

# Tier II Data, Systems & Practices

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*This Practice Brief was developed as result of the roundtable dialogue that occurred at the 2019 PBIS Leadership Forum in Chicago, IL and provides an overview of the process of designing and implementing Tier 2 systems and practices within a Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) framework. Approaching Tier 2 design from the district-level is encouraged; however, considerations and suggestions for schools implementing Tier 2 independent of a district-level initiative are included.*

## Operational Definition

In the PBIS framework, Tier 2 consists of the data tools and sources, systems, and practices needed to support students for whom Tier 1 behavior supports are necessary, but not sufficient. Researchers and practitioners broadly describe Tier 2 interventions as a systematic intensification of universal effective behavior supports. The behavior interventions include, but are not limited to, Check-In Check-Out, Self-monitoring, Social Skills Instruction, and Academic Remediation. Practitioners designing and implementing Tier 2 engage in ongoing data collection, data analysis, and data-based decision making used to: a) identify students in need of intensified behavior interventions, b) match identified students to appropriate interventions, and c) monitor student progress and response to intervention.

## Rationale

When the United States Congress revised the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to become the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, federal law required enhancements of social, emotional, and behavioral learning and supports in public education. The rationale for such improvements came from a plethora of studies, spanning over 40 years, documenting the critical need for social and behavioral competence and the direct impact it has on society.

Batsche et al., 2015 (as cited by OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2017) defined Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as “the practice of providing high-quality instruction and



interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions.” PBIS aligns to the foundations and practices of MTSS. Districts and schools implementing PBIS utilize a problem-solving model to “prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2017).”

Implementing the essential features of Tier 1 in the PBIS framework with fidelity decreases the number of students needing additional interventions and increases the efficacy of interventions implemented. Teaching all students the necessary social, emotional, and behavioral skills for success in school while encouraging the expected behavior helps students learn appropriate behaviors and replace inappropriate behaviors. Additionally, Tier 1 implementation ensures teachers develop the knowledge and skills necessary to support Tier 2 interventions.

A primary concern of districts and schools beginning PBIS implementation is how to address the needs of students who do not respond to Tier 1 supports. Once Tier 1 systems and practices are in place, Tier 2 data, systems, and practices become the next focus of PBIS implementation. Utilizing data to identify which students need additional support, the function of the inappropriate behavior, and what intervention and supports address the function of the behavior, significantly impacts the success of the intervention.

## Procedures

The FSCA created a conceptual framework outlining six essential features of family-school collaboration identified in research. The features and research-based rationale for their importance in family-school collaboration within PBIS are described below followed by a summary of guiding principles shared across the six essential features.

**Step 1: Readiness** Prior to Tier 2 systems being created, it is vital to assess building readiness for implementation. Assessing readiness includes a data review to determine implementation fidelity of Tier 1 supports, student response to the supports, and the building’s fluency with data-based decision making (Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports, 2018). Schools with a Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) score of 70% or higher in Tier 1, and a School-wide Assessment Survey (SAS) score of 80% or higher in the areas of School-wide, Non-Classroom, and Classroom meet the criteria for Tier 1 implementation fidelity. Additionally, determining 80% or more students received 0-1 Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) demonstrates the Tier 1 supports are sufficient for the building population. A review of Tier 1 team activities showing Big 5 data collected monthly with active action planning around said data, a system to collect classroom minor referrals, and access to district level support, indicate fluency with data-based decision making. Further, a school (or district) will need to consider the base rate of students who may be expected to need Tier 2 supports (10-15% of the population) and the serviceable base rate (i.e., how many students can feasibly receive services). Freeman, et al. (2016) note, “Implementation of Tier 2 is

likely to be more effective and efficient if foundational Tier 1 systems are implemented with high fidelity to improve the accuracy with which teams identify and deliver appropriate levels of support to the more appropriate students (p. 1).”

**Step 2: Teaming** Members of the Tier 2 team often include a school administrator, behavior specialist, classroom teacher, coordinator for each Tier 2 intervention, and a cross-over member from the Tier 1 team. The Tier 2 team is responsible for creating and monitoring the Tier 2 system; reviewing data for those students referred for additional support; and providing training and support to families, staff, and students regarding the Tier 2 interventions (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2019). As the Tier 2 system is more complex than Tier 1, the team itself becomes vital in building capacity and balancing workload, and assists in alignment. School teams would be wise to reach out to district level leadership to identify if the district has a Tier 2 system in place or is in the process of developing one; if so, the District Leadership Team may have already completed a resource alignment, allocation, and funding process. If a Tier 2 system at the district level has not been created, then it is recommended that the school Tier 2 team complete an alignment process to identify resources and ensure efficient use of resources.

