

**Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG)
Questions and Answers**

.....
*Closing the Achievement Gap:
Arkansas' Response to Instruction and
Intervention (RtI)² Model*

Arkansas State Personnel Development Grant
Little Rock, AR
2011

ARKANSAS STATE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Improving Student Outcomes through Academic and Behavioral Instruction and Intervention
and Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Development

2402 Wildwood Avenue
Wildwood Center
Suite 170
Sherwood, AR 72120
Ph: 501-835-3330
Fax: 501-835-5326

Dr. Howard M. Knoff, Project Director
Coordinators:
Lisa Haley, Literacy
Jennifer Gonzales, Positive Behavior
Martha Kay Asti, Professional
Development

Copyright © 2011 by the Arkansas State Personnel Development Grant
All rights reserved

This document represents effective practices as implemented through the Arkansas State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). It does not reflect any policies or requirements of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). This document may be duplicated without the permission of the SPDG or ADE.

Acknowledgements

This document was adapted from material originally developed and published by Dr. Howard M. Knoff. It contains materials and figures copy written by Project ACHIEVE Press that are used with permission. The two most prominent citations are:

Knoff, H. M. (2009). Implementing Response-to-Intervention at the school, district, and state levels: Functional assessment, data-based problem solving, and evidence-based academic and behavioral interventions. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.

Knoff, H. M. (2009). (RtI)²: The necessary integration of response-to-instruction and response-to-intervention to strategically support students with academic or behavioral challenges. Little Rock, AR: Project ACHIEVE Press.

The contributions of Dr. Randall Glenn, former Co-Coordinator of Positive Behavioral Supports for the State Improvement Grant; and Marcia Harding, former Director of the Arkansas Department of Education's Special Education Unit are hereby recognized with appreciation.

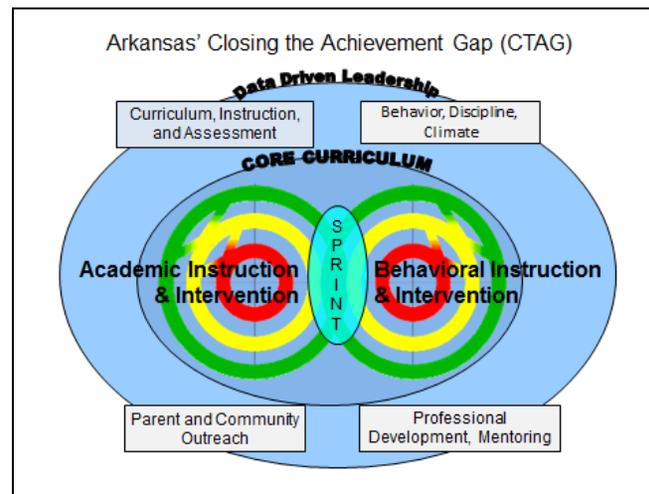
This document is available to and has been distributed without charge to all Arkansas public school districts or schools.

For information about the State Personnel Development Grant, visit www.arstudentsuccess.org.

Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) Questions and Answers



Closing the Achievement Gap: Arkansas' Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI)² Model



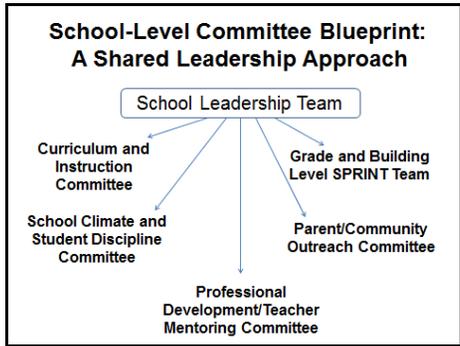
What is the Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) initiative?

CTAG is an Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) initiative to facilitate effective school practices for all students across the state. It is anchored by a comprehensive model for educational practices that meet the diverse academic and social, emotional, and behavioral learning needs of ALL students.

The CTAG initiative recognizes the need for the regular, ongoing assessment of students' academic and behavioral progress. These assessments help schools evaluate the success of their core instructional program(s), and the level and rate of individual student progress. Based on these data, instruction and intervention is continually adjusted to meet student needs within a flexible multi-dimensional (tiered) service delivery model. Analyses of students' response to instruction and intervention, through the use of a data-based problem solving process, guides the decisions regarding the need for more or less intensive services, supports, strategies, or programs within the multi-dimensional service delivery model.

