to monitor progress at equal intervals. In addition, the intervention remains the same in duration, frequency, intensity, and integrity as previously implemented for the duration of the 10 weeks. The educator then analyzes the student graph after another 7–9 data points to determine whether the student’s goal is appropriate or whether a change is needed.
On Chart 10, the trend line is flatter than the performance goal line. Therefore, the student’s instruction/intervention must be changed. As a reminder, the performance goal and goal line never decrease. A trend line below the goal line indicates that student progress is inadequate to reach the performance goal. The instructional program should be tailored to improve the student’s scores so that they match or surpass the goal line.

The point of the change is represented on the graph as a solid vertical line. This allows teachers to visually note the change. The teacher should re-evaluate the student graph in another 7–9 data points to determine whether the change was effective.
If the trend line matches the goal line as on Chart 11, then no change is currently needed for the student. The teacher should re-evaluate the student graph in another 7-9 data points to determine whether the performance goal or instruction/intervention change should take place.

Although these examples are exclusively academic in nature, the same rules apply to behavior. The teacher should still make decisions based on the data as given in the examples in the aforementioned sections. In addition, the target behavior should be graphed but instead of words read correct per minute, for example, the teacher would graph on-task behavior.
III. Appropriate decision making (Essential Element 3)

Essential Element 3 of Tier 2 addresses the use of data to make appropriate decisions regarding interventions and student progress. To meet the standard, schools should have a decision-making process that:

- is based on the student’s current level of performance;
- is based on slope/level, and rate of improvement; and
- incorporates a continuation, modification, or termination decision.

Permanent product data that meets the following requirements should be used as evidence to document implementation of Essential Element 3 based on the decisions regarding:

- each interval and rationale;
- instructional level; and
- slope/level/rate of improvement.

Additionally, schools that meet the standard for this element should be able to document that decision making was based on data.

To assist schools and districts in implementing an appropriate decision-making process, information is presented below regarding the use of data in this process. After the instructional process has begun, monitoring of the instruction/intervention should be conducted at least twice weekly for Tier 2. Individuals implementing the instruction should graphically display the results and analyze them to produce comparisons between instructional data and baseline data (Barnett et al., 2004; Fuchs, 2003).

To assess progress or response, there are some variables that should be predetermined to ensure adequate validity and reliability of the instruction within the tiers (Barnett, Daly Jones, & Lentz, 2004). For progress to be measured, targeted
behaviors or skills, scheduling (e.g., when, where, how long, etc.), appropriate personnel, and intensity should be concretely defined and/or clarified. Ongoing PM of assessment procedures, adequate information about what instruction is most effective, and expected trajectory outcomes are imperative.

**Rate of improvement and level of performance** are the primary sources of information used in ongoing decision making. Rate of improvement refers to a student's growth in academic or behavioral competencies over time compared to prior levels of performance and peer growth rates. Level of performance refers to a student's relative standing on some dimension of achievement or performance compared to expected performance (either criterion or norm-referenced). Learning rates and levels of performance vary significantly across students. Most students with academic or behavioral deficiencies respond positively to explicit and intense instruction or interventions. Decisions about the use of more or less intense interventions are made using information on learning rate and level of performance.

Educational outcomes differ across a population of learners. A currently low-performing student may ultimately perform as well as his or her peers. All students do not achieve the same degree of competence. Just because growth is low does not mean the student should automatically qualify for special education services.

If a low-performing student is learning at a rate similar to the growth rate of other students in the same classroom environment, he or she may be demonstrating the capacity to profit from the educational environment. However, when a low-performing student is not demonstrating growth in a situation where others are thriving, a change in strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction may be warranted. Alternative methods should be used to address the apparent mismatch between the student’s learning requirements and those represented in the supplemental instructional program or strategic/targeted intervention.

The teacher or interventionist should document that low performance is clearly evident in one or more areas and that the academic or behavioral problem has existed over a period of time and is not the result of such factors as excessive, persistent absences.
from school, frequent moves between schools, or instruction that has not been appropriately matched to the student’s needs and abilities. Information generated through a review of the student’s educational records, attendance records, group achievement test results, teacher ratings (behavior) or grades (academic), interviews (student, teachers—past and present, parents, other service providers), or checklists completed by teachers and other service providers can be used to satisfy this requirement.

The implementation of Tier 2 is defined largely by the particular instructional program. For example, some supplemental programs require 60 minutes for maximum effectiveness while others only require 45 minutes. The Tier 2 strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction should be in place for at least 10 weeks and progress monitored twice a week. Thus, the teacher has a minimum of 20 data points to determine if the student is responding adequately to Tier 2 efforts.

The teacher determines if the student is making progress at the midpoint (i.e., 5 weeks) of the strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction. The teacher is guided to the definitions and decision rules below to determine the next course of action. For example, the student could be performing at the rate and slope that is needed to remediate the deficit; therefore, the student should continue the same course of action. However, if the student is not performing at the expected RoI or slope, and the actual RoI or slope has not changed, then several decisions can be made including, but not limited to, intensifying the instruction, adding another component to the original instruction, or changing the instruction. These are the minimum standards; thus, local educational agencies can elect to run strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction for longer durations and progress monitor more frequently. However, at this point, several options or decision rules should be evaluated. For more assistance in this area, the reader should refer to the progress monitoring section (Tier 2, Essential Element 1) of this handbook.

There are two definitions that are required so that the reader can understand the decision rules:
**Slope:** Slope is the rate of improvement (i.e., acquisition) over time. This is often called the RoI for academics. For example, students in first grade generally learn 2 new words or can read 2 more words each week, which is the RoI. Thus, the slope is 2 words per week. However, if a student is only gaining 0.8 words per week, then his/her slope is different from his/her peers.

**Level:** Level is defined as the present level of performance. For example, if a student is performing at 20 words correct per minute (WCPM), then his or her level would be 20 WCPM. However, his or her peers’ level may be at 40 WCPM. Therefore, there is a discrepancy of 20 WCPM (i.e., 40-20 = 20).

After the intervention has been deemed to be implemented with high integrity, the decision rules can be applied. While these examples are academic in nature, both academic and behavioral processes use the same decision rules:

**Decision Rule #1:** There has been no change in slope and level; thus the student is referred to Tier 3.

**Decision Rule #2:** There is a change in slope and/or level, but the student has not met the standard:

2a: Continue with the same strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction and continue monitoring.

2b: Alter strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction and assess response.

2c: Refer to Tier 3 after 10 weeks.

**Decision Rule #3:** There is change in slope and level and the student has met the standard:

Strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction provided in Tier 2 is terminated; however, if appropriate, to maintain performance, the student is monitored for an additional 5 weeks. If the student does
not maintain the standard at any time within the 5 weeks (e.g., slope and level have changed in an undesirable direction), then resume the previous Tier 2 intervention immediately for an additional 10 weeks.

IV. Selection of supplemental instruction and/or behavioral/emotional interventions (Essential Elements 4, 5, 6, and 7)

Essential Elements 4, 5, 6, and 7 of Tier 2 address the need for each school to implement interventions in the areas of reading, math, subject area testing program content courses, and behavior, respectively. To meet this standard, schools should provide Tier 2 interventions that are supported by scientifically based research, match the student’s current level of performance, provide written documentation of the intervention protocol, and conduct data analysis at the individual and school level.

A. Academic interventions (Essential Elements 4, 5, and 6)

To help schools and districts better understand Tier 2 intervention, this section is adapted from and based upon several works by Simmons and Kame‘enui (2006), which are available at http://reading.uoregon.edu/cia/curricula/con_guide.php.

Note: Evidence-based is the preferred term when using instructional practices or interventions that do not yet have extensive research support in the literature, yet offer promise for instructional/intervention effect.

The selection and adoption of effective, research-based supplemental instructional programs in the schools is a critical step in the development of an effective school-wide initiative. The investment in identifying supplemental and intervention programs that align with research or hold great empirical promise and fit the needs of learners in the school will reap long-term benefits for children’s acquisition, development, and retention of knowledge and appropriate behavior. There are two overriding concerns in the selection of a program:
content of a program or strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction, and

the student’s developmental needs based upon the instructional hierarchy.

A critical review of supplemental programs requires objective and in-depth analysis. For this reason, the following recommendations and procedures for analyzing critical elements of programs are offered. First, the definition of strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction is provided and followed by a discussion of the process for selection of these programs. Second, specific guidelines are provided regarding the review process, including type of review, sampling procedures, evidence documentation, and scoring.

**Definition of Supplemental Instruction**

Supplemental instructional programs are used to support and extend the critical elements of core instruction. Typically, supplemental programs provide additional instruction in one or two areas (e.g., phonological awareness/fluency, or math calculation/math reasoning, or poor grades/off-task behavior) and provide more instruction or practice in the particular area(s) of need. These programs can often be effective in supporting an identified gap in otherwise strong instruction. For example, if the general curriculum does not provide enough fluency instruction in an academic area, a supplemental program could be implemented to support the core program.