**Step 3: Identification System** Tier 2 teams need a clearly defined systematic process to determine which students may need additional support. The most common strategies to identify students for Tier 2 supports include review of existing behavioral and academic data sources; universal screener(s) including social-emotional competencies, and behavioral skills and academic skills; and teacher nomination forms. Additional items might include parent and support providers (e.g., counselor, school psychologist) recommendations (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2019).

**Step 4: Data Decision Rules** Data decision rules provide clear guidelines to assist the team in reviewing student data to identify students needing Tier 2 supports. Once the team creates a system for collecting and collating data, they can develop data decision rules to determine which students need Tier 2 interventions. Data decision rules might include a range of office discipline referrals, a range of scores on a universal screener, etc.

**Step 5: Student Identification** When students meet the data decision rules indicating a potential need for Tier 2 supports or a teacher nominates a student, the Tier 2 team should review the data to determine next steps. The team may decide to enroll the student in an intervention, immediately; however, in some cases, the team may decide Tier 2 supports are inappropriate (e.g., student needs Tier 3 supports, classroom environment needs stronger Tier 1 supports). Once the team identifies students in need of additional interventions the team will need to identify the function of behavior (e.g., to obtain/get something or avoid/escape something). The function of the behavior will guide the team in identifying appropriate interventions for the student.

**Step 6: Intervention** Tier 2 teams should ensure interventions selected are research-based and include a component in which student data is collected and reviewed on a regular basis. Part of the Tier 2 team’s responsibilities include developing a handbook for each intervention. The Intervention Development Checklist and the Intervention Essential Features tool can guide teams when developing an Intervention Handbook (e.g., in identifying the information and processes needing development and clarification) and intervention training for school personnel. Many Tier 2 teams begin with Check-in Check-out, adding additional interventions after establishing Check-in Check-out. Researchers and technical assistance providers recommend piloting each intervention with a small group of students so the team can ensure staff and parents/guardians can implement with fidelity, and that students, staff, and parents/guardians find the intervention user-friendly.

**Step 7: Progress Monitoring** In order to identify the effect of an intervention on student behavior, data needs to be collected on a daily basis. This information is often collected through the Daily Progress Report (DPR). The Tier 2 team develops the DPR and standardizes it for each intervention. It often uses a three point scale and reflects the 3-5 school-wide expectations. The Tier 2 Team will outline how students receive the DPR each day, how data will be collected from the DPR, how often the data from the DPR will be reviewed by the team, data decision rules to determine next steps (e.g., continue, fade or modify the intervention), and a feedback loop to the student and staff member(s) involved in the process. Additionally, the Tier 2 Team will need to identify a data management system for the DPR data to allow the team to progress monitor and make data-based decisions in addition to identifying a process to ensure implementation fidelity of each intervention. The DPR also serves as a prompt to encourage teachers to implement the selected intervention with fidelity.

**Step 8: Fading/Graduation** Once a student’s data meets the data decision rules for fading by meeting program goals, the intervention will be gradually removed. This process will vary by intervention; however, the process for fading and graduation needs to be clear and outlined in the Intervention Handbook(s).

**Step 9: Professional Development and Staff Updates** Professional Development can be broken down by intervention and the role each person has in implementing and/or supporting the intervention. For example, roles identified within Check-in Check-out might include student, parent/guardian, classroom teacher, and intervention facilitator. In addition to training individuals on how to implement the intervention, it is also important to provide regular/monthly updates to staff on overall implementation of the interventions. For instance, “25 students have, or are currently receiving support through Check-in Check-out. To date, 3 students have graduated, 5 students are currently fading from the intervention, 13 students are making progress within the intervention, 3 students have needed intensified support, and 1 student has been referred for Tier 3 support.”

Providing updates and professional development regarding Tier 2 is needed for implementation with fidelity to occur; however, it is critical that a focus remain on Tier 1 and implementing PBIS in the classroom (e.g., expectations and rules, procedures and routines, system for encouraging expected behavior, system for discouraging inappropriate behavior, active supervision). Keeping these practices at the forefront of implementation supports implementing Tier 1 with fidelity which then aids in the Serviceable Base Rate being one that is realistic and manageable.