	<p>When implemented with integrity, CTAG processes provide data that promote quality decisions about the effectiveness of practices ranging from general education core instruction (provided to all students) to high intensity interventions (provided to individual students showing the greatest needs). These data are then utilized to make quality instructional and intervention decisions that maximize students' academic and social, emotional, and behavioral success.</p>
<p>What are the primary principles within the CTAG model?</p>	<p>The primary principles within the CTAG model are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students receive instruction in the general education curriculum and settings to the greatest degree possible. • All students receive instruction that facilitates their academic and social, emotional, and behavioral development, progress, and proficiency. • All students receive instruction or interventions that are scientifically or research-based. • All students' academic and social, emotional, behavioral progress is monitored on a planned and ongoing basis. The data generated through this process are the basis for all instructional or intervention decisions. • All instructional or intervention decisions are made and supported through a data-driven shared leadership process. • When students are not demonstrating appropriate academic or social, emotional, or behavioral development, progress, or proficiency, functional assessments are completed to identify the underlying reasons, and these are linked to more strategic or intensive instruction and/or intervention. • These more strategic or intensive approaches then are evaluated to determine a student's response, progress, and need for more or less intensive approaches. • Consultation from colleagues, instructional or intervention specialists, or others is encouraged and available to support teachers and others during any phase of the problem solving process. • A multi-tiered range of instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, and programs is available to address students' academic or social, emotional, or behavioral needs.
<p>How is behavior addressed in the CTAG model?</p>	<p>The CTAG model includes the implementation of the research-based principles underlying positive behavioral supports (PBS). Positive behavioral supports involve social, emotional, and behavioral instruction in general education settings with regular, ongoing monitoring of student progress. Progress is evaluated against social, emotional, and behavioral expectations, or "standards," that are developmentally appropriate to the age and maturity level of different groups of students. This is similar to monitoring students' academic progress by evaluating them against curricular, content, and/or state proficiency standards.</p> <p>Social, emotional, or behavioral instruction and intervention are provided using a flexible multi-dimensional (tiered) service delivery model. As with academics, the implementation of more or less intensive instruction or intervention is based on students' responses to their current instruction or intervention within the context of a data-based problem solving process.</p>

What school-level committees are needed to effectively implement CTAG, and who is on these committees?



CTAG implementation requires staff collaboration and collegial consultation. Below are the school-level committees that are instrumental to CTAG success. This committee “blueprint,” however, may need to be adapted to the size and personnel in individual schools.

The School Leadership Team:

- Oversees implementation of a school’s strategic planning process/ACSIP. This team is the committee under which all other committees are organized.

Membership:

- Administration
- Committee Chairs from school-level committees
- Selected others to ensure cross-staff representation

The School Discipline Committee:

- Oversees the school’s positive behavioral support system (PBSS), school discipline, behavior management, and school safety processes and activities

Membership:

- Building Principal/Administrator
- Teacher from each Grade-level, Teaching Team, and/or Teaching Cluster
- Related Specialty and Support Staff

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee:

- Oversees the implementation of new and existing curriculum
- Coordinates the strategic academic instruction and intervention program in a school

Membership:

- Building Principal/Administrator
- Teacher from each Grade-level, Teaching Team, and/or Teaching Cluster
- Instructional Facilitator or Consultant(s)
- Related Specialty and Support Staff (including Special Education)

The Professional Development/Teacher Mentoring Committee:

- Organizes, evaluates, and monitors the school's professional development needs and program
- Oversees the school's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Coordinates the mentoring process for staff from first-year through experienced professionals

Membership:

- Building Principal/Administrator
- Representatives from every grade or instructional teaching team
- Related Specialty and Support Staff

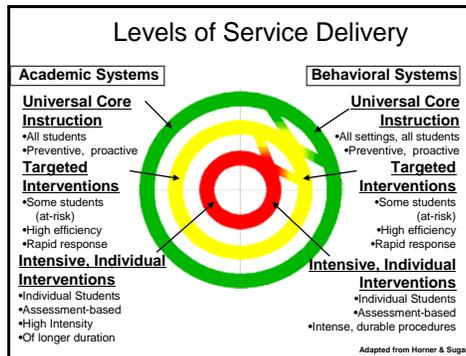
The School Prevention, Review, and Intervention Team (SPRINT):

- Guides the school's use of data-based problem solving and intervention processes when students are not responding, academically or behaviorally, to effective instruction and interventions
- Coordinates the school's early intervening services, and its strategic and intensive instruction and intervention process for individual students

Membership:

- Building Principal/Administrator
- Curriculum/Academic Intervention Specialists
- Behavioral/Behavior Management Specialists
- Special Education Teachers
- Counselor
- School Psychologist
- Social Worker
- Speech Pathologist
- School Nurse

What is the focus of Arkansas' multi-dimensional instruction and intervention model?



