



Tennessee Behavior Supports Project

at Vanderbilt University

Lessons from the Field: Teaching the RTI²-B Plan to Schools

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This guide was produced by Tennessee Behavior Supports Project at Vanderbilt University – one of three projects across the state funded by the Tennessee Department of Education to provide training and technical assistance to schools as they address the behavioral needs of students. This brief was authored by Abbie Jenkins, Lauren Magill, Brooke C. Shuster, & Erik W. Carter.



Across the state, schools are being trained in Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B) to address the social and behavioral needs of students. After training, it is the responsibility of each school's RTI²-B leadership team to then teach the plan to everyone at their school. Sometimes inconsistencies in the daily implementation of these plans take place because faculty and staff have different or unclear interpretations of what is expected of them and their students. The RTI²-B framework can help resolve these inconsistencies by providing a

systematic plan for preventing behavior challenges before they occur.¹

One important component of RTI²-B involves establishing and defining behavioral expectations for all school settings (e.g., classrooms, cafeteria, hallways, restrooms, assemblies, playground). This is done to (a) explicitly teach students what is expected of them behaviorally and (b) increase consistency of behavior management and discipline across the school. School leadership teams should teach all faculty and staff the plan *before* the first day of school, and then teach

the students the plan when the school year begins.

Teaching the RTI²-B plan involves helping faculty, staff, and students understand the behavioral expectations, acknowledgment system, and the discipline plan. In this guide, we share practical ideas and advice learned from schools throughout Middle Tennessee.

Developing Your School's RTI²-B Plan

If administrators, faculty, and staff at your school have agreed to implement RTI²-B, we recommend recruiting a leadership team to develop the plan. RTI²-B is a framework that should be tailored based on your school's needs. We recommend the leadership team starts by developing an implementation manual, which should bring together all aspects of the plan in one document.

The Purpose of RTI²-B

Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B) is a systems approach to help districts, schools, staff, parents, and students align social and behavioral supports into one sustainable and effective multi-tiered, problem-solving framework.



The manual can be a great resource to draw upon when teaching the plan.

The implementation manual includes a brief description of RTI²-B and the Tier I plan. The Tier I plan includes:

- 3-5 behavioral expectations selected by the school (e.g., “be respectful, be responsible, take pride”)
- Expectation matrix explaining how the behavioral expectations are displayed in each school setting
- Procedures for teaching, reinforcing, and monitoring the expectations
- Description of acknowledgement system for students and staff
- Office Discipline Referral Form for the staff to use consistently
- Problem Behavior definitions and examples

The implementation manual should also include a discipline plan for when problem behaviors occur. The discipline plan is typically a decision-making flow chart that lists staff-managed versus office-managed behaviors.

Gather faculty and staff input on the plan while building your school's framework. Throughout the year, the implementation manual should be looked at regularly and changes should be made according to how the plan is being implemented in the school.

Tier I focuses on the behavioral and social needs of all students across the school environment. Tier II involves providing targeted, small group interventions to students who do not respond to Tier I supports. Tier III includes individualized interventions for students who do not respond to Tier I or Tier II supports.²



Teaching the Plan to Faculty and Staff

Misunderstandings can often hinder implementation.³ It is important that all educators are taught the plan before students arrive on the first day of school.⁴ The implementation manual is a great starting point for faculty roll-out of the plan. It is important that all faculty and staff have a copy of the implementation manual so they have all the information they need. This may also help reduce future questions for the leadership team. In addition, we suggest the leadership team (including at least one administrator) introduce the plan to faculty and staff in a creative way to get everyone excited about the plan.

For consistency, the leadership team must teach the plan to all adults in the school. In addition to teachers, this includes bus drivers, teaching assistants, cafeteria staff, administrative staff, custodial staff, volunteers, substitutes, and new faculty and staff. When schools roll-out their plan at faculty meetings, non-teaching staff are often not present to be introduced to the plan. To teach these staff, some schools host a breakfast before school begins to introduce the plan and provide staff with any materials needed to support their use of the plan (e.g., copies of the behavioral expectations, expectation matrix, tickets). Schools have also created bookmarks or small cheat sheets for staff that cover the basics of the plan.

Ways to get staff excited about the plan

- Reinforce staff with prizes (e.g., gift cards) or non-tangible rewards (e.g., car duty relief) so they have fun as they learn
- Create entertaining skits displaying the behavioral expectations
- Schedule drawings for staff to get rewarded for teaching and modeling the appropriate behavior to students
- Create separate staff tickets; hand out tickets to staff on the first day back as they walk in
- Make a competition to see which staff members can reinforce the most students in a week



This can be extremely helpful to adults who are new to the building or to substitutes who are only there for a short time. For new faculty and staff, we recommend including an overview of the plan during orientation meetings.

Pictured below is an example of a bookmark that reviews the basics of the plan. This can be used to give to new faculty and staff, substitutes, parents, and the community.

Kenrose Elementary School

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Bookmark

What is PBIS: Positive Behavior Interventions and Support is a multileveled strategic intervention system, which addresses social and behavioral needs of all students within a variety of school settings. Support is provided based on a continuum ranging from school-wide to individualized intervention.