Supplemental instructional programs are designed specifically for children who demonstrate difficulty and are performing below grade level or below age appropriate peers. In general, supplemental instructional programs focus on a few areas. In some cases, a particular supplemental instructional program may focus explicitly and exclusively on one essential area (e.g., phonemic awareness, math calculation, off-task behavior). Tier 2 supplemental instructional programs allow teachers to meet the needs of individual students who are struggling in their classrooms and are specialized, intense, and typically delivered in small group settings.
Selecting Supplemental Instructional Programs

Schools begin the process for selecting supplemental programs by assessing the core instructional program (e.g., curriculum, classroom management, instructional techniques, and differentiation) that is being used. Once this is completed, educational personnel can then focus their attention on supplemental and intervention programs that provide instruction in those areas of weakness. In addition, school leaders should examine student assessment data (e.g., phonemic awareness, vocabulary, office disciplinary referrals) to determine areas of difficulties. Again, it makes sense to direct a search toward supplemental and intervention programs that address these particular areas of difficulty. Schools should also consider the discrepancy between the individual student’s scores or behavior and target goals on essential skill components.

Some students may require supplemental instruction that includes the current core program intensified or modified to some degree (e.g., time, grouping size, number of modeled examples, etc.). A supplemental instructional program may be an appropriate way to strengthen the instruction provided in the core program for these students. Other students may require intensive instruction that involves changing the core instruction significantly or supplanting it with a supplemental instructional program. Through a combination of examining the adopted core program and considering students’ current level of performance, schools can target specific supplemental and intervention programs for review.

Once supplemental instructional programs have been identified, ideally, every teacher involved in instruction should be involved in the review and selection of the supplemental and intervention programs. Realistically, a grade-level representative may be responsible for the initial review and reduce the "possible" options to a reasonable number. At a minimum, it is recommended that grade-level representatives use the criteria that follow and then share those findings with grade-level teams.
Good supplemental instruction is when there is treatment validity and treatment integrity. Treatment validity is an intervention that effectively treats the area of concern and is logically related to the potential problem. Treatment integrity is the degree to which an intervention was implemented correctly and consistently.

**Definition of Strategic/Targeted Intervention through the Instructional Hierarchy**

When selecting strategic/targeted intervention, the LEA should consider instructional hierarchy.

**Figure 4: Skill Development**

Instructional hierarchy includes two components, which are the learning (left) and performance (right) aspects. In the learning aspect of the chart, acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization, and adaptation are the key features. For example, if students are making several errors, they are potentially at the acquisition level. A strategic/targeted intervention that models and provides feedback in the targeted area should be considered to increase their performance in accuracy. In addition, if a student is slow but accurate (in the proficiency aspect of learning), then a
program that emphasizes repeated practice for fluency as well as potential motivational components should be considered.

Strategic/targeted interventions can be class-wide interventions, but the primary targets are those students in Tier 2 that are not meeting performance standards in the general education setting. For example, some students may have difficulty with off-task behaviors. An example of a Tier 2 intervention may be “Response Cards.” Response cards are mini white boards or small chalkboards on which all students can provide a written response in a large or small group instruction setting, so that all students (including the targeted students) can respond to all questions. The teacher is replacing off-task behaviors with active engagement. The teacher can also have increased academic responses to judge whether the students are acquiring the information (Christle & Schuster, 2003; Lambert, Cartledge, Heward, & Lo, 2006).

B. Strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction supported by scientifically based research in behavioral/emotional concerns (Essential Element 7)

Essential Element 7 of the Tier 2 Matrix addresses the use of strategic/targeted interventions and supplemental instruction supported by SBR in behavioral/emotional concerns. While PBIS or a similar positive behavior support model should be the foundation of Tier 1 activity of any school district or school building, it remains that certain students or small groups of students may need supplemental efforts on the part of building-level personnel to be behaviorally successful.

Once a student has been identified as needing additional support, following a determination that the student has received adequate behavioral instruction and support at Tier 1, interventions supported by SBR should be utilized. Interventions supported by SBR require resources appropriate to the student’s level of need, and the student’s progress should be monitored for the duration of the intervention. At Tier 2, this is interpreted as providing interventions that are easy to administer to small groups of students and that require limited time and staff involvement.
Some areas in which Tier 2 behavioral interventions are conducted include establishing daily report card programs, weekly social skills groups, class-wide direct instruction on social/emotional skills, character education, and group or individual contingency management.

**Social/Emotional Skills**

The degree to which students are able to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships defines social competence and predicts adequate long-term psychological and social adjustment (Gresham, 2002). Many students lack the appropriate social skills necessary to relate positively to other students, thereby inhibiting their use and practice of expected social behaviors at school. Formal social skills instruction should include the acquisition of skills, enhancing skill performance, reducing/eliminating competing problem behaviors, and facilitating generalization and maintenance of social skills. Specific components of social skills programs include instructions and rationales, modeling, concept teaching, role playing/behavior rehearsal and practice, coaching, and contingent reinforcement (Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1993). The following are examples of social skills interventions:

1) **Positive Peer Reporting (PPR).** PPR is a class-wide intervention strategy designed to address the student who is socially isolated. This student may not interact with others often or may interact in a negative manner in order to receive peer attention. PPR focuses on providing positive attention from peers for appropriate social behavior. More information can be found about PPR at [www.interventioncentral.org](http://www.interventioncentral.org).

2) **Direct Social Skills Instruction.** Direct social skills instruction is small group instruction targeting specific social skills lessons. Instruction is conducted with groups of students. Specific curricula on social skills are available to include, but are not limited to, Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child and Skillstreaming the Adolescent, The Prepare Curriculum, The ACCEPTS Program, Adolescent Coping Curriculum for Effective Social Skills, and Getting
Character Education

The goal of character education is for children to become caring, responsible, self-disciplined citizens by teaching them about basic human values such as honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, and respect (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). A list of character education programs and the areas in which research has been conducted on these programs can be found at www.character.org and at www.whatworks.ed.gov.

Group or Individual Contingency Management

Group contingency plans are often used in various game formats and are often favored by teachers because of their efficiency. These plans can be one of three types: dependent, independent, and interdependent. For dependent group contingencies, when the specific group of targeted students meets the expectation(s), every student in the class receives the reward. In independent group contingencies, the contingency is the same for all students, but applied individually, meaning that each student’s reward is contingent solely on their own behavior. With interdependent group contingencies, rewards for any student depend in some manner on the performance of every member of the class. Individual contingency plans are created for individual students as determined by the needs of the student. The following are examples of Group Contingency Management programs and Individual Contingency plans.

C. Good Behavior Game (GBG). Different variations of the GBG exist, but all include the following elements: specific classroom rules are established; the class is divided into two or three teams; teams receive points for appropriate behavior or for breaking rules; and teams receive rewards for earning more than (or less than) the predetermined criteria. Information about the Good Behavior Game can be found at www.interventioncentral.org.
D. Mystery Motivator (MM). The MM is an incentive program designed to provide random rewards for appropriate behavior. It can be used with whole classrooms, teams, or single students. More information can be found in The Tough Kid Book or at www.interventioncentral.org.

E. Daily Report Card. A Daily Report Card is an incentive program that utilizes the parents to provide rewards contingent upon the student meeting the specified expectations at school. The program consists of a note that is periodically completed by the teacher (e.g., daily or weekly) that is an assessment of academic and/or behavioral progress. The note is sent to the parents to review, sign, provide consequences, and return to the school. More information about Daily Report Cards can be found in The Tough Kid Book or at www.interventioncentral.org.

V. Documentation of intervention implementation with integrity (Essential Element 8)

An intervention, properly designed and implemented contributes valuable assessment data that may be useful, for example, in determining whether a child’s problem is a performance or a skill deficit (Daly, Witt, Martens, & Dool, 1997). When interventions are not implemented with integrity, difficulties develop in the interpretation of intervention effectiveness. If an intervention is not implemented with fidelity and does not achieve the desired results, it is impossible to determine whether the intervention itself was ineffective or whether the intervention outcome was the result of less than optimum treatment integrity.

It is vital to document intervention or treatment integrity/fidelity and provide evidence that treatment was implemented with fidelity (Shapiro & Derr, 1987). Due to differences in teacher training and preparation, researchers are evaluating the length of training to determine the appropriate amount of time required to prepare teachers for implementation of interventions. Rahn-Blakeslee et al., (2005) have identified multiple components utilized within the classroom to achieve treatment integrity.
including: behavioral definition of target behavior, direct measure of behavior, clearly identified target behavior, hypothesis for behavior, procedural intervention plan, data indicating students’ response, and comparison of students’ outcome directly.

Torgesen (2003) trained classroom teachers for 40 hours for baseline preparation to achieve integrity. In addition, Vaughn and Fuchs (2003) trained four tutors for 20 hours of preparation and weekly meetings. Noell et al., (2000) trained teachers until 100% integrity was observed. However, by the fifth day following the training, treatment integrity had decreased to 20%–40%. As a result, both positive and corrective feedback were implemented and integrity increased to near perfect levels again.

Several empirically-based practices in consultation have been found to be effective in enhancing treatment integrity with teachers. Verbal instruction prior to treatment implementation (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990), modeling, feedback, performance feedback (Witt, Noell, LaFleur, & Mortenson, 1997; DiGennaro, Martens, & McIntyre, 2005) and performance practice (Ward, Johnson, & Konukman, 1998) have all been shown to be effective methods to increase treatment integrity. Schools should be cognizant of training and continual support to maintain levels of integrity as well as monitoring integrity throughout the intervention.