Academic and social, emotional, and behavioral instruction and intervention occurs within the context of the CTAG’s multi-tiered service delivery approach. Embedded within this approach is a data-based problem solving process that evaluates how specific students respond to instruction or intervention (RTI^2) at each tier of service or support. It is extremely important to understand that the multi-tiered model is not a categorical system, but rather a system that organizes and guides the delivery of different intensity levels of instruction or intervention to individual or groups of students as needed. Within this model, there are not “Tier I students,” “Tier II students,” and “Tier III students.” Instead, there are students who need, for example, a “Tier II level” of instructional or intervention service or support in a specific academic and/or social, emotional, or behavioral skill or strand area.

Failure to recognize this subtle, yet critical, distinction can result in an over-emphasis on trying to “categorize” instruction or interventions and students into the tiers. When this occurs, this over-emphasis detracts from the fundamental purpose of the multi-dimensional model which is to link students’ needs with strategic or intensive instruction or interventions. The multi-tiered model should involve a continuum of instruction and intervention services, supports, strategies, or programs with progressive levels of intensity.

Movement through the tiers is fluid. A student is not required to sequentially move through the tiers in order to receive more or less intensive services (i.e. s/he must “fail” in Tier I to receive Tier II services, and in Tier II to receive Tier III services; or s/he must succeed in Tier II services, having been successful with Tier III services, in order to return to Tier I services). Moreover, in certain cases, a student may demonstrate such significant difficulties that interventions at a Tier III intensity level are needed (and delivered) immediately. Finally, students may repeatedly, and over time, move to more or less intensive levels of instructional or intervention support within the multidimensional model. When successful, students receiving Tier II or III supports can always return to a less intensive tier of services. Returning to a less intensive level of services or supports should always be the goal of any intervention.

What are some examples of “intensity”?

Across the multi-dimensional tiered model, “intensity” may be defined in different ways:

Intensity of assessment, progress monitoring, and instruction/intervention. Assessments and instruction/intervention can vary, for example, by breadth or depth. Breadth might involve the number of different curricular areas that need to be assessed or addressed through instruction/intervention. Depth might involve the number of specific areas within a single curricular area—for example, a student with difficulties in one versus all five areas of literacy.

The intensity of progress monitoring can vary, for example, by the complexity of developing or administering the assessments, or by the frequency of administration.

Intensity of Individualization. Intensity may vary by the number of students (e.g., an entire classroom, a group of students from the same classroom or grade-level, or just a single student) whose needs call for a specific instructional or intervention service, support, strategy, or program.

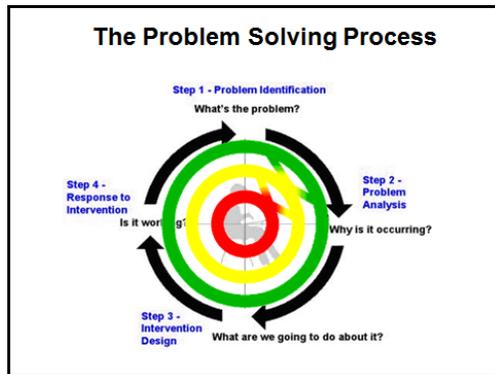
Intensity of Setting, Teacher Expertise, or Teacher Need for Consultant Expertise. Intensity may vary by whether the instruction or intervention can be implemented (a) in a general education classroom versus another more specialized classroom setting, (b) by a general classroom teacher versus a teacher with more specialized skills, and/or (c) by a general classroom or specialized teacher independently versus with the assistance of an expert from a related, but more specialized or multidisciplinary profession.

Intensity of Time. The intensity of time relates to the frequency and/or duration of a service, support, strategy, or program—that is, how many times an hour, day, week, or month it must be provided, and for how long.

Intensity of Teacher-Student Instructional Interactions. The intensity of teacher-student instruction involves the interactions needed to successfully implement some instructional or intervention approaches. Although a separate category, the intensity of teacher-student instructional interactions is closely tied to individualization and related time factors. Examples of instructional interactions here may include the approaches (and student’s) need for:

- Teacher proximity
- Explicit and frequent feedback
- Opportunities for student initiated questions
- Observation of individual students
- Opportunities for student practice
- Opportunities for student interaction

How does problem solving occur across the tiers of services, supports, strategies, and programs?



Effective problem solving can occur at several levels ranging from informal to formal. At the most informal level, classroom teachers utilize problem solving as part of their effective instructional processes—adjusting their instruction to students’ learning styles, approaches, and responses, or implementing classroom-based intervention when needed. However, when students do not respond over time, or when they are exhibiting significant difficulties, the problem solving process becomes more formalized, and the intensity of instruction or intervention increases. Regardless, the problem solving process is critical to properly identifying student need, linking need to instructional changes or interventions, and determining whether desired outcomes actually occur.