Purpose: Kenrose Elementary's PBIS program is focused on teaching and modeling, through positive reinforcement, of the following four school rules:

**Be Respectful
Be Responsible
Be Safe
Be a Role Model**

How do I participate in PBIS? You can fill out a Something to Tweet About ticket when you observe a student or group of students showing respect, responsibility, safety, and role model behavior.

Students can either keep their tickets with their homeroom teachers or hold onto their tickets for a later drawing. For example, the tickets can be drawn during school-wide assemblies to receive a reward.



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Educating, Empowering, Inspiring
We are Kenrose!**

EXPECTATIONS	Classroom	Hallway	Café	Playground	Restroom	Bus	Arrival/Dismissal
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions. Keep hands, feet, and objects to self. Listen to the speaker. Cooperate with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands, feet, and objects to self. Stay calm and quiet. Be courteous of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to and follow directions the first time. Use appropriate manners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect others' personal space. Respond immediately when teacher/adult calls. Be kind to peers. Resolve conflicts peacefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give others privacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and follow the Bus Driver's Rules. Use kind words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond immediately when teacher/adult calls. Display a positive attitude. Use a quiet voice.
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercises self-control. Respond appropriately to conflict. Bring required materials. Take care of school materials. Listen wisely. Ask for help when needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take responsibility for your own behavior. Follow teacher directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat the food you brought or bought. Choose a seat quietly and stay in it. Clean up after yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use equipment appropriately. Stay in established area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flush toilet. Wash hands with soap properly. Throw away trash quickly and quietly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use self-control. Be alert and watch your step. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive on time to school. Go straight to class. Bring to school and take home all necessary materials. Stay in assigned area.
Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report unsafe behaviors to a faculty member. Follow instructions given for drills and emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report unsafe behaviors to a faculty member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report unsafe behaviors to a faculty member. Make sure floors are clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report unsafe behaviors to a faculty member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report unsafe behaviors to a faculty member. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report unsafe behaviors. Stay clear of moving equipment. Be alert and prepared in emergency situations. Keep hands and feet and objects to self and not in aisles. Remain in seat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report any problems to a faculty member. Be alert and careful when walking to and from class.
Be a Role Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete work with responsibility. Remain on-task. Engage in class activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk safely in a line on 3rd block. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make choices quickly in the lunch line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow rules in games and include others in your activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep restroom clean. Wait and turn patiently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Bus Patrol's examples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a quiet voice.



Who should be taught about the plan?

- Classroom teachers
- Bus drivers
- Paraprofessionals
- Teaching assistants
- Cafeteria staff
- Administrative staff
- Custodial staff
- Volunteers
- Substitutes
- New faculty and staff



It is important to receive staff input not only when schools are developing the plan, but also during implementation. Not all teachers will buy-in to the plan in the first year. Listen to the teachers who are reluctant or hesitant. Their concerns should be addressed and could be used to modify the plan during the summer. For example, teachers often are concerned about rewarding students for something they are already supposed to do. One high school in Tennessee came up with a creative way of addressing this concern. The leadership team created a PowerPoint that explained corporate incentives and bonus programs for adults and related it back to their plan.

They explained that reinforcing students for expected behaviors is similar to corporate incentives. The leadership team said the analogy really hit home for most faculty and staff.

To keep staff on board and excited about the plan, keep them involved. Consider developing separate tickets and drawings for staff. Just like students, staff should be acknowledged for teaching and modeling the plan. Some schools simply reinforce faculty and staff by checking to see which teacher names are on the student tickets when there is a drawing and rewarding those teachers in addition to their students. This

motivates teachers to hand out tickets because there is a chance they might be rewarded.

Another way to teach staff the plan is to invite them to be part of the leadership team or serve on a subcommittee. For example, some schools have subcommittees related to data management, parent and community involvement, tickets, prizes, RTI²-B store management, fundraising, and assemblies. It is also a good idea to have refreshers at some point in the year to answer any questions and maintain enthusiasm.

How can we solicit staff input and feedback?

- Survey staff to find the rewards that interest them
- Show a presentation relating corporate incentives to reinforcing students to address concerns about rewarding students for something they are already “supposed to do”
- Create a parking lot for questions or concerns about the plan
- When changes are made to the plan over the summer, present the changes to staff to let them know their voice was heard

[RTI²-B] is so ingrained with what we do now that it is a part of our school culture.

-Middle School Administrator



Teaching the Plan to Students

Faculty and staff should introduce the plan to students on the first day of school. As students enter the building, be sure to give every student displaying the behavioral expectations a ticket. Next, the faculty and staff can introduce each aspect of the plan (e.g. behavioral expectations, tickets, drawings). So every student is receiving the same information, we recommend teaching the students in large groups. Some schools have students rotate through each location (e.g., hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, gym) in the school building and staff members teach students exactly what the behavioral expectations look like in that particular setting.

