

# Chapter 25

## Improving School Climate Through Behavioral Response to Intervention

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Response to intervention (RTI) is commonly recognized as a schoolwide, systematic service delivery model designed to support academic learning for all students. Similar to the delivery model for academics, behavioral RTI provides a continuum of schoolwide behavioral supports ranging from promoting a positive school climate in Tier 1 to implementing individualized behavioral interventions in Tier 3. This chapter analyzes the systematic, behavioral approach within each tier, including screening, assessment, progress monitoring, and subsequent data analysis. Discussion includes how to use these data to make data-based decisions, develop appropriate goals, and match student need to an appropriate intervention with effective reinforcers. Examples of evidence-based interventions are provided for each tier.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Response to Intervention (RTI) was initially developed as a way for schools to improve student learning by identifying and remediating students at risk for learning disabilities (Fuchs, 2004). This schoolwide delivery model allows students to move through the multitiered system based on their academic needs, with additional supports available to those with the greatest academic need. Similar to academic RTI, behavioral RTI provides a continuum of behavioral supports designed for all students, with a progression in place for those needing greater assistance. The focus of RTI has been primarily in elementary schools and some middle schools; however, the implementation of behavioral RTI in high schools is growing.

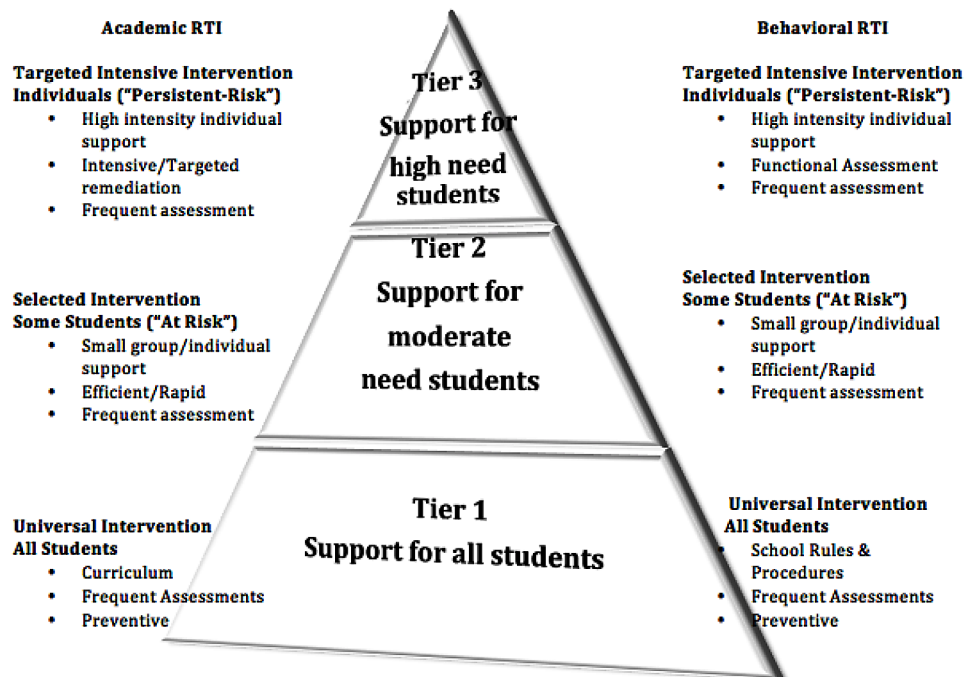
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Currently, there are high schools in every state implementing RTI, with 17 states including behavioral RTI in at least 20% of their high schools (Flannery, Hershfeldt, & Freeman, 2018).

The increase in behavioral RTI at the high school level is much needed as the demographics of schools continue to change and student populations become more diverse. It is critical that schools are prepared to meet the needs of all students, including their behavioral needs. This process is important for the teachers as well as the students because many teachers report struggles with classroom management. It is especially a concern at the high school level because often teacher preparation programs focus more on content than pedagogy at the secondary level (Bohanon et al., 2006). RTI is a way to help support and train teachers in effective behavioral procedures while providing a structure for both teachers and students to better navigate the school rules and procedures that results in fewer behavior concerns, better teacher satisfaction, and a more positive school climate (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009; Hawken, Vincent, & Schumann, 2008).

Developing a positive school culture also leads to improved academic outcomes, which is important given the emphasis today on career and college readiness. RTI provides an effective platform to deliver the layers of support needed to increase college and career readiness for many more students (Freeman, Kern, Lombardi, Swain-Bradway, & Sugai, 2018). Creating a culture that supports the socio-emotional and academic needs of all students also helps decrease dropout rates by providing more unified school supports for at-risk students (Kern & Wehby, 2014). Incorporating academic and behavioral RTI improves outcomes for high school students in different settings, including urban and alternative high schools (Bohanon et al., 2006).

*Figure 1. Academic and behavioral RTI*



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