As depicted in the figure, problem solving is an evolving process consisting of four basic steps:

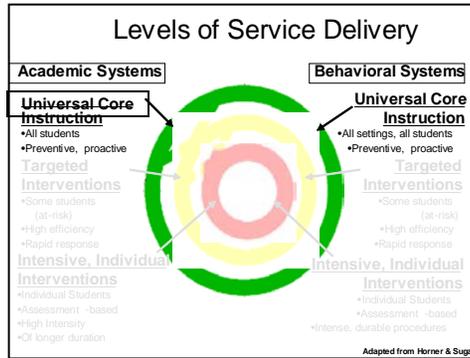
1. Problem Identification – What is the problem?
2. Problem Analysis – What is/are the reason(s) the identified problem is occurring?
3. Intervention Design and Implementation – Based on identified student needs, what instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, or programs need to be designed and implemented?
4. Response to Intervention/Instruction. – Based on evaluations of student response, were the desired outcomes achieved?

The central goal of the CTAG problem solving process is to successfully validate why a student is having academic or social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties, and link the results of the functional assessments to specific instruction or intervention practices. This process begins by accurately identifying the specific problem. In doing this, “symptoms” needed to be differentiated from “problems.”

For example, if three students are having difficulty with reading comprehension, the problem identification and analysis process may determine that Student A has comprehension problems in all areas of comprehension; Student B has difficulties with inferential comprehension questions, but not concrete or factual comprehension questions; and Student C is having difficulties with phonetic decoding and fluency, which are interfering with comprehension. For Student A,

	<p>the comprehension difficulties <u>represent</u> the problem. For Student B, a specific area of difficulty in comprehension represents the problem. For Student C, the comprehension problems are symptomatic of the underlying decoding and fluency problems.</p> <p>Similarly, if three high school students are persistently late to school in the morning, Student A’s tardiness may involve organization and time management in getting up and making the school bus; Student B’s difficulties may involve needing to get her siblings to school before leaving herself; and Student C’s difficulties may involve a larger peer group that often gathers in school to socialize and doesn’t hear or react to the “warning bell.” While the tardiness is a problem, for these three students, it does not fully represent “the” problem.</p> <p>Once the problem has been clarified, the reasons for the problem need to be validated and then linked to intervention. For example, some academic problems occur because (a) the skills were never taught, (b) taught to mastery, or (c) mastered at a level of independent application. Some behavioral problems occur because (a) the skills were never taught or mastered, (b) the student is not motivated to use already-mastered skills, or (c) the student is inconsistently held responsible for appropriate behavior. If validated, each of these problem areas would need a different type of instructional or intervention approach. Thus, in the problem solving process, functional assessment (problem analysis) results lead to strategic (not random) interventions.</p>
<p>Where does universal screening and “standard protocol” intervention approaches fit into the CTAG/RtI² process?</p> <p>How does universal screening fit into the CTAG/RtI² process?</p>	<p>As noted earlier, embedded within the CTAG and its multi-tiered service delivery approaches is the notion of “Response to Instruction and Intervention” (RtI²).</p> <p>Relative to universal screening, the CTAG initiative emphasizes that classroom teachers are the best universal “screeners,” and that screening should utilize multiple assessment approaches and tools. In addition, given the potential for “false positive” and “false negative” results—where students are identified as having difficulties when they do not, or identified without difficulties when some actually are present—any screening results that identify students as “at-risk” or “needing services” should be considered only as “warning flags” that need to be validated through more extensive assessments.</p> <p>Relative to universal intervention, while “standard protocol” intervention approaches help organize the availability of a school or district’s multi-tiered instructional or intervention services and supports, the decision as to what services or supports are needed by a specific student should be linked to the functional assessments completed as part of the problem solving process. That is, students should not automatically receive any instruction or intervention listed on a standard intervention protocol based solely on the results of a screening assessment (see above) or due to a lack of success in their classrooms. Once again, screening “red flags” need further validation, and students’ lack of classroom success requires additional functional assessments. This additional assessment serves to determine the underlying reasons that explain why the student is having academic or social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. Once these reasons are determined, they can be linked to instructional or intervention approaches that, hopefully, are on the standard protocol.</p>

Tier I



What is Tier I instruction?

Effective Tier I instruction (a) uses high quality research-proven core instructional approaches, that (b) are linked to state or national content standards, (c) differentiated to meet students’ diverse learning needs, and (d) monitored regularly for effectiveness as evidenced by student mastery on curriculum-based and standards-based assessments. Tier I instruction should meet the needs of a majority of students. It should include classroom-based instructional or intervention supports.

For Academics?

