

What is an RtI² Model to Support Academic Achievement?

Academic Supports

RtI² starts with and emphasizes instruction and intervention in the general education classroom. (California Department of Education (CDE), 2008). In an RtI² model, schools identify at risk students, regularly monitors student learning, provides research-based interventions, and utilizes a systematic approach to ensuring academic success for all students.

Tier One focuses on preventing learning difficulties and providing best first instruction for all students. Tier One consists of a comprehensive implementation of the content area frameworks and State Board of Education (SBE) approved instructional materials, Universal Access, as well as a comprehensive assessment and data monitoring system. Tier One is the primary academic program available for all students with a focus on best first instruction, collaboration, common assessments, and data analysis within grade levels or departments.

Tier Two interventions are designed to meet the needs of strategic intervention students. Strategic students may be “one to two standard deviations below the mean according to state assessments” (RLA Framework p. 264, Mathematics Framework, p. 231) or one to two years below grade level. Tier Two is an additional opportunity for students to learn missing prerequisite skills required to master standards. Progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments are used to determine specific intervention needs of students and customized short term interventions are designed and implemented. Most Tier Two interventions last for three to eight weeks with multiple data monitoring points throughout the intervention. Student’s response to these interventions is monitored closely to determine if additional interventions are needed.

Tier Three interventions are designed to meet the needs of intensive intervention students. Intensive is defined as “seriously at risk as indicated by their extremely and chronically poor performance on one or more measures” (RLA Framework, p. 265, Mathematics Framework, p. 231). Intensive interventions are used when it has been determined that students are not responding to tier one and tier two interventions and will be best served by providing more intensive interventions or placement in alternative instructional materials.

Each tier simultaneously provides the best instructional program for students. Effective RtI² is proactive, preventative, and involves all adults on campus. The interventions are consistently and regularly implemented by all staff and monitored for student response. Students needing additional support move up the pyramid thru a continuum of interventions to respond to their academic needs. As student achievement of standards improves, students gradually move down the RtI² pyramid when data indicates that less support is needed.

What is an RtI² Model of Positive Behavior Support?

Positive Behavior Supports

School-wide positive behavior support (PBS) is a systems approach for establishing the social culture and individual behavioral supports needed for schools to achieve both social and academic success for all students. Features of PBS include explicit instruction of social expectations, acknowledgement of positive behavior, and ongoing data collection that is used for decision making. These expectations are consistently and regularly taught, modeled, practiced, and reinforced. All staff actively supervises and responds to positive and inappropriate behavior. With a school wide structure it is expected every staff will monitor and assist students with additional support to respond to inappropriate behavior by determining which strategy on the pyramid is appropriate. PBS is a school-wide system that provides staff with reinforcement; but requires buy-in and accountability of all staff and students. PBS emphasizes a three tier approach to address students' behavioral needs.

Tier One focuses on teaching all students a set of social skills they are expected to display. School-wide expectations, rules and procedures are taught to all students through unified lesson plans used by every teacher. Data is continually collected and reviewed to pinpoint areas in need of attention and/or the re-teaching of expectations.

Tier Two focuses on students who have been identified as needing additional support to address their behavior needs. This tier utilizes interventions that are easy to administer with small groups of students. Some examples of interventions at this level are check-in/check-out, social skills groups, anger management groups, group counseling, and mentoring programs.

Tier Three focuses on students that are having persistent behavior problems. Interventions at this level may include functional behavior assessments and behavior support plan or a completion of mental health rating scale. Usually evidence-based interventions, services and resources are individually matched to the students' needs identified through the functional behavior assessment. If the student continues to show a poor response to the plan, additional school personnel are gathered to apply a more structured problem solving process to the situation, and develop a more detailed plan (Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007).

PBS is comprised of a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors with all students. PBS is not a specific "model" but a compilation of effective practices, interventions, and strategies.