Although these practices have been found to be effective, available data suggest that teachers fail to implement agreed-upon plans in the absence of ongoing consultative support (DiGennaro, et al., 2005). Therefore, consultative support during the intervention process is vital in achieving treatment integrity. Accordingly, for teachers to implement a quality intervention within the classroom, they should have an intervention plan, provide problem analysis for formative evaluation, have treatment goals, and elicit an intervention outcome.

Essential Element 8 of Tier 2 focuses on the integrity of implementation of the intervention and the documentation of that implementation. To meet this standard, documentation of the implementation integrity should be assessed using a systematic observation at least 2 times during the 10 weeks, at equal intervals, and should
include documentation regarding the interventionist including his or her name and training on the specific strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction to be implemented. The educator who will be implementing the intervention/instruction needs training on the strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction. For example, training may consist of professional development from a computer software company. Documentation of the training should be included. In addition, a person who has implemented another type of small group instruction or intervention with high integrity may train the person who will be implementing the intervention/instruction with the student using didactics (teaching), modeling, and feedback. The trainer and trainee should document the training and indicate if fidelity has been achieved.

Evidence sources to demonstrate that this element has been met may include:

- An integrity checklist of the intervention completed by appropriate personnel at least twice during the 10 weeks, at equal intervals;
- Documentation of the intensity and frequency of the intervention; and
- Documentation of the professional development for educational staff on the strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction and its required components.

### VI. System of instructional support (Essential Element 9)

Essential Element 9 of Tier 2 requires each school to provide a system of instructional support for its staff that ensures that teachers and other staff involved in the RtI process will have the necessary professional development and ongoing support to implement the process and improve their practice. To meet this standard, the LEA’s instructional management plan should include data-driven professional development for Tier 2 interventions supported by progress monitoring and appropriate decision making. The LEA should also provide professional development based on National Staff Development Council standards, as well as on-site support for instructional staff members through the use of mentors, instructional coaches, and educational
consultants. The LEA should provide evidence of these efforts including, but not limited to, documentation of the mentoring program, peer planning, and collaborative team meetings as well as evidence of data-based professional development. Members of the Teacher Support Team (TST) may assist in the development and implementation of Tier 2 interventions through consultation. This process does not need to include a formal meeting but rather a support mechanism for teachers. If TST members are involved at Tier 2, they should have expertise in the prescribed interventions, progress monitoring, and decision making that can assist other teachers to ensure use of appropriate practices and a smoother process.

VII. System of behavioral support – school and district level (Essential Element 10)

Essential Element 10 of the Tier 2 Matrix addresses a continuum of school-wide behavioral support. An essential component of school-wide PBIS is the collection of data to use in decision making. These data should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of PBIS across the school, classroom, and individual levels. The areas in which the data should be analyzed include, but are not limited to, the number of referrals:

- per day
- per month
- by student
- by location
- for specific problem behaviors
- for problem behaviors by time of day

Additionally, data gathered in the universal screening for behavior (e.g., SSBD) should be utilized in identifying students in need of additional support.
The school leadership team or PBIS team should continue to hold collaborative team meetings for ongoing review of the data (e.g., review of school-wide survey, office referrals, and universal screening of behavior). During the team meetings, the collaboration team should determine if the district’s model reflects the process and essential characteristics delineated in the Tier 1 section of the handbook. If the team notes any deficient areas, appropriate steps should be taken to address the deficiencies.

Based on a review of the data, if a significant number of students are identified through universal screening of behavior and/or receive more than one office referral, it is important to review and possibly modify universal interventions (proactive school-wide discipline) to improve the overall discipline system. If a significant number of referrals or students with high screening scores come from a small number of classrooms, it is important to enhance universal and/or targeted classroom management practices such as examining the academic engagement and success or ensuring that the PBIS procedures are being utilized appropriately. If a significant number of referrals come from non-classroom settings, it is important to enhance universal behavior management practices and increase the use of active supervision (i.e., moving, scanning, interacting) in those settings. For any student who is identified through universal screening of behavior, the modifications of the classroom PBIS system should be attempted first. If however, a significant number of referrals come from specific, individual students, it may be necessary to use strategic/targeted interventions and supplemental instruction supported by SBR to improve behavior.

Ongoing professional development should be implemented for PBIS as well as for the use of modifications or specific Tier 2 behavioral interventions.

VIII. Instructional leadership (Essential Element 11)

Effective instructional leadership is critical for the success of any RtI process and is addressed in Essential Element 11 of Tier 2. To meet this standard, schools should demonstrate that the school improvement plan:

- links to professional development related to Tier 2 activities;
assesses the impact of the professional development (i.e., growth, knowledge, and integrity/fidelity); 

addresses areas of needs/concerns based on data (i.e., MSIS data, state assessment data, discipline data, classroom assessment data); and 

demonstrates a direct correlation of allocation of resources to the needs.

In order to meet the standard of this element, the school or LEA should provide evidence including, but not limited to:

a. analysis of data used to determine concerns; 

b. written documentation that the plan addresses the areas of concern; 

c. written documentation that resources are allocated to the needs demonstrated; and 

d. outcome measures on professional development that measure growth, knowledge, and fidelity.

IX. Parental/family and community involvement

(Essential Element 12)

Parental involvement—addressed in Essential Element 12 of Tier 2—is an essential component that can potentially provide support and enhance any implemented intervention. The focus at this level of the continuum is on supporting students who need support beyond Tier 1 in order to be successful and students who are at-risk. Small group strategies should be targeted in response to student need beyond Tier 1 supports but should not be highly individualized. At Tier 2, the emphasis in family participation shifts from awareness to “involvement” and indirect supports.

The focus of awareness activities should include three considerations. First, information regarding what practices the school typically puts in place to support
students at this level of the continuum should be discussed. Second, referral points and data decision rules to identify students who may benefit from small group supports should be explained. Finally, information should be shared regarding the family members’ role in implementation of small group supports.

Involvement of family members within small group supports should be the primary focal point of school team planning activities. Districts should develop policy and practices to include the following three steps. First, schools should establish a notification process to inform families that their child has been identified to receive additional support(s) beyond Tier 1. Second, districts should establish a policy or consult their district policy regarding parent/guardian notification. Within the notification form, districts should extend an invitation to parents/guardians to participate (Dunlap, Newton, Fox, Benito, & Vaughn, 2001; L. Koegel, R., Koegel, Boettcher & Brookman-Frazee, 2005). Third, schools should schedule follow-up meetings to discuss outcomes. The latter point is especially relevant in that educators often involve family members when there is a problem but are remiss to share outcomes when improvements occur.

Regardless of the level of family involvement in the planning and implementation of Tier 2, strategies to develop home/school partnerships focusing on improved outcomes should be examined. At this level, the focus should be on providing the family with strategies for additional practice opportunities at home. For example, schools could enlist family members to sign self-monitoring sheets in which the student self-reports use of key social skills. The team may suggest family activities to increase involvement with the child.

For schools to meet this standard, parents should be notified at the start of the Tier 2 process. In addition, the representative of the LEA should meet with the parent/family member to discuss the intervention and the student’s progress. The LEA should provide a written letter of notification at the start of Tier 2 services, documentation of parent/family meetings to discuss the intervention and progress, and
recommendations from the parent/family conference. At a minimum, the LEA should provide written notification at the start of Tier 2 support as well as periodic updates.

**Documentation during Tier 2 and before entering Tier 3**

The referring teacher should document the following items during Tier 2:

a. Tier 2 Documentation Form (Model Form 5)
   - Interventionist and qualifications
   - Targeted area(s) for intervention
   - Goal
   - Measure for progress
   - Intervention and the components
   - Integrity checks
   - TST review or input (if applicable)

b. Chart or Graph Form (Model Form 6)
   - Graphical Display of Measure (target area)
   - Aim line
   - Goal line
   - Progress monitoring twice weekly

The referring teacher should document the following items at the completion of Tier 2 if recommending a referral to the TST for Tier 3 or if an automatic referral to the TST for Tier 3 is being made:

a. Request to the TST (Model Form 7)
b. Social and Emotional Worksheet (Model Form 8)

**Note:** The aforementioned items are not mandated forms for the process. Suggested forms provided by the MDE include data that are indicative of the information necessary to prescribe a successful intervention. School districts may utilize any format to streamline the process that includes all student demographic and performance data.
Tier 3: Intensive Intervention

A small percentage of students who have received Tier 2 strategic/targeted intervention and supplemental instruction may continue to have significant difficulty in acquiring necessary skills. These students require an intervention that is more explicit, more intensive, and specifically designed to meet their individual needs. Tier 3 is designed for students with inadequate accuracy and/or fluency in academic areas or continued behavioral/social/emotional concerns that have not been remediated in Tiers 1 and 2. There are 14 essential elements for Tier 3 which include:

1. Teacher Support Team (TST) process;

2. progress monitoring of the target area(s);

3. documentation of progress in target area(s) through a graphical display;

4. appropriate decision making;

5. strategic/targeted intervention supported by scientifically based research in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency (i.e., rate), and/or comprehension;

6. strategic/targeted intervention supported by scientifically based research in counting, quantity discrimination, number identification, sequential ordering, mathematical fluency, and mathematical reasoning;

7. strategic/targeted intervention supported by scientifically based research for students who will be/are taking Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. History, and English II;

8. strategic/targeted intervention supported by scientifically based research in behavioral/emotional concerns;
9. documentation of intervention implementation with integrity;

10. system of instructional support;

11. system of behavioral support (school and district level);

12. instructional leadership;

13. parental/family and community involvement; and

14. Teacher Support Team (TST) outcomes.

The MDE has defined some mandatory requirements for Tier 3 as outlined in State Board Policy 4300:

- Grades 1–3: A student has failed one (1) grade;

- Grades 4–12: A student has failed two (2) grades;

- A student failed either of the preceding two (2) grades and has been suspended or expelled for more than twenty (20) days in the current school year; or

- A student scores at the Minimal level on any part of the Grade 3 or Grade 7 Mississippi Curriculum Test-2 (MCT-2).