For academics, schools should identify an effective, research-based Tier I core program of study that is directly linked to the state’s standards. Selecting a core program to best address the needs of students at a particular school should be based on local data that include: (a) student achievement patterns, (b) the experience and expertise of administrators and teachers, (c) the resources and supports available, (d) whether or not the school has an instructional facilitator on staff, etc. For schools with highly effective leaders, experts and well-trained teachers, data-driven instructional practices, and successful professional development and teaming processes, the core program can be chosen to provide more instructional freedom, flexibility, autonomy, and teacher-driven implementation. For schools that lack some or all of these characteristics, a more directive core program may be necessary.

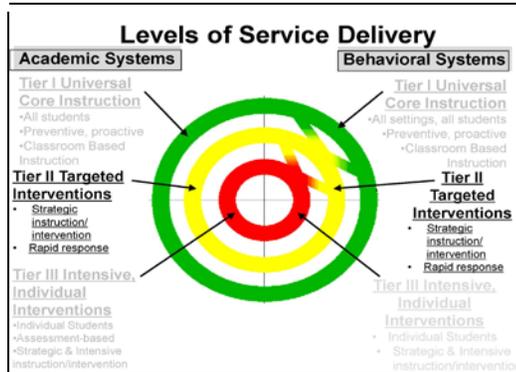
For Behavior?

For behavior at Tier I, schools should identify a core set of interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and emotional coping skills. This should become part of a school-wide behavioral accountability system that identifies behavioral expectations and differentiated responses to increasing levels of inappropriate student behavior across all classroom and school settings. The goal of this entire Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS) is to help students learn, master, and apply effective social, emotional, and behavioral self-management approaches. Thus, all students need to receive classroom-based social skills instruction through a research-based core curriculum, and there needs to be a consistent system of incentives and consequences to motivate students to demonstrate these learned skills.

	<p>Finally, skill instruction should focus on the common areas of a school (e.g., hallways, bathrooms, cafeterias, buses, assemblies), and should include ways to prevent and respond to teasing, taunting, bullying, harassment, and physical aggression.</p>
<p>Who provides Tier I academic and behavioral instruction?</p> <p>Where does it occur?</p>	<p>Tier I instruction is typically provided by the general education classroom teacher or through a co-teaching partnership that involves general education teachers and other support specialists. Other individuals, especially grade level/departmental colleagues and instructional or behavioral consultants, may also be involved in supporting Tier I instruction and, when needed, classroom-based interventions.</p> <p>Tier I instruction occurs in the general education classroom.</p>
<p>What assessment is done at Tier I?</p>	<p>Assessment at the Tier I level focuses on answering the following types of primary academic and behavioral assessment questions at a classroom or grade/instructional level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the current functional academic and behavioral status of every student (i.e., the knowledge and skills that they have mastered), and to what degree have they mastered the prerequisite skills needed for the current academic and behavioral instructional program? 2. Prior to initial instruction, are individual students or groups of students at risk for not meeting specific academic and behavioral standards, expectations, and proficiencies? Why, and what instructional or intervention approaches need to be integrated into the initial instruction? 3. Given the breadth of student skill groups in the classroom, is the teacher able to successfully differentiate instruction? 4. During and after instruction, have students benefitted from the differentiated instruction they have received? 5. Are students mastering the academic and behavioral standards, expectations, learning objectives, and/or skills being taught at a level of independent practice, use, and application? 6. For the students who are not mastering the standards, expectations, learning objectives, and/or skills over time or to a significant degree, why are they having difficulty, and what classroom-based (or other) instructional or intervention approaches are needed? 7. Have the classroom-based (or other) instructional or intervention approaches helped students to master desired/needed standards, expectations, learning objectives, and/or skills?

<p>How is problem solving used at the Tier I Level?</p>	<p>When students are not demonstrating appropriate levels of progress, mastery, or proficiency, classroom teachers use data-based problem solving to evaluate the student, instructional, and/or curricular factors that may explain this lack of success. The results of this problem solving process may lead to classroom-based instructional or intervention approaches, or they may indicate that a more intensive assessment process, leading to more strategic or intensive instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, or programs is needed. At the Tier I level, teachers may use the problem solving process independently or with consultative assistance from other colleagues.</p>
<p>What professional development focus is needed at Tier I for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>Professional Development at the Tier I level should focus on at least the following competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively differentiating instruction to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners. • Implementing components in the Positive Academic Services and Supports (PASS) blueprint for academic curriculum, instruction, and response. These components include: effective instruction, remediation, intervention, accommodations, and informal modifications. • Implementing components in the Positive Behavioral Self-Management System (PBSS) blueprint for discipline, behavioral management, self-management, and school safety. • Conducting effective formative and summative evaluations and using progress monitoring to routinely measure academic and behavioral outcomes. • Utilizing the problem solving process at the individual teacher or grade level to effectively link student needs to appropriate differentiated instruction and social, emotional, or behavioral intervention. • Linking functional assessment results with scientifically-, evidence-, and research-based instructional or intervention approaches.

