RTI Classroom Teacher Toolkit

HANDOUT 2

Tier 2: Supplemental Interventions to Fix Off-Grade-Level Skill Gaps

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The Data Analysis Team: Command & Control for Tier 2/3 Services

The Data Analysis Team (DAT) is the 'command and control' group for determining which students qualify for Tier 2/3 academic services in your Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) model and assigning them to the appropriate intervention support. The DAT meets after each of 3 school-wide academic screenings that occur in fall, winter, and spring.

The Team's tasks are to (1) share screening results with grade-level teachers to help them to improve instruction; (2) identify specific students that qualify for Tier 2/3 services; and (3) assemble an individual plan for each student identified for Tier 2/3 services.

The DAT is typically multi-disciplinary. There is no minimum or maximum number of participants on the Team. However, the DAT membership collectively should:

- be knowledgeable of all intervention personnel and evidence-based programs available for Tier 2/3 interventions.
- know how to identify students who have failed to meet expected screening benchmarks
- be skilled in using the benchmarks to estimate the risk for academic failure of each student picked up in the screening
- be able to match identified students to appropriate interventions while providing students with sufficient instructional support.
- have the capacity to document the Tier 2/3 intervention set up for each student

Here is a description of how the DAT prepares for and conducts Tier 2/3 intervention-planning meetings (adapted from Kovaleski & Pedersen, 2008).

PREPARATION: STEP 1: Establish Objective Data Sources. An appropriate range of screening tools and other data sources are identified that are capable of accurately assessing student basic academic skills and/or curriculum skills. The school:

- *selects screeners.* The school chooses an appropriate range of screening tools to accurately assess student basic academic and/or curriculum skills. For each screening tool, the school establishes 'cut-points'—score ranges that allow students to be sorted and placed in categories according to their level of need. Those categories include:
  A. Tier 1: Core Instruction: Low Risk: No intervention is needed.
  B. Tier 1: Classroom Intervention. Emerging Risk: A classroom intervention plan is sufficient.
  C. Tier 2: Supplemental Intervention: Some Risk: The student requires intervention beyond core instruction to remediate off-level academic skill gaps. Tier 2 groups are limited to 7 students and meet at least 3 times per week for 30 minutes.
  D. Tier 3: Intensive Intervention: At Risk: The student requires the most intensive level of intervention support matched to their unique skill deficits. Tier 3 groups are limited to 2-3 students and meet daily for 30 minutes or more.
- *identifies additional data sources.* The school optionally has selected additional data sources (e.g., state test scores; teacher nomination) for identifying students needing intervention support. When possible, cut-points are established for these additional data sources (e.g., organizing raw scores into cut-points on a state reading test to correspond with Tiers of intervention).
- *weights screeners and other data sources.* The school weights in descending order of importance all measures to be used to make intervention placements, with the most 'diagnostic' sources appearing in first position. When

a student's several data sources show an inconsistent data profile (e.g., with some sources indicating a need for intervention and others suggesting that the student is low-risk), the school assigns greater weight to the more 'trustworthy' data sources to help to resolve the uncertainty.

PREPARATION: STEP 2: Prepare Data Reports for Current Screening. The Data Analysis Team prepares the school-wide screening data in a format suitable for sharing with classroom teachers and making Tier 2/3 service placement decisions. The DAT:

- *compiles summaries depicting patterns of student performance by grade level.* For each grade level, the DAT prepares summary statistics useful for interpreting the effectiveness of core instruction. Such grade-level summary information might include the overall percentage of students performing at or above grade level on each screening measure, as well as targeted analyses of percentages of students demonstrating mastery of particular academic skills (e.g., oral reading fluency).
- *prepares student eligibility lists by Tier.* At every grade level, the school generates lists for each screening measure that use predetermined cut-point scores to group students into corresponding intervention Tiers.

DAT MEETING: STEP 1: Have Instructional Conversations with Grade-Level Teams. Once a fall, winter, or spring school-wide screening has been completed, the DAT meets with teachers at each grade level. Grade-level teachers are supplied with data reports containing screening results, including summaries highlighting patterns of student performance and eligibility lists by Tier for that grade level.

The goals of DAT/grade-level meetings are to:

- *evaluate the effectiveness of core instruction.* The DAT and teachers review the numbers and percentages of students whose screening results met or exceeded benchmarks. A general rule of thumb is that core instruction is judged to be adequate if at least 80% of students perform at or above the benchmark cut-point.
- *examine patterns of student performance.* The DAT and teachers next look over the screening results to see what grade- or class-wide patterns of performance emerge. Relative areas of strength and weakness are identified.
- *brainstorm ideas to strengthen instruction.* Once specific areas of student weakness are identified, the conversation turns to discussion of specific strategies that teachers can incorporate into core instruction across the grade level to improve learning and outcomes. A recorder takes notes and the resulting ideas are formulated as an 'action plan' for teachers to implement.