## Specific Implementation Examples

### *Center School District, Kansas City, MO*

While the District Leadership Team from Center School District began building their Tier 2 system, they came to the conclusion that a universal screener, utilized twice a year, would assist teams in efficiently identifying students that are at-risk of academic and behavioral challenges. The District Leadership Team elected to utilize the Social, Academic, & Emotional Behavior Risk-Screener (SAEBRS) and developed data decision rules to guide school teams in responding to the data collected. As school Tier 2 teams review building and classroom level reports, data decision rules are enacted based on the percentage of students in each classroom that have been identified as being at-risk. The Center SAEBRS Screening Manual (2018) states:

In general, schools with risk identified in more than 20-25% of students are encouraged to continue to develop effective universal practices and explore additional Tier 1/universal intervention supports. Classrooms/Grade levels with risk identified in more than 20-25% of the population are encouraged to refine effective classroom practices and explore whole-group interventions, such as Class-wide Function-related Intervention Teams (CW-FIT) or class-wide social skills/social emotional learning curriculum. When evidence shows that Tier 1 is being implemented with fidelity and that universal supports are effectively supporting 75-80% of the school and class, the Data Consult Team will determine interventions to support individual students (p. 4).

Center School District found that the number of students originally identified for possibly needing Tier 2 support decreased once CW-FIT was implemented with fidelity.

### *Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines, IA*

As Des Moines Public Schools began implementing Tier 2 within select buildings, they quickly realized there was a lack of infrastructure in that school teams did not have the tools necessary to help them make decisions regarding which students might need additional support. It was decided that a dashboard be utilized to pull information by:

school year, school, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, special education status, 504 status, English language learners, gifted, age, and name of student. Teams were then able to drill down further on behavior by looking at total referrals, referral level, OSS days, and OSS events, in addition to a number of other filter items regarding attendance and academics. This information combined allowed for school teams to identify students based upon the total number of at-risk indicators. As the district began expanding Tier 2 across multiple sites, school teams found the identification of students became seamless due to the data decision rules developed, and the dashboard allowed for multiple data points to be viewed collectively.

The district also saw the need to identify if the interventions being implemented were resulting in positive student outcomes. Using the same dashboard, district leaders were able to view Tier 2 intervention data as a district average while also being able to drill down to individual students. District leaders kept a pulse on attendance and behavioral changes while also identifying the success rate of each intervention. Using a dashboard to pull multiple data points from a variety of sources has helped Des Moines Public School make data-based decisions to support students, teachers, and families.

### *Omaha Public Schools, Omaha, NE*

Omaha Public Schools (OPS) approached implementation of Multi-tiered Systems of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B) as a district-wide initiative. Beginning in the Spring semester of 2016, all schools created MTSS-B teams and those teams received training in the critical features of Tier 1 implementation. Since the start of the 2018-2019 school year, all school buildings in OPS are implementing Tier 1. Additionally, in the 2018-2019 school year 6 schools began implementation of Tier 2. Another 23 schools began implementation of Tier 2 in the 2019-2020 school year.

While the practices and systems associated with Tier 1 were developed by schools to meet their unique needs, the District Leadership Team (DLT) provided district-level systems to support Tier 2 implementation across all schools. These systems include: a) development of a data management system to support Tier 2 identification and progress monitoring, b) selection of standard data sources for extant data reviews, and c) selection of standardized interventions.

By providing these system supports, the DLT reduced the start-up workload for all schools. Additionally, the standardized data, systems, and practices allows the DLT to efficiently monitor implementation fidelity and student outcomes. Based on reviews of the common data sources, the DLT is able to develop relevant professional development across all schools and provide targeted technical assistance to school teams.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** *How do leadership teams assess readiness and initiate the exploration phase of Tier 2 implementation?*

**A:** Beyond the data-based decision making criteria for Tier 2 readiness in buildings, the district leadership team needs to consider the district-level systems and practices necessary to support Tier 2 implementation within and between buildings. In particular, the district leadership team will need to identify personnel at the district- and building-level with behavior expertise necessary for Tier 2 implementation. Additionally, they may need to provide training to staff members and consider how to allocate resources (e.g., FTE, materials) within and between buildings. After the initial implementation of Tier 2 systems, it will be important for the district to identify model demonstration sites so schools considering Tier 2 implementation can observe the data, systems, and practices associated with Tier 2 implementation. In schools considering Tier 2 implementation independently, the building leadership team will need to assume these tasks.