Tier II



What is Tier II instruction or intervention for academics and behavior?

Instruction or intervention at Tier II includes the specific services, supports, strategies, and/or programs that students need to be successful in the general education curriculum and classroom. Thus, the Tier I academic and social, emotional, behavioral goals, objectives, and expected proficiencies continue to be the primary targets, and effective Tier I instruction continues to be essential. As noted earlier, such instruction (a) uses high quality research-proven core instructional approaches, that (b) are linked to state or national content standards, (c) differentiated to meet students' diverse learning needs, and (d) monitored regularly for effectiveness as evidenced by student mastery on curriculum-based and standards-based assessments.

For Academics?

Depending on the results of the functional assessment to determine why students are demonstrating academic or behavioral challenges, Tier II instruction may include a range of services, supports, strategies, and/or programs that help students to be successful in the core instruction. For a few students, however, the assessment may determine that an alternate core curriculum is needed, or that a student lacks so many prerequisite skills that the core curriculum needs to be put aside until "catch-up" approaches are successfully implemented.

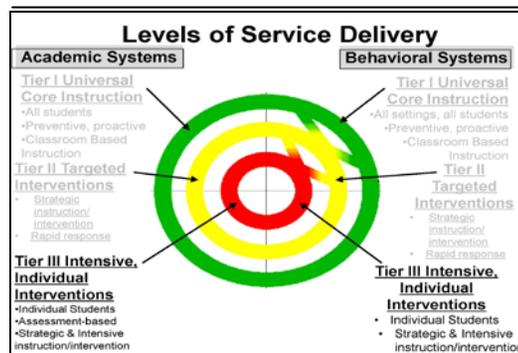
Instructional or intervention strategies or programs at this level typically are strategically targeted to the underlying reasons for a student's lack of "response" to Tier I instruction and classroom-based instructional or intervention approaches. These may involve student-specific factors, or instructional or curriculum-based factors that are impacting student learning, progress, and proficiency. The assessment or intervention process may involve colleagues or other school-based instructional consultants who work with the classroom teacher(s) to address students' needs. Tier II instruction or intervention typically is student-specific, although groups of students with the same difficulties and needs can certainly be grouped together as appropriate.

<p>For Behavior?</p>	<p>As with academics, the Tier I social, emotional, and behavioral competency and self-management goals and objectives of the Positive Behavioral Support System (PBSS) continue to be the primary focus. Once again, the results of a functional assessment at this level need to be linked to specific instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, and/or programs that may decrease or eliminate inappropriate student behavior, and/or increase social, emotional, or behavioral skills. In addition to possible teacher/instructional, curricular, classroom, or home/community factors that explain the presenting challenges, the student-specific factors include possible skill and mastery deficits, motivational or performance deficits, inconsistency, and the impact of peer interactions and/or interactions that occur in the common areas of the school (e.g., hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, buses). There are many intervention approaches available to address these different factors. The assessment or intervention process, again, may involve colleagues or other school-based instructional consultants who work with the classroom teacher(s) to address students’ needs. Tier II instruction or intervention typically is student-specific, although groups of students with the same difficulties and needs can certainly be grouped together as appropriate.</p> <p>At Tier II, students are receiving services, supports, strategies, and/or programs that are more intensive than those provided at the Tier I level in an individual school (see the section above that discusses “intensity”). Tier II services and supports are identified, organized, and designated as such by each specific school or district. That is, Tier II services at one school or district may be Tier I or Tier III services at another school or in the next district.</p>
<p>Who provides Tier II intervention for academics and behavior?</p> <p>Where can Tier II academic and behavioral interventions be provided?</p>	<p>Tier II instruction and/or intervention is implemented by the general education classroom teacher to the greatest degree possible. Often supporting this implementation is additional training, consultation, and supervision. At times, the instruction or intervention approaches may be supported and implemented in settings outside the general education classroom by instructional (for academic needs) or related services/mental health (for social, emotional, or behavioral needs) support staff. When this occurs, the general education classroom teacher is fully involved in the planning and evaluation of these services and supports—with the goal still being to facilitate the student’s regular classroom academic and behavioral progress, mastery, and proficiency. Thus, as out-of-classroom approaches are successful, they are integrated into the general education classroom as soon as possible.</p>
<p>What assessment is needed at Tier II for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>Assessment at the Tier II level focuses especially on answering the following types of primary assessment questions for students who are at risk, underachieving, unresponsive, or unsuccessful in learning, mastering, and becoming proficient in the academic and behavioral standards, expectations, learning objectives, and/or skills being taught at their grade level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the current functional academic and behavioral status (i.e., the knowledge and skills that they have mastered) of the students receiving Tier II services or supports?