There may be a need to clarify the definitions and processes of the identified students who move directly to the TST for consideration of appropriate placement. For example, if a student is automatically populated in the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) due to repeated failures but is currently “doing well,” the district should consider a few things. The district should define “doing well.” For example, the district could define it as earning passing grades on all assignments (e.g., homework, classroom assessments, and in-class assignments). In addition, the district could decide that “doing well” is based upon the results of universal screening. If the student does not have consistent grades but has variability in the grades or the scores on the universal
screening suggest that the student is not performing commensurate with age or grade appropriate peers, then the Tier 3 or TST process should be engaged by referring the student. With data gathered on the student as the guiding force behind all decisions, the TST should determine which level and types of interventions a student should receive. The TST may decide that the student does not need Tier 3 intensity (e.g., frequency or duration) but to ensure stability in progress, the TST may determine that the student needs Tier 2 intervention(s). However, if there is some instability in progress, the TST may decide that the student needs Tier 3 intervention(s) until ensured success and the student is able to gradually move down to Tier 2 interventions or intensity. It is important to note that some students may need Tier 2 or Tier 3 to maintain success beyond the suggested 10-week timeline for Tier 2 interventions or the maximum 16-week timeline for Tier 3 interventions. This does not mean that the student is in need of special education services.

I. Teacher Support Team (TST) process (Essential Element 1)

The TST has a great responsibility to support positive student outcomes as well as foster the goals of the school striving to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP). The members should be fully supported by the administration and the remaining educational staff in the school. The following sections provide a review of the Teacher Support Team process which includes membership, roles, responsibilities, and the use of a problem-solving model (PSM) and a standard protocol (SP) model to develop, implement, and monitor interventions.

The Team Membership

The Teacher Support Team composition and dynamics are critical for a successful process to support positive student outcomes. The team composition, roles, and responsibilities are outlined to aid in the understanding of the formation and function of the team.
In determining the membership of a school’s TST, the principal should make sure that selected members are:

- Committed to the school’s instructional goals and programs;
- Willing to accept responsibility for at-risk students’ progress;
- Knowledgeable of multiple teaching strategies and interventions;
- Respected and approachable by other staff;
- Experienced in interpreting data;
- Organized and capable of mapping a plan for improvement; and
- Able to maintain confidentiality concerning student data and outcomes discussed in the team setting.

The team should have three to five core members. The core members are the principal or principal’s designee as the TST chair, the general education teacher(s), the referring teacher, and the guidance counselor or school psychologist/psychometrist/behavior specialist. A general rule for the length of membership should be 3 to 5 years while rotating a member off each year and replacing with another member. Because this rotation is seamless, there would be no disruptions in the TST process or student outcomes. Additionally, having a rotation system also prevents “burnout” by the members. The educational staff serving on the TST will gain new skills that they previously did not have.

The team could include auxiliary member(s) that may aid in the successful outcome of the student. Auxiliary members are defined as members who may participate in the team process but are unique to each student that is referred to the TST. These auxiliary members could include, but are not limited to, the student, the student’s parent(s) or legal guardians, school-based support personnel (e.g., special education teacher, speech language pathologist, mental health counselor, intervention specialist, etc.), and/or building-level teaching staff. The composition or makeup of each team
may vary depending on specific issues related to the district or school. For example, large schools may designate more than one team for different grade bands or other divisions in order to divide the intervention tasks into a manageable work schedule.

**Note:** Any positions funded by IDEA Part B funds that are involved on a regular basis with the TST must have their salaries prorated.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Principal or Principal’s Designee**

- sets the tone of commitment for the process;
- organizes the professional staff schedules to allow the process to happen;
- coordinates duties of team members;
- schedules/convenes team meetings;
- ensures parents are notified as part of the process; and
- delegates other responsibilities to the other members.

**TST Coordinator (e.g., Lead Teacher, Intervention Specialist, etc.)**

- coordinates the process at the building level;
- provides training and technical assistance;
- coordinates instructional services;
- gathers information;
- organizes the presentation of data;
- documents the meeting (maintains the TST record-keeping process);
- develops timeframes and schedules meetings; and
• manages progress monitoring data (i.e., academic and/or behavior) to ascertain intervention effectiveness.

**Guidance Counselor or School Psychologist/Psychometrist/Behavior Specialist**

• conducts functional behavioral assessments;

• consults with teachers/parents/administrators;

• conducts student observations;

• conducts curriculum-based assessments;

• assists in designing and implementing interventions; and

• provides training in various areas.

**Other Members**

In addition to the previous tasks outlined, there are other responsibilities that should be completed by other members. Other responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

• interview the parent and/or teacher;

• assist the teacher with the collection of data;

• provide support to the teacher during the intervention; and

• assess for integrity.

Duties will be assigned based on several factors such as schedules of teachers, relationships between teachers, etc. However, some assignments may be more consuming than others. The teachers need to rotate each duty so that one teacher is not consistently overwhelmed and all teachers learn the different aspects of the TST process.
The Process

The majority of this section describes models to implement the TST process and provides a suggested timeframe. Specifically, this is a discussion of incorporating two models (i.e., the problem solving model [PSM] and the standard protocol [SP]). Finally, the discussion outlines the actual implementation process.

Bergan’s PSM may be better suited for behavioral/social/emotional (e.g., disruptive behaviors, tardies, aggression, etc.); while the SP model may be better suited for academic concerns. However, both models may need to be incorporated, as some students may exhibit academic and behavioral concerns.

Figure 5: Bergan’s PSM

There are four steps in the PSM, which include defining the problem, developing a plan, implementing the plan, and evaluating the effectiveness. Each step will be defined and outlined.
Define the Problem

When a student is referred, the TST should evaluate the referral to determine if the concern is meaningful, measurable, and monitorable. For example, a teacher may refer a student for being disrespectful. The TST should first define the problem by defining disrespectful. An operational definition, for example, could be that the student talks out without permission during large group instruction. The following questions could be used to aid in defining the problem:

- How precisely has the presenting concern been described?
  - Can it be observed? Does everyone agree?

- What are the salient features of the student’s described performance?
  - How discrepant is the student’s performance from peers?
  - When, where, how, etc.?

- What features of the instructional environment need further analysis?
  - What aspect(s) of the instructional environment is not conducive for this particular student?

- What types of assessments (observations, interviews, CBM, etc.) should be conducted with the student?

These are just some of the questions that the TST may want to consider when the duties are assigned and information is being collected. Based on data collected, the identified problem should be precisely defined with the development of a measurable goal that is based on realistic expectations for success. Observations, interviews, and other information gathered should focus on the questions so that the information leads to the development of the plan.
Develop a Plan

Once the problem or concern has been established as meaningful, monitorable, and measurable, the team meets with the referring teacher to examine the data collected. The following questions should be asked:

- Based on all existing data, which instructional variables (curricular, instructional, student, environment) can be hypothesized as potential areas for intervention?
- Has an intervention been designed based on the data collected and on the hypothesized variables?
- Has a data monitoring system been devised to track the student’s rate of improvement and maintenance of skills?
- Who will develop and implement the intervention and monitor the student’s progress?
- How can the classroom teacher and/or other team member incorporate the strategy into the daily routine?

Once these questions have been answered, a written plan is developed in addition to data collection measures and goals.

Implement the Plan

To implement the plan effectively, the referring teacher needs appropriate supports and a mechanism for assessing integrity. The following questions should be addressed:

- Are the data being collected on a regular and frequent basis during the intervention?
- Is the intervention being implemented as planned?
• Is the teacher graphing the data and submitting it to the TST?

**Evaluate Effects**

The TST should continually evaluate the progress of the student. This means that the team views the graph in relation to the goal but may not necessarily have all members present. This process is a mechanism to determine if the intervention is continued or if the TST needs to reconvene to evaluate the intervention and its integrity. The TST follows the procedures outlined by the MDE for timelines. The following questions should be continually asked throughout the intervention process:

• Is the student making progress at the expected rate?

• Should the intervention be modified?

**Standard Protocol (SP) Model**

Although individualized interventions using the PSM could be utilized, another potential tool that can be used for individual or small groups of students is a standard protocol (D. Fuchs, L. S. Fuchs, & Compton, 2004). In the SP model, students would receive a uniform intervention for a fixed duration trial (e.g., 16 weeks) delivered for a specified number of minutes (e.g., 35 minutes) at a fixed frequency (e.g., daily). This type of protocol would include an intensive program with small group or individual lessons/tutoring. The setting in which the intervention is delivered would also be specified (e.g., classroom, Title I) as well as the qualifications of the staff providing the intervention. The description of the intervention would be very specific and linked to theoretical frameworks of children's reading acquisition. If the student responds well to this type of intervention and no longer needs Tier 3 support, appropriate strategies are provided at Tier 1 or 2.

