Tennessee Behavior Supports Project
at Vanderbilt University

Student Involvement Series:
Student Leadership Teams

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Student Leadership Teams

An efficient way to involve students from all grade levels in RTI[2]-B is to develop student leadership teams or work with existing student leadership teams. Students can be chosen for these teams through nominations or applications. The team should be made up of students who represent diverse perspectives and interests (e.g., academic performance, social groups, clubs, extracurricular activities), as well as students who work well with others, are willing to be involved, are creative, and have leadership potential.[1] These teams can check in with the RTI[2]-B team regularly to provide input on components of the Tier I plan and school-wide activities. Creating student leadership teams prepares students for future responsibilities, facilitates structured collaboration with adults, and gives students valuable leadership experience.

Peer leadership. The student leadership team can support RTI[2]-B planning and implementation through work with other students in the building. They can do this by gathering input, teaching the behavioral expectations to other students, mentoring younger students, explaining the Tier I plan to new students, advertising special events,

Student Leadership Team Focus Areas
1. Peer Leadership
2. Event Leadership
3. Acknowledgement System Leadership

and acknowledging students and staff.[1] When behavioral expectations are taught and reviewed with all students in the building, the student leadership team can participate in teaching the expectations across school settings. They can do this by helping the RTI[2]-B team create lesson plans, performing skits, creating videos, or teaching younger students. Members of the student leadership team can also serve as mentors by helping new students understand the school-wide behavioral expectations, the acknowledgment system, and all aspects of the Tier I plan. Similarly, older students can mentor younger students on the school's Tier I plan, especially in areas where younger students may be struggling. For example, if younger students are having difficulty meeting behavioral expectations on the playground, older students can re-teach those expectations, model appropriate behavior, and help the younger

students practice engaging in that expected behavior during recess. At the high school level, a mentorship program supported by the student leadership team can be used to help students who are at-risk get back on track.

Event leadership. In addition to working directly with their peers, the student leadership team can also be in charge of planning and advertising school-wide events. Examples of these events include carnivals, pep rallies, field days, movie nights, and dance parties. Members of the school leadership team can be responsible for spreading awareness to all stakeholders, including students, families, community members, and local businesses. Students can advertise events by making posters, wearing special shirts, speaking during school announcements, or posting on social media. Additionally, the leadership team can work

with local businesses to enhance community partnerships, spread awareness of the Tier I plan, and advertise events so that more students and families can learn about the Tier I plan.

Acknowledgement system leadership. Finally, the student leadership team can collaborate with RTI[2]-B leaders to make sure staff and students are acknowledged when they engage in the school's behavioral expectations. If students are rewarded by earning tickets or points, the student leadership team can help run the school store or organize a celebration during which students can use their tickets or points to buy items or experiences. To acknowledge staff, the student leadership team can create thank you cards, select a teacher of the month, pass out special treats, or host a raffle for teachers who support RTI[2]-B.

Working with Student Leadership Teams

Members of the RTI[2]-B team are responsible for supporting student leadership teams and promoting meaningful participation. There are three key ways to do this.

1. RTI[2]-B teams should gather student input and use it to make decisions. Students should be told how their input will be used so they feel their voice has value. When gathering input from students, RTI[2]-B teams must remember to evaluate both what is and what is not effective regarding the RTI[2]-B Tier I plan. Students will buy into the plan more if they feel that they are a part of the plan.

2. RTI[2]-B teams should provide the student leadership team with meaningful opportunities to collaborate. For example, the student leadership team can collaborate with the RTI[2]-B team on the development of the Tier I Implementation Manual. They can also be involved in decision-making related to the implementation of the RTI[2]-B plan.

3. RTI[2]-B teams should give the student leadership team opportunities to lead RTI[2]-B initiatives. This will allow their peers to view them as leaders and understand that students had a role in developing the Tier I plan. Example leadership opportunities include helping students set up a mentorship program to help others learn about the RTI[2]-B plan and helping

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them develop ways to advertise for future events related to the plan. Working with the student leadership team shows that everyone is striving toward a positive school climate and culture.

Summary

The RTI[2]-B team should actively involve students as part of the Tier I plan. An efficient way to involve students in all grade levels is to develop student leadership teams or work with existing student leadership teams.

For Further Reading

Feuerborn, L., Wallace, C., & Tyre, A. (2016). A qualitative analysis of middle and high school teacher perceptions of school wide positive behavior supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 18*(4), 219-229.

Mitra, D. (2006). Increasing student voice. *The Prevention Researcher, 13*(1), 7-10.

Smyth, J. (2006). When students have power. International Journal of *Leadership in Education, 9*(4), 285-298.

Endnotes

[1]Hine, M., & Caceres, E. (n.d.). *Student involvement: How to include student in the RTI[2]-B framework* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from www.tennesseebsp.org
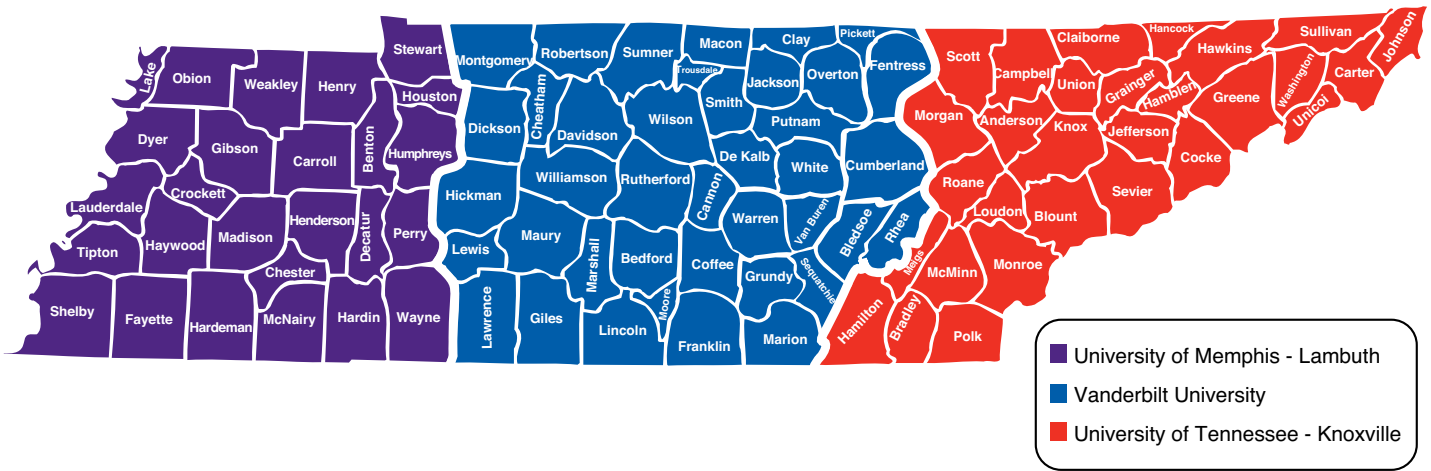
Tennessee Behavior Supports Project by Region: 2016-2020

Legend:
- University of Memphis - Lambuth
- Vanderbilt University
- University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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 (RTI^2-B). To locate the project assigned to your region, see below.

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