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What academic and behavioral standards, expectations, learning objectives, and/or skills has each student learned, mastered, and become proficient in at his/her grade level? 3. What instructional or intervention approaches should the primary classroom teacher be using to maintain the student’s progress and proficiency in academic or behavioral areas where the student is currently successful? 4. For the academic and/or behavioral areas of concern—or areas where a student is not functioning at grade level and/or learning, mastering, and/or demonstrating proficiency—what are the reasons underlying these circumstances? 5. What instructional or intervention approaches are needed to resolve the situations identified and analyzed, or what approaches are needed to facilitate the student’s grade-level learning, mastery, and proficiency? 6. During and after more intensive instruction or intervention identified in Question 5 above, has the student made progress toward mastery and proficiency in the specific area(s) of concern? 7. For students who still are not mastering the standards and expectations over time or to a significant degree, are additional assessments or services and supports needed? <p>Given these questions and building on Tier I assessment results, the Tier II assessment system should include a data collection and analysis focused on diagnostic, functional assessment, more frequent or specialized progress monitoring, and outcome-specific formative and summative evaluation. These assessments are likely to be more targeted, intensive, specialized, and/or multidisciplinary.</p>
<p>What academic and behavioral instructional grouping is used at Tier II?</p>	<p>Once again, there is no definitive link between a tier and a specific instructional grouping approach. Grouping is a function of the instructional goals and objectives, the curricular materials and instructional resources, how students best learn, and how teachers need to teach in order to maximize student outcomes and mastery. Students may receive instruction in a whole group or a small group depending on the lesson and the differentiation needed. At the same time, some Tier II instruction or intervention may involve small group or individualized implementation. As this is successful, the transfer to whole- or larger-group general education classroom implementation is a planned and ultimate goal.</p>

<p>How is problem solving used at Tier II?</p>	<p>When students are not demonstrating progress, mastery, or proficiency after classroom-based instructional or intervention approaches, or they are presenting significant academic or social, emotional, or behavioral challenges or needs, the data-based problem solving process becomes more formal, and it involves a grade- or instructional-level problem solving team, or a building-level multidisciplinary SPRINT team (see the description of this team in the Committee section above). As noted above, problem analysis now is likely to be more targeted, intensive, specialized, and/or multidisciplinary.</p> <p>Once the problem analysis has confirmed the underlying reasons for the student’s difficulties (which may involve instruction, curriculum, or other non-student factors), the results are linked to, typically, more intensive instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, or programs.</p>
<p>What professional development focus is needed at Tier II for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>Professional development (PD) at the Tier II level builds from that implemented at the Tier I level. Professional development here involves everyone who is involved in the implementation, monitoring, and/or evaluation of outcomes for students who need more intensive (Tier II) instruction or intervention services, support, strategies, or programs. The PD should focus on ensuring that staff has the knowledge and understanding, the implementation skills and techniques, and the consultation and supervision processes needed during the entire data-based problem solving process. At times, PD may need to be individualized to those who are directly implementing the instruction or intervention, and those who are indirectly supporting this implementation. Much of the knowledge and skills provided through PD will center on the specific academic or social, emotional, or behavioral needs of students receiving services or supports at this level of intensity.</p>