Even though both models have pros and cons, the SP model tends to only have evidence in reading. However, this does not mean that the SP model could not be implemented in other areas. The best suggestion within the known knowledge of both models is to incorporate the models together to potentially obtain the best effects.
The table below gives an outline of each model and demonstrates the similarities and differences. (The table offers a more in-depth review to provide an essential understanding of both perspectives.)

**Table 3: Comparison of Bergan’s PSM and the SP Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bergan’ s Problem Solving Model</th>
<th>Standard Protocol Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defines the problem behaviorally</td>
<td>Defines the problem in terms of level and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures performance in the natural setting</td>
<td>Assesses academic skills through universal screening and progress monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determines current status and performance gap compared to peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States the goals based on peer expectations</td>
<td>States the goals based on standard(s) and peer expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designs and implements interventions</td>
<td>Implements academic interventions based on five components of reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designs and implements interventions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implements intervention with integrity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors progress frequently over a period of time to interpret the data, make changes, or raise the goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates effectiveness based on goal and peer comparison</td>
<td>Evaluates effectiveness based on attainment of established goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes decisions based on data to continue, fade, or discontinue</td>
<td>Makes decisions to continue intensive supports, move down to supplemental instruction, or to refer to the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Duration/Intensity**

Depending on the type of intervention, the implementation guidelines will vary. In accordance with Policy 4300, no later than 16 weeks after implementation of the Tier 3 intervention(s), a second review must be conducted to determine whether the intervention is successful. Thus, the teacher would have approximately a total of 32 data points to determine if the student is responding to Tier 3 efforts adequately. These are the minimum standards; thus, LEA’s can adopt to run interventions that have more intensity or duration (e.g., minutes) and progress monitor more frequently.

**How to Implement the Process within the MDE Timeline**

**Two-Week Referral Period**

- Referral to the TST may be from the parent, legal guardian, or teacher. See information regarding parent request under the Parental Participation and Notification section.

- The TST has two weeks to obtain critical information regarding concern(s) and to develop and implement the intervention.

- The referring teacher provides Tier 1 and Tier 2 documentation (if applicable) as well as the Request to the School TST Form (Model Form 7) or school/district form.

- The TST acknowledges the request for assistance through an e-mail, note, or some other mechanism.

- The TST reviews information from Tier 1 and Tier 2 (if applicable) to determine if the request can be processed into Tier 3.
  - If not, inform the referring teacher that additional information is needed before the TST can determine if the student needs Tier 3 support.
  - If yes, then the principal delegates the activities based upon the request.
• If there are other exclusionary factors, then the team helps in obtaining other supports or targets some of the exclusionary factors for Tier 2 interventions (e.g., absences, motivational factors).

• Parent is notified. See Parental Notification section for further information.

• The TST determines the additional information that should be collected (e.g., interviews, observations, other assessments such as CBM measures, etc.).

• Not all areas identified as a concern must be addressed in the intervention. The referring teacher may need to collect data on all concerns but may not intervene in all areas as some interventions aid in the other areas. However, the data should always be systematically reviewed.

• Schedule meeting and invite the parent to participate.

• Meet with the TST to evaluate the data and develop a plan.

Example of Data to Collect Before the First Meeting

Parental Input for TST Data

• Behaviors at home or school, academic issues with homework, strategies attempted at home, and collaborative efforts with the classroom teacher

• Parent input regarding successful interventions (e.g., previous academic years, at home, etc.)

• Description of any significant factors that parent feels may impact the child
  
  o Developmental

  o Medical

  o Emotional

  o Situational
**School Data**

- Demographics

- Cumulative Record Review
  
  o Attendance in the last 2–3 years
  
  o Schools attended
  
  o Retentions
    
    o Previous intervention(s) in Tier 2 and/or Tier 3
    
    o Previous disability evaluations, the date administered, and results
    
    o Previous eligibility for services under Section 504, IDEA, or Title I
    
    o Days missed during current year–pattern of day of week, time of day for early/late concerns
    
    o Discipline
      
      ▪ Number of discipline reports per teacher
      
      ▪ Number of office discipline referrals per teacher
      
      ▪ Patterns of infraction: day-time-teacher-reason
      
      ▪ Number of suspensions
        
        - In-school suspension (ISS)
        
        - Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
        
        - Bus
        
        - Total number of days suspended
- Testing information
- Standardized Achievement History
- Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring data from previous tiers
- Special concerns (e.g., medical)
- Most recent academic grades

**Teacher Observation Data**

- Data-based observations using valid and reliable methods of measurement (e.g., frequency, duration, rate, etc.)
- Likert Scale (lowest 10%, below average, average, above average, highest 10%) or other scale on the following including, but not limited to: completes assignments, motivation, attention, follows directions, functions independently, written language skills, oral language skills, receptive language skills, relates well with adults, relates well with peers, fidgetiness or off-task behaviors, reality oriented, follows rules and structure, arrives on time for class, attends school regularly, appropriate self-help skills, social maladjustment issues

**Vision/Hearing Data**

- The TST chairperson should check to make sure the student passed the hearing/vision screening. If not passed, or if the date is more than 1 year ago, request a hearing/vision screening. Once screening is completed, the screening results will be given to the TST chairperson.

- If the child fails the hearing/vision screening, the TST chairperson should contact the parent. The parent will be informed that a delay in addressing hearing and/or vision problems may postpone the TST process.
Evaluation Periods

Appropriate practice is to evaluate the success of interventions at **4-week intervals** (maximum). Policy 4300 states that no later than 8 weeks after implementation of the intervention(s), the TST must conduct a documented review of the interventions to determine success of the interventions.

The following activities should be conducted as necessary either by the referring teacher or other designated person throughout each 4-week interval:

- Train the teacher if needed on the intervention and progress monitoring procedures.
- Develop an integrity checklist for the referring teacher and for observation purposes.
- Observe for fidelity or integrity of the intervention at least twice during each interval.
- Progress monitor at least twice a week.
- Graph progress each time data is collected.
- Submit graphs weekly to the TST.
- Evaluate progress monitoring data at each evaluation period.
- Return to decision rules that were outlined in the Tier 2 section of the handbook such as increasing the goal or changing interventions at each evaluation period.
- Reconvene the TST at each evaluation period, if needed, to determine if the data support increasing the goal or changing interventions.

Policy 4300 states that **no later than 16 weeks** after implementation of the intervention(s), a second review must be conducted to determine whether the Tier 3
intervention is successful. At this point, a determination is made to (1) continue with the intervention as the student’s trend line and goal line will meet but the amount of time needed for the trend line and goal line to meet will take longer than the required timelines; (2) terminate intervention due to the student being a nonresponder, thus, a referral to the MET; (3) terminate intervention due to the student successfully meeting the goal; or (4) reduce intensity of services.

II. Progress monitoring of target area(s) and documentation of progress at Tier 3 (Essential Elements 2 and 3)

How Is Progress Monitoring (PM) Implemented at Tier 3?

In progress monitoring, students' academic performance is assessed on a regular basis (at least twice a week) to determine whether the students are progressing under the strategic targeted intervention. The measure assesses the targeted area of concern. The short assessments should take only between 1–10 minutes after which the data are graphed. This process of PM is exactly the same as for Tier 2; however, it is implemented for a longer period.

Documentation of progress through a graphical display

Graphing performance data on an individual student graph is a vital aspect of progress monitoring. These graphs give the TST a concise way of reviewing a student's progress, monitoring the appropriateness of the student's goals, judging the adequacy of the student's progress, and comparing and contrasting successful and unsuccessful instructional aspects of the student's program.

This graph should display the current performance level and the goal, which tells the TST how quickly the student needs to progress. By plotting the student's scores, the TST can even determine the actual rate at which the student is progressing (slope) with a particular method. By using a graph, the TST can use a set of standards to create more ambitious student goals. Also, graphs provide the TST with actual data to
help the individual revise and improve a student's instructional program. See Model Form 12 for a graphing template.

For more information and/or instruction on graphing, plotting, and setting goals, refer to the Tier 2 section on progress monitoring.

III. Appropriate decision making (Essential Element 4)

**Defining a “Responder” versus a “Nonresponder” for Tier 3**

After implementation of an intervention, monitoring of the intervention needs to be conducted at least twice a week for Tier 3. Individuals implementing the intervention should graphically analyze the results to produce comparisons between intervention data and baseline data (Barnett et al., 2004; Fuchs, 2003). For progress to be measured, several things should be considered such as having a target behavior or skill, scheduling the time (e.g., day, time, etc.) to collect data, and selecting appropriate personnel. Ongoing progress monitoring of assessment procedures, adequate information about what interventions are most effective, and expected trajectory outcomes are imperative.