Here are examples of questions that the DAT may ask a grade-level team about how to change instruction in response to screening data:

- *According to our most recent screening data, 65 percent of our third-grade met or exceeded the benchmark for oral reading fluency. That's well below our goal of 80 percent. What ideas do you have to target reading fluency in your core reading instruction?*
- *The data show that there are at least 4 students in each of your first-grade sections who have big gaps in their letter-identification skills. Let's brainstorm ways that you can provide classroom support to help these students to catch up with their peers.*
- *When you look at student performance in reading comprehension, some of your fourth-grade classrooms were at or above benchmark and some below. Why do you think we have this variability—and more importantly, what can we do to address it?*

TIP: *Delegate to streamline grade-level meetings.* Schools may find it logistically difficult to convene a meeting between the entire DAT and each grade-level instructional team. One solution is first to convene the full DAT collectively to analyze screening results and compile analyses for all grade levels. Then a representative or sub-group of the DAT can be delegated to meet with the various grade levels to convey the updated screening information and the full DAT's recommendations, as well as to generate an action plan.

DAT MEETING: STEP 2: Identify Tier 2/3 Students. The DAT next reviews screening results at each grade level. The Team's task in this phase is to identify students who qualify for Tier 2/3 services based on their falling below the Tier 2/3 eligibility cut-point scores on the screening measure(s).Below are examples of questions that the DAT may ask as it reviews screening data and identifies specific students as qualifying for Tier 2/3 services:

- *Let's look at our screening cut-point scores for reading comprehension across grades 2 through 6. Which students fell into the Tier 2 and Tier 3 ranges?*
- *How many students in our fifth-grade qualify for Tier 2 or Tier 3 services because of reading delays? And if we cap groups at 7, how many students can our current MTSS providers accommodate at that grade level?*
- *Are there any students appearing on our Tier 2/3 eligibility list who are a surprise because we thought their skills were stronger than we saw in the screening?*
- *Which students were so low on our reading screenings that we should do more diagnostic assessment to pinpoint their intervention needs?*

DAT MEETING: STEP 3: Develop Intervention Plans for Each Eligible Tier 2/3 Student. In the final segment of the fall, winter, or spring DAT meeting, the Team assigns each student to a specific reading group/program and creates a matching intervention plan. For each student discussed, the team decides on details such as what group and intervention program that learner is to be assigned to, the frequency and length of intervention sessions, and the number of weeks the intervention will last before check-up. The DAT also creates a written record of the intervention plan. Here are sample questions that the DAT may ask as it assembles and documents a Tier 2/3 intervention plan for a particular student:

- *Let's look at our next student on the list, Jack. According to our screening data, what reading intervention would be best for Jack?*
- *How will we monitor Jack's progress during the intervention—and how often?*
- *What will be the maximum size of Jack's reading group?*
- *How frequently should Jack's reading group meet?*
- *How many weeks will the intervention last before we check in on Jack's reading progress?*

TIP: *Delegate development of intervention plans to Tier 2/3 providers.* The DAT can find it time-consuming in a single meeting to create individualized plans documenting all details of each eligible student's Tier 2/3 reading interventions. An alternative is to hand off final documentation of individual plans to the intervention providers, to be completed soon after the DAT meeting. In this scenario, the full DAT retains responsibility for identifying Tier 2/3 students and making assignments to groups and reading programs. Of course, if interventionists are given responsibility for creating Tier 2/3 plans, they will need training to ensure that the plans that they develop will be of high quality.

Reference
Kovaleski, J. F., & Pedersen, J. (2008). Best practices in data analysis teaming. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology, V.* Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Tier 2: Academic Intervention Services: Activity Sheet

Here are key recommendations for establishing Tier 2 services at your school:

Intervention

- **Use Interventions Supported by Research.** Intervention plans for Tier 2 students contain programs or practices supported by research.
- **Cap Group Size.** Tier 2 services are delivered in small-group format to allow enough adult attention to close the gap in academic skills or performance.
- **Schedule Adequate Time.** The schedule allocates sufficient time outside of core instruction for the delivery of Tier 2 interventions to promote accelerated student learning.
- **Put Plans in Writing.** Tier 2 intervention plans are written down before the intervention begins—and student