A good way to teach students the RTI²-B plan is to keep the plan in front of them at all times. Posting visual cues like expectations posters or including the behavioral expectations on student agendas and identification badges can offer very helpful reminders. Also consider teaching the plan by using morning announcements, student-performed skits about the expectations on the morning news, monthly assemblies, or creating a game with the expectations. You can also teach the expectations by modeling the behaviors and using behavior-specific praise.

Many schools have quarterly or monthly assemblies showcasing their RTI²-B plan. These assemblies require students to exchange a set number of their earned tickets for admission to the assembly.

Ways to teach the plan to students

- Monthly assemblies
- Creative student or teacher skits
- Expectation posters
- Behavioral expectations listed on student agendas and identification badges
- Students teaching students
- Morning announcements
- Games and activities with the expectations
- Monthly lessons that cover the expectations in each setting
- Competitions between grade levels



Holding a school-wide assembly and drawing on the first day of school can be a great way to get students excited about the plan. Every student should be a part of the first assembly, so that faculty and staff can explain how to gain access to future assemblies. This also helps motivate students because they are able to know what they would be missing out on if they do not earn admission to the future assemblies. Creating competitions between grade levels is another great way to keep students excited about the assemblies. For example, schools could create a prize for the grade level that receives the most tickets for that quarter or month.

Schools must ensure the plan is consistently being taught to new

students. It is important to reteach the lesson plans monthly or quarterly. Monthly lessons that cover the behavioral expectations in each setting will be a good reminder and help new students understand the plan. Some schools have the guidance counselor or

"[RTI²-B] is a real and palpable part of our school. I don't go a day without hearing Respectful, Responsible, and Engaged."

-Middle School Counselor

other staff review the plan as a part of new student orientation or they assign new students to student ambassadors who model expectations and explain the rewards.

Summary

These ideas for teaching can help RTI²-B schools sustain implementation. The overall goal of this multi-tiered system of supports is to help students learn appropriate behavior and be successful academically. Having an efficient and effective plan in place to teach all faculty, staff, and students can provide a clear picture of what can be expected from day to day inside the school building and create a better learning environment for all students.

For Further Reading

Lane, K. L., Kalberg, J. R., & Menzies, H. M. (2009). *Developing schoolwide programs to prevent and manage problem behaviors: A step-by-step approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Lane, K. L., Oakes, W. P., & Magill, L. (2014). Primary prevention efforts: How do we implement and monitor the Tier 1 component of our Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered (CI3T) Model? *Preventing School Failure*, 58:3, 143-158.

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Endnotes

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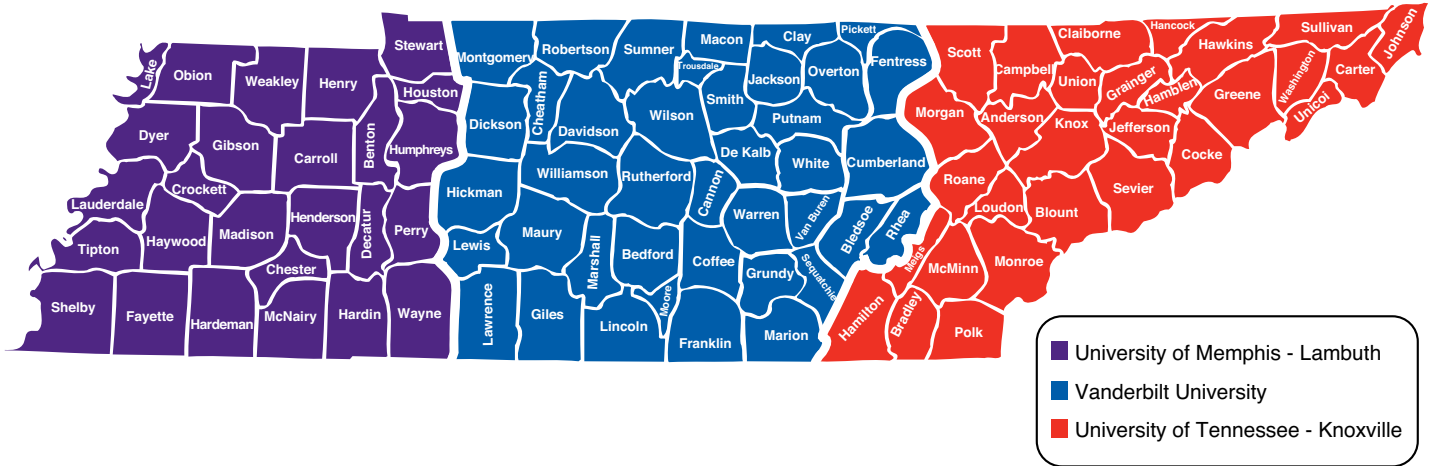


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Tennessee Behavior Supports Project by Region: 2016-2020



The Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (TBSP) is funded by the Tennessee Department of Education and consists of three regional support contracts: University of Memphis – Lambuth Campus, Vanderbilt University, and University of Tennessee – Knoxville. TBSP is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to schools as they address the behavioral needs of students through Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B). To locate the project assigned to your region, see below.



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