**Learning rate (slope) and level of performance** are the primary sources of information used in ongoing decision making. Learning rate (slope) refers to a student's growth in achievement or behavioral competencies over time compared to prior levels of performance and peer growth rates. Level of performance refers to a student's relative standing on some dimension of achievement or performance compared to expected performance (either criterion or norm-referenced). Learning rates and levels of performance vary significantly across students. Most students with achievement or behavioral challenges respond positively to explicit and intense interventions. Decisions about the use of more or less intense interventions are made using information on learning rate and level of performance.
A widely accepted method for determining whether a student has a potential disability related to academic achievement under RtI is the dual discrepancy model (Fuchs, 2003).

a. Discrepancy 1: The student is found to be performing academically at a level significantly below that of his or her typical peers (discrepancy in initial skills or performance); and

b. Discrepancy 2: Despite the implementation of one or more well-designed, well-implemented interventions tailored specifically for the student, he or she fails to ‘narrow the gap’ with classmates (discrepancy in rate of learning relative to peers).

The student not only performs below the level demonstrated by classroom peers but also demonstrates a learning rate substantially below that of classmates and national standards. The solution to a purely local norm approach or to a national norm approach is to use a combination of local and national norms. A minimal competency standard (e.g., 40 WCPM in first grade reading CBM) can be set to determine that the student’s performance is low relative to peers. Use the bottom 16% (e.g., greater than 1 standard deviation below), and compare it to national norms for additional confirmation of the discrepancy.

The TST should document that low achievement is clearly evident in one or more of the achievement areas and that the achievement or learning problem (a) has existed over a period and (b) is not the result of such factors as excessive, persistent absences from school; frequent moves between schools; and/or instruction that has not been appropriately matched to the student’s needs and abilities. Information generated through a review of the student’s educational records, attendance records, group achievement test results, teacher ratings or grades, interviews (student, teachers [past and present], parents, other service providers), or checklists completed by teachers and other service providers can be used to satisfy this requirement.

At this point, several options or decision rules should be evaluated.
**Decision Rule #1:** There has been no change in slope and level; thus, the student is referred to the MET.

**Decision Rule #2:** There is a change in slope and/or level, but the student has not met the standard:

2a: Continue with the same intervention and continue monitoring.

2b: Change the intervention to determine if better results may be obtained.

**Decision Rule #3:** There is a change in slope and level, and the student has met the standard. Therefore, the student no longer needs Tier 3 and may move down to Tier 2 for supplemental instruction or continue to receive appropriate strategies provided at Tier 1.

**Evaluations**

There are multiple ways that a school district may request an evaluation (also commonly referred to as a comprehensive assessment) through the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET).

1. The child has been through all three tiers of intervention and failed to meet the requirements of each tier because the child continues to not respond like his/her age appropriate peers in slope and level.

2. The intervention is successful, but maintaining the level of intensity needed is not appropriate in the current general education setting.

3. The child displays a medical condition and/or severe condition that cannot be remediated through the three-tier process (e.g., cancer, cerebral palsy, severe/profound mental retardation, visual or hearing impairment, autism), therefore a comprehensive assessment may be requested.

4. A parent, public agency, or the Teacher Support Team makes a written request for an initial evaluation to determine if the child is a child with a disability.
For more information about evaluations, please seek guidance from other professionals and the State Policies Regarding Children with Disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004 (State Board Policy 7219).

**Note:** A determination that a child is appropriately responding to intervention indicates that the child does not need to be referred for an evaluation.

**Outcome Measures for the MET**

Once the Teacher Support Team has determined that a student has not responded based on the previous criteria and methodology, the team may make a request to the MET. However, when submitting a request to the MET, the following information should be presented.

**Tier 1 Documentation**

- Documentation of a teacher observation assessing effective instruction, differentiated instruction, classroom management, and alignment to the MS Curriculum Frameworks.
  - The principal, principal designee, or another appointed individual (e.g., school psychologist, psychometrist, etc.) may conduct this observation.
  - If the observation concludes that the above-mentioned measures are not in place, then an action plan is developed and implemented. Once the action plan is implemented, then other observation(s) are needed until adequate demonstrations (i.e., 80%) of these variables are observed.

- The universal screening data with the type of scores (percentile ranking, number of disciplinary referrals, etc.) and the discrepancy noted.

- Documentation that the teacher has the proper endorsement in the academic content area of concern.
See Model Forms 1-4 in the appendices to aid in the data collection process.

**Tier 2 Documentation**

A written supplemental instructional plan should be in place that documents:

- Interventionist was trained on the intervention/supplemental instruction
- Individual who provided the intervention/supplemental instruction
- Where the instruction occurred
- Number of days of the week the instruction occurred
- Duration of the instruction
- Outline or description of the instruction
- Observation(s) of the integrity of the instruction
- Progress monitoring schedule

Documentation of the targeted variable or behavior (e.g., phoneme identification, percentage of off-task behavior, digits correct per minute [DCPM]) in graphic form that includes the following:

- Trend line
- Goal line
- Phase change line (a vertical line representing that the intervention has been implemented and/or a change in the intervention has occurred)

See Model Forms 5 and 6 for documentation.

**Note:** A student could enter Tier 3 directly without entering Tier 2 first if the school can demonstrate through multiple data sources that the student has severe discrepancies
in academic and/or behavior performance. If a student enters Tier 3 directly, justification including supportive documentation must be on file.

**Tier 3 Documentation**

A written intervention plan should be in place that documents:

- Interventionist was trained on the intervention.
- Individual who provided the intervention
- Where the intervention occurred
- Number of days of the week the intervention occurred
- Duration of the intervention
- Outline or description of the intervention
- Observation(s) of the integrity of the intervention
- Progress monitoring schedule

In addition, other information is required to show that exclusionary factors have been ruled out.

Documentation of the targeted variable or behavior (e.g., phoneme identification, percentage of off-task behavior, DCPM) in graphic form that includes the following:

- Trend line
- Goal line
- Phase change line (a vertical line representing that the intervention has been implemented and/or a change in the intervention has occurred)

See Model Forms 7–14 for documentation.
IV. Interventions for reading, math, subject area testing program content courses, and behavioral/emotional concerns supported by scientifically based research (Essential Elements 5, 6, 7, and 8)

Depending on the type of intervention designed by the TST, the implementation guidelines will vary. The intervention that is developed based upon the research will guide the implementation guidelines, not some arbitrary number. However, the implementation guidelines of the intervention cannot be deviated from unless a decision was made based upon the student data.

The instructional interventions used as part of an RtI process should provide targeted assistance based on progress monitoring, should be delivered by a classroom teacher or another trained person, and should provide additional intervention on an individual or small group basis (with or without technology assistance). The following practices are not interventions:

- Special or re-assigned seating in the classroom
- Shortened assignments
- Communications with the parent about the child at regular parent-teacher conferences or other informal communications
- Student observations
- Behavior logs
- Suspension
- Retention
- More of the same/general classroom instruction and/or assignments
V. Documentation of intervention implementation with integrity for Tier 3 (Essential Element 9)

For this essential element, documentation should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- the targeted and specific intervention (including all the components of the intervention);
- where the intervention occurred and duration of the intervention;
- who implemented the intervention (including qualifications);
- how often the student engaged in the intervention; and
- documentation of the integrity through observation(s) of the intervention by the principal, principal designee, TST member, or someone other than the primary interventionist at least 8 times during the Tier 3 process.

VI. System of instructional support (Essential Element 10)

The system of instructional support at Tier 3 should be similar to Tier 2 instructional support, but more intensive. The district should include in its respective instructional management plan information regarding data-driven professional development for Tier 3 interventions supported by SBR, progress monitoring, and appropriate decision making. The plan should have some mechanism for assessing educators’ knowledge about interventions in all areas, so that professional development can be designed to meet the needs of individuals providing intensive interventions. In addition, the professional development should be assessed to determine if the desired outcomes were obtained.

After the professional development is provided, the instructional management plan should indicate how the interventions and integrity will be monitored. The district should determine whether the knowledge obtained is implemented with integrity; if not,
a follow-up professional development session and/or feedback may be needed. Finally, appropriate decision making is a key element to the instructional management plan. There should be data on integrity and knowledge as well as outcomes for students to determine if the plan and the supporting elements were worthwhile or if the elements of the plan itself should be changed based on the data. The evidence sources that can document these endeavors include, but are not limited to, mentoring programs, peer planning, evidence of data-based professional development, and collaborative team meetings.

VII. System of behavioral support (Essential Element 11)

Essential Element 11 of the Tier 3 Matrix addresses the school-wide behavioral support plan. A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is an assessment utilized to evaluate a child’s behavior and determine the purpose or function of that behavior. The result of an FBA should always be the development and implementation of a behavior intervention plan. The process includes:

a. Describing the behavior in observable terms;

b. Determining the setting and time of day when the behavior occurs;

c. Identifying the events prior to the behavior occurring;

d. Analyzing the consequences which maintain the behavior, that is, what events follow an occurrence of the behavior; and

e. Developing strategies to reduce the inappropriate behaviors and teach positive alternative behaviors.

Types of Functional Behavioral Assessments

The two different methods that can be employed when conducting an FBA include descriptive analysis and experimental (functional) analysis.
Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis can include indirect methods, such as behavior interviews, checklists, rating scales, and questionnaires, as well as direct methods such as observations.

Indirect Methods

This type of assessment includes a variety of different tools such as a review of records, behavior rating scales, social skill and academic assessments, and interviews or questionnaires from the individual or from those who observe the behavior frequently. The purpose of the indirect procedures is to identify behaviors that interfere with social and/or academic progress; identify antecedents and consequences of behavior that may serve as reinforcement; and identify possible replacement behaviors and possible interventions (Miltenberger, 2001; Watson & Steege, 2003).