Tier III



<p>What is Tier III instruction or intervention for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>Tier III services, supports, strategies, or programs are highly specialized and more intensive than those provided at the Tier II level (see the section above that discusses “intensity”). As such, across the problem identification, problem analysis, and intervention design, preparation, implementation, and evaluation phases, they often involve teachers and multidisciplinary consultants with more specialized training, knowledge, skills, and expertise. As Tier III instructional or intervention goals and outcomes are highly student-specific, Tier III strategies or programs often make significant changes to the school or grade-level’s Tier I core instruction, and in some cases, an entirely different core curriculum may be needed and used.</p> <p>Given the intensity of needs in different academic and/or social, emotional, or behavioral areas, a student could receive instruction and additional instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, or programs simultaneously at the Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III levels. For example, in the academic and behavioral areas, students who are performing at grade level or above would receive Tier I instruction. In other academic or behavioral areas where Tier II services and supports are needed, students could simultaneously receive Tier I and II instruction and supports. In the areas of greatest or most significant concern, students could simultaneously receive Tier III services or supports.</p> <p>Remember that schools or districts identify, on their own, the services and supports that they consider to be at the Tier III level of intensity. Thus, Tier III services at one school may be considered Tier II services at another school within or in the next district.</p>
<p>Who provides Tier III instruction or intervention for academics and behavior?</p> <p>Where can Tier III intervention be provided for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>Due to the level of intensity, the implementation of Tier III instruction or intervention approaches often is facilitated and/or provided by teachers or support professionals who have specific and more specialized skills in the student’s area(s) of need. Depending on the areas of concern, general education classroom teachers may continue to be primarily responsible for the core instruction and for the implementation of the Tier III instructional or intervention approaches. When this occurs the support professionals typically are helping to design and evaluate the Tier III approaches, and they are providing direct consultation to the general education teacher(s) to ensure that the approaches are implemented in the general education classroom with appropriate integrity and intensity.</p> <p>For some concerns, the Tier III services, supports, strategies, or programs are provided outside of the general education classroom by support professionals who are working directly with specific students. These professionals may include, for example, general or special education teachers, instructional or behavioral specialists, or related services personnel (e.g., counselors, psychologists, social workers, speech pathologists, occupational or physical therapists, school-based mental health therapists). The goal of the Tier III instructional or intervention process is to attain the success needed to move to the least intensive level of services, supports, strategies, or programs. If supported by evaluation data, it is important to note that a student could transition from a Tier III intensity level of services and supports directly to a Tier I level of services and supports.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">What assessment is needed at Tier III for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>Assessment at the Tier III level focuses especially on answering the following primary academic and behavioral assessment questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the current functional academic and behavioral status (i.e., the knowledge and skills that they have mastered) of the students receiving Tier III services or supports? 2. In what academic and behavioral standards, expectations, learning objectives, and/or skills has each student learned, mastered, and become proficient in at his/her grade level? 3. What instructional or intervention approaches should the primary classroom teacher be using to maintain the student’s progress and proficiency in academic or behavioral areas where the student is currently successful? 4. For the academic and/or behavioral areas of concern—or areas where a student is not functioning at grade level and/or learning, mastering, and/or demonstrating proficiency—what are the reasons underlying these circumstances? 5. What Tier II and/or Tier III instructional or intervention approaches are needed to resolve the situations identified and analyzed, or what approaches are needed to facilitate the student’s grade-level learning, mastery, and proficiency? 6. During and after more intensive instruction or intervention identified in Question 5 above, has the student made progress toward mastery and proficiency in the specific area(s) of concern? 7. For students who still are not mastering the standards and expectations over time or to a significant degree, are additional assessments or services and supports needed? <p>Given these questions and building on Tier I and II assessment results, the Tier III assessment system should include data collection and analysis focused on diagnostic, functional assessment, more frequent or specialized progress monitoring, and outcome-specific formative and summative evaluation. These assessments are likely to be more targeted, intensive, specialized, and/or multidisciplinary.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">What instructional grouping is used at Tier III for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>The intensity of instruction or intervention at this level typically requires small group and/or individual student implementation in the areas of academic or behavioral concern.</p>

<p>How is problem solving used at the Tier III level?</p>	<p>The data-based problem solving process at this level is highly formal and systematic, and it typically involves the building-level multidisciplinary SPRINT team (see the description of this team in the Committee section above). Problem analysis at this level—involving assessments to determine the reasons for a student’s difficulties or presenting problems—is targeted, intensive, specialized, and multidisciplinary in nature. Beyond assessing the teacher-instructional, curriculum, and students factors present in a school that are contributing to a problem situation, the analysis extends to evaluations of possible classroom/peer, school/district, and home/community factors.</p> <p>As always, once the problem analysis has confirmed the underlying reasons for the student’s difficulties, results are linked to instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, or programs at the needed level of intensity. Given the breadth of the assessments (and their results), these services or supports also may involve the student’s family, and community-based, as well as school-based, professionals.</p>
<p>What professional development focus is needed at Tier III for academics and behavior?</p>	<p>Professional development (PD) at the Tier III level builds from that implemented at the Tier I and Tier II levels. Thus, professional development still involves everyone involved in the problem identification and analysis process, and/or the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes for students needing more intensive (Tier III) instruction or intervention services, support, strategies, or programs. The PD continues to focus on ensuring that staff have the knowledge and understanding, the implementation skills and techniques, and the consultation and supervision processes needed during the entire data-based problem solving process. At this level, however, the PD is targeted to meet the needs of staff members who provide the most intensive, specialized services in the school or district.</p>
<p>How does a decision to determine a student’s eligibility for special education services fit into CTAG?</p>	<p>The RtI² process within CTAG cannot be used in lieu of or to restrict a student’s protections and rights to a free, appropriate, and public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If at any point in the problem solving process, a concern is raised that a student has a disability, the procedural safeguards under IDEA must be followed.</p> <p>Nonetheless, when a student receives services and supports through the CTAG/RtI² process, the assessment and outcome data can be used to support the decision whereby a student qualifies for IDEA services through an IEP.</p>