**Q:** *How do effective Tier 1 classroom supports affect implementation of Tier 2 practices?*

**A:** Classroom teachers need to understand the foundational principles of function-based logic (i.e., antecedent-behavior-consequence chains) in order to implement Tier 2 interventions effectively. Understanding and implementing effective classroom management practices allows teachers to practice using the behavior supports included in Tier 2 interventions (e.g., teaching behavior, prompting, monitoring, providing feedback). When effective behavior supports are used as part of the ongoing classroom management system it is easier for the teacher to reduce, intensify, or modify the practice for students who need more support to be successful.

**Q:** *Which evidence-based practices are recommended for Tier 2?*

**A:** The menu of Tier 2 interventions available should include interventions designed to address the common functions of behavior (e.g., gain attention, escape attention, access privileges or tangibles, escape work). Commonly used evidence-based practices include:

- Check-in Check-out
- Social Skills Instruction
- Self-monitoring
- Academic Remediation

**Q:** *When should Tier 2 support be removed?*

**A:** Tier 2 interventions help students acquire appropriate behaviors to replace challenging behaviors and develop fluency with the appropriate behaviors. Progress monitoring is a critical component of



implementing Tier 2 interventions. When progress monitoring data indicate a student has achieved the goal of the intervention (e.g., increased appropriate behavior, reduced challenging behavior), the intervention may be faded. Fading the intervention, rather than stopping it suddenly, provides an opportunity for the student to maintain the new behavior patterns and generalize the behaviors to multiple settings.

**Q:** *What can leadership teams do to keep Tier 1 strong while building and implementing Tier 2?*

**A:** In order to sustain Tier 1 implementation, the leadership team will need to provide the resources and systems necessary to keep the Tier 1 team engaged in data-based decision making to monitor and adjust school-wide implementation, as needed. The leadership team will also need to provide dedicated time for ongoing staff development as well as training for any new staff members.

**Q:** *How can school and district teams be effective and efficient in their Tier 2 systems?*

**A:** Adding Tier 2 systems and practices to ongoing PBIS implementation requires a significant investment of resources. In order to effectively and efficiently implement Tier 2, we recommend district leadership teams (DLT) provide support to buildings in the form of creating data management systems, selecting standardized interventions, and providing professional development and technical assistance to ensure fidelity of implementation. However, if a school is implementing Tier 2 without district support, the building leadership team can take on the roles and responsibilities associated with developing and launching Tier 2.

In order to effectively develop, launch, and maintain Tier 2 implementation, we recommend the leadership team conduct a resource audit (<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/initiative-inventory>) and an alignment of initiatives ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cJ\\_OIH5YxwUZqK-gxfz3lHmM9eMSpFM4/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cJ_OIH5YxwUZqK-gxfz3lHmM9eMSpFM4/view)). By engaging in these two activities, the leadership team can determine how to streamline the implementation of Tier 2 and integrate it with existing initiatives.

**Q:** *What steps do schools and districts need to take to ensure Tier 2 systems and practices are culturally relevant and equitable?*

**A:** As with all practices implemented in schools, it is critical to ensure Tier 2 systems and practices are culturally relevant and equitable. Initially schools and districts need to ensure Tier 1 PBIS systems and practices are culturally relevant and implemented equitably. To do this, school and district teams need to involve stakeholders in the development and review of Tier 1 systems and practices. Part of the ongoing review should include an examination of disaggregated implementation fidelity and student outcome data. The same practices will help school and district teams develop and implement culturally relevant Tier 2 practices equitably.



## Resources

- [CW-FIT](#)
- [Hexagon Tool](#)
- Intervention Development Checklist:
  - [Check-in Check-out](#)
  - [Social Skills](#)
  - [Self-Monitoring](#)
- [Intervention Essential Features](#) and [Rubric](#)
- [Using Discipline Data within SWPBIS to Identify and Address Disproportionality: A Guide for School Teams](#)
- [Tier 2 PBIS.org](#)
- [Tiered Fidelity Inventory](#)
- [Self-Assessment Survey](#)

## Additional Reading

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