The following sub-sections provide examples with descriptions of the various indirect methodologies that are used to gather information about the behavioral concern(s).

a. Reviewing records such as attendance history, test scores, medical history, social history, disciplinary history, previous behavioral assessments and previous interventions can be helpful in providing background information and possible reasons for lack of academic skills or social skills as well as identifying patterns of behavior and maintaining consequences.

b. Behavior rating scales are available for parents, teachers, and students. Rating scales will not provide additional information about the function of the behavior; however, they can help in identifying specific behaviors of concern.

c. Social and academic assessments should indicate specific skill deficits that may contribute to many problem behaviors. These areas should be assessed in order to determine variables that may be related to the behavior
of concern. If a skill deficit is found, it can be helpful to target the improvement/remediation of that skill in order to decrease the problem behavior.

d. The goal of the interview is to gather information about the problem behavior, antecedents, consequences, and any other variable that may be influencing behavior. It is important to conduct accurate and reliable interviews as well as decrease subjective responses. Examples of FBA interviews include, but are not limited to, the Functional Assessment Interview (FAI), the Problem Behavior Questionnaire (PBQ), and the Functional Assessment Informant Record-Teacher (FAIR-T).

Direct Methods

This type of assessment includes observation of the behavior in the context of the environment in which it occurs (e.g., classroom, library, bus). The goal of the direct assessment is to determine the operational definition of the behavior and to observe and record the behavior as well as antecedents and consequences. Several different methods (scatterplots, descriptive observation, and anecdotal record-keeping) can be used to obtain information about the behavior (Miltenberger, 2001; Watson & Steege, 2003).

a. The scatterplot is a tool with which someone in the student’s natural environment (e.g., teacher or assistant) indicates the time of the problem behavior. The observer can indicate that the behavior did or did not occur during a certain time frame, or the observer can indicate the frequency of the problem behavior during each time frame. A scatterplot can aid in the determination of possible antecedents affecting the problem behavior.

b. Descriptive observations should be conducted in the environment in which the problem behavior occurs. The Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) Observation is one type of descriptive observation that can be done narratively or in checklist form. The observer should record the problem
behavior as well as the antecedents and consequences to each behavior. Other types of descriptive observations include frequency or event recording, interval recording procedure (e.g., partial interval or whole interval), and a conditional probability analysis.

c. Anecdotal recording involves an observer writing down problem behavior(s) and associated relative variables that are influencing behavior(s). This method is typically narrative in nature and should be followed up with an interview.

**Experimental Analysis**

Experimental or Functional Analysis is the systematic manipulation of environmental variables (i.e., antecedents and consequents) in order to identify a causal relationship between the performance of target behaviors and the environmental variables.

a. Antecedent-based conditions involve setting up conditions where the antecedents (i.e., adult instructions, amount of adult attention, level of task demand, etc.) are manipulated to evaluate their impact on behavior.

b. Consequent-based conditions involve an experimental (functional) analysis condition in which the consequent events (i.e., social attention for teachers or peers, allowance of escape from tasks) are manipulated in order to evaluate their effect on behavior.

c. Hypothesis-based conditions involve a functional analysis condition in which only the hypothesized functions of behavior are manipulated.

**When to conduct an FBA**

It is considered best practice for an FBA to be conducted at the following times:

a) At the beginning of Tier 3 when the student’s problem behavior impedes the learning of self or others;
b) When there is a known history of problem behavior;

c) When the student’s suspensions approach 10 cumulative days;

d) Before the student’s placement into an alternative education setting; and/or

e) When the student’s behavior presents a danger to self or others.

Once the decision is made to conduct an FBA or circumstances arise that warrant an FBA, it should be conducted within 10 school days.

Additionally, it is ethically appropriate to conduct an FBA for all students for any of the following situations:

1. The student has been removed from the current setting for a violation of the code of conduct to an alternative education setting, another setting, or suspension.

2. The student is removed to an alternative education setting for any of the following:

   a) Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an LEA;

   b) Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an LEA;

   c) Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of an LEA.

3. The student has a series of removals from school that signify a pattern because (a) they total more than 10 days, (b) the behavior is similar to the behavior in previous incidents that resulted in a removal, or (c) other factors such as the length of the removal, the total amount of time of the removal, and the proximity of removals to one another.
How to conduct an FBA

An FBA is not a quick process that can be completed in a few minutes by completing a few forms. Merely going through the process of an FBA to satisfy the letter of the law “will not be sufficient if the FBA doesn’t lead to quality programming” (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2000).

There are four phases of an FBA: descriptive phase, interpretive phase, verification phase, and treatment implementation and monitoring.

- The descriptive phase is the data collection phase. Data should be collected from a variety of different sources, including the process of an indirect procedure as well as direct observations.

- The interpretive phase involves the development of a hypothesis or summary statements about the triggers (antecedents) setting off the behavior and events (consequences) maintaining behavior. A decision should be made about the intervention plan that will be put into place.

- The verification phase involves making direct changes in the environment to test the hypothesis or summary statements (i.e., behavior intervention plan implemented). Data should be collected through a variety of sources in order to gather the information to make decisions.

- The treatment implementation and monitoring phase involves monitoring of behavior change that should take place to make decisions about intervention effectiveness. Additionally, the implementation of the treatment (i.e., intervention) should be monitored. If the intervention is not conducted in the manner in which it was developed, data on the change of behavior is not meaningful.
What to include in an FBA

The key components of an FBA based on empirical literature (O’Neill, Horner, Albin, Sprague, Storey, & Newton, 1997) include:

1. Clear description of the problem behavior
2. Identification of the antecedent events, times, and situations that predict when the problem behavior will and will not occur
3. Identification of the consequences of the problem behavior
4. Development of hypotheses and summary statements that describe the problem behavior and its functions
5. Collection of data from a variety of sources: interviews, direct observation data, etc.

An FBA is an assessment utilized to evaluate a child’s behavior and determine the purpose or function of that behavior. The result of an FBA should always be the development and implementation of a behavior intervention plan. A behavior intervention plan (BIP) takes the information gathered for the FBA and turns that information into a concrete plan of action for improving a student’s behavior. A BIP does not focus on controlling the person. Rather, it focuses on redesigning the environment and building new skills that make the problem behavior irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective in the environment (Drasgow et al., 1999).

The following is a list of components that should be included in a BIP.

1. Observable and measurable description of the problem behavior (Operational Definitions of Target Behaviors)
2. Identified purpose of the problem behavior as a result of the FBA (Summary Statements and Rationale)
3. General strategy or combination of strategies for changing the problem behavior
   (Predictor/Consequent Strategies and Teaching Strategies)

4. Written description of when, where, and how often the strategy will be implemented
   (Routines)

5. Consistent system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan
   (Treatment Monitoring)

6. Consistent system for monitoring the fidelity of implementation of the plan
   (Treatment Integrity)

VIII. Instructional leadership (Essential Element 12)

To meet this essential element, the instructional leader should include the following in the school improvement plan: (a) a link to professional development related to Tier 3 activities; (b) an assessment to determine the impact of the professional development (i.e., growth, knowledge, and fidelity); (c) documentation that addresses areas of needs/concerns based on data (i.e., MSIS, state assessment data, discipline data, and local test data); and (d) a demonstration of the direct correlation of allocation of resources to the needs.

Perhaps the most critical variable impacting the success of the TST process is the principal and other district and building level administrative staff. Implementing the TST process promotes change in each school. This change may have unintended repercussions as staff adjust to the process. The process itself may cause change in the working dynamics of the faculty.

The principal should carefully consider the school culture when making TST assignments and design appropriate professional development activities to meet the identified needs. The principal’s active support of the process should be evidenced by vocal support, by resources made available to personnel, and most importantly, by active supervision of and participation on the TST.

According to State Board Policy 4300, the principal or the principal’s designee is listed
as the TST chair. Even though the action allows a designee, the absence of the principal as the TST chair from this process can “speak” volumes to the educational staff about the importance the principal places on his/her role as the instructional leader.

The TST process will frequently require reallocation of a school’s resources including, but not limited to, time, funding support, supplies, and scheduling considerations. The TST chair should be able to make decisions about resource allocation based on data provided from the TST and respond with appropriate and effective interventions for students and educational staff. The success of Mississippi’s Tier 3 or TST process will depend upon district and building-level leadership.

The research is clear that in order to have an effective school and program for all children, the principal has the responsibility to effectively function as the instructional leader. The research on effective schools has clearly illustrated that the direction and success of the school is a function of the effectiveness of the leadership of the principal.

Student outcomes (i.e., learning) are the direct result of the interaction among three variables (a) the student skills, (b) the curriculum, and (c) the delivery of the instruction by the teacher to the child. The principal has the responsibility to manage an effective curriculum to ensure that teachers are delivering the instruction in a manner that provides ALL students with the necessary skills.

**IX. Parental participation and notification (Essential Element 13)**

While some students need an intensive level of supports within the school, they may also need additional supports beyond the educational setting such as mental health services. The primary focus of a family participation process now shifts to “support,” while continuing to feature awareness and involvement. Similar to adopting an instructional approach to address intensive behavioral challenges, educators should continue to keep an instructional focus as they attempt to support and educate parents/guardians to access and utilize additional supports that may benefit their child.
Awareness activities to consider in team planning include disseminating information about family rights and service entitlement (e.g., IDEA, Americans with Disabilities Act, mental health services) and steps families can take to access services or express concerns. Information dissemination and awareness training sessions should be linked to the larger system. Informing parents/guardians of the continuum of supports in place across agencies within the school should increase the likelihood of success. An additional awareness activity at the student level is identifying potential related agencies and service providers. The goal should be to reach understanding of school and agency services, connect points along the continuum, and use a common language when working with families.

Involvement planning should focus on building partnerships with families to assist them in supporting their child and assist school personnel in deepening the understanding of the child's needs from the family's perspective (Boettcher et al., 2003; Dunlap, Newton, Fox, Benito, & Vaughn, 2001; Frea & Kasari, 2004; Marshall & Mirenda, 2002; Minke & Anderson, 2005; Vaughn et al., 2005). An additional angle on involvement at the individual student level is to increase representation of families with children who require individual/intensive supports on school teams or through related committees.

The primary focus of family participation at the individual level should be on supports. The desired outcome is to engage in collaborative planning with the family to address the child’s social and academic challenges. Educators should not assume roles in which they have not been trained such as counselor, social worker, or legal advocate. Rather, educators should assume the role of family advocate and educate families about their options, facilitate access to external services, as well as foster connections between external service agencies, the family, and the school (Lucyshyn, Horner, Dunlap, Albin, & Ben, 2002).

The first level of support offered should focus on the development and implementation of individual interventions for the student. Parents/guardians should be invited to be active participants in the planning process. The invitation should be designed to
express the school's desire to assist the student to be successful in school. The next level of support should focus on fostering interagency collaborations. The final level of support educators should consider is to provide training or technical assistance for families. Support at this level is designed to provide families with strategies to manage behavior in the home and/or to promote academic achievement. Support at this level may include formal training, fostering parent support groups, as well as providing informal assistance through suggestions or sending support materials home to parents.

Across the small group and individual levels of family participation, the emphasis shifts from keeping families informed to increasing their involvement with the school in an effort to increase the success of behavioral and academic interventions. While “involvement” and “support” will require educators to expand their focus beyond the school, educators are strongly encouraged to maintain an instructional emphasis in their approach to working with families.

**Parental Notification**

The parent(s), or legal guardian, should be notified in writing by the principal of the school that the student will be receiving intervention(s). Such notice should be provided in English and translated, when appropriate, into a parent's native language. At a minimum, the notification should be provided at the beginning of the TST referral process and should include the following:

- The reason the student needs such intervention(s)
- Consequences of not achieving expected performance levels

The parent(s), or legal guardian, should be notified in writing by the school's principal if the TST determines that the student no longer needs intervention(s). Such notice should include:

- the criteria for ending intervention(s);
• the performance levels obtained on district-selected assessments, if appropriate; and

• a translation, when appropriate, into the native language of the parent(s) or legal guardian.

Other forms of communication may be necessary (e.g., parent(s) with limited literacy skills in English or the native language, the visually impaired, etc.). Districts/schools should make provisions to ensure the following including, but not limited to:

1. Provide a preferred mode of communication to the parent(s). In addition to translating the notices into the native language of the parent(s), where appropriate, the district should also make additional accommodations for parent(s) with different modes of communication, such as the visually impaired or those with limited literacy skills in English or their native language.

2. Provide opportunities, such as parent conferences, for consultation with the student’s general education teacher(s) and other professional staff providing intervention(s), including other agencies providing supports.

3. Provide quarterly reports during the academic school year on the student’s progress by mail, telephone, and telecommunications, or include in the student’s report card.

4. Provide information to parent(s) in a combination of ways in order to foster support and involvement in helping the student meet state learning standards. Examples of the many ways information can be provided include, but are not limited to, the following:

   o Printed materials such as newsletters, brochures, and booklets

   o Audio materials such as tapes and CDs

   o Electronic means such as telephones, computers, and Web sites
5. Listen to parental concerns, share evidence of the student’s need for intervention(s), and work with the parent(s) in a timely manner to assure the provision of appropriate intervention(s). Placement in educational programs during the regular school day, however, remains the responsibility of the district and school.

6. Listen to parental concerns and review the student’s school record and assessment results in a timely manner to determine if the child meets criteria for Tier 2 or Tier 3. Parent(s) may advocate for their child to receive intervention(s).

7. Provide information on ways parent(s) may become involved in working with their child, monitoring their child’s progress at home, and working with teachers and other educators who are providing intervention(s) to improve their child’s performance.

8. Determine appropriate placement of the student in the tier process. However, parents have the right to request changes in the program of intervention(s) being provided to their child. District and school staff should work with parent(s) to:
Determine the possible necessity for changes based on additional information; and

Review scheduling and delivery options that might better meet the student’s needs.

9. Work with parents interested in providing, at the parent’s expense, additional supplemental intervention(s) for their children outside of the regular school day. However, that does not negate the obligation of the school district to place the child in appropriate educational programs, including intervention(s) provided by the district, nor does it allow for parent(s) to keep their child out of intervention(s).

X. Teacher Support Team (TST) outcomes (Essential Element 14)

As in previous tiers, the school and/or district should analyze their data at a group level as well as at an individual level. Because previous sections in Tier 3 have addressed the individual level in making data-based decisions, this section will only discuss the group level analysis. The premise of examining the TST outcomes is so that the TST process can address individual needs more quickly and accurately. In addition, the intensity of resources (i.e., educational staff time, student/parent time, professional development, intervention costs, etc.) that are given to any one student can be costly but effective. Thus, the outcomes of the TST should be examined thoroughly to make sure that the resources are used wisely and efficiently.

For this element to be met, the TST should document the following, including, but not limited to: (a) completed student files; (b) outcomes for all students referred to the TST; (c) the percentage of students referred for comprehensive evaluation to the MET; (d) the percentage of files that had to be returned to teachers for additional information; (e) the number of students referred to the TST; and (f) an analysis of the type of referrals to determine if there are patterns that need to be addressed at a group level (e.g., large number of students referred for math reasoning that should be addressed at Tier 1). Each component can help lead to a better analysis of the TST
outcomes; thereby, aiding the TST and the instructional leader(s) to make decisions based on the data.

Here are some examples of how the TST process may use resources in a way that is not the most productive or meaningful. For example, School A has approximately 30% of the total population in the TST process at any given time. Thirty percent of the population is too large for any TST to handle the process effectively and efficiently; thus the team and the students’ outcomes may be in danger of being unsuccessful. A meaningful way to address the issue is for School A to examine the data of the referrals to determine patterns in the referrals that could lead to better expenditure of resources in Tier 1 and/or Tier 2. In another example, School B has an appropriate referral rate to the TST, but the percentage of students who are unsuccessful at Tier 3 and deemed ineligible for Special Education is concerning for the time and resources spent. A meaningful way to address the issue is for School B to examine the data from the TST to determine if inappropriate interventions were chosen or if the integrity of the interventions was low. School B could then make decisions about how to address the concerns.
# Glossary of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
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<td>ASHA</td>
<td>American Speech-Language-Hearing Association</td>
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<td>AYP</td>
<td>Adequate Yearly Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIP</td>
<td>Behavior Intervention Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Curriculum Based Assessment</td>
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<td>CBM</td>
<td>Curriculum Based Measurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEIS</td>
<td>Coordinated Early Intervening Services</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Cerebral Palsy</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCPM</td>
<td>Digits Correct Per Minute</td>
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<td>DI</td>
<td>Differentiated Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIBELS</td>
<td>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBS</td>
<td>Effective Behavior Support</td>
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<td>ECI</td>
<td>Effective Classroom Instruction</td>
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<td>EIS</td>
<td>Early Intervening Services</td>
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<td>Functional Assessment Interview</td>
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<td>FAIR-T</td>
<td>Functional Assessment Informant Record-Teachers</td>
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<td>FBA</td>
<td>Functional Behavioral Assessment</td>
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<td>GBG</td>
<td>Good Behavior Game</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>IHL</td>
<td>Institutions of Higher Learning</td>
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<td>ISS</td>
<td>In-School Suspension</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Agency</td>
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<td>LRE</td>
<td>Least Restrictive Environment</td>
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<td>Mississippi Curriculum Test-2</td>
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<td>MDE</td>
<td>Mississippi Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>MET</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team</td>
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<td>MM</td>
<td>Mystery Motivator</td>
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<td>Mississippi Student Information System</td>
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<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind Act of 2001</td>
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<td>National Staff Development Council</td>
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<td>Office Disciplinary Referral</td>
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<td>Positive Behavior Interventions and Support</td>
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<td>Problem Behavior Questionnaire</td>
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<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
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<td>RoI</td>
<td>Rate of Improvement</td>
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<td>RTI</td>
<td>Response to Intervention</td>
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<td>SATP</td>
<td>Subject Area Testing Program</td>
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<td>Scientifically Based Research</td>
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<td>School-wide Evaluation Tool</td>
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<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
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<td>Standard Protocol</td>
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<td>School-Wide Positive Behavior Support</td>
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<td>Test of Early Numeracy</td>
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<td>Teacher Support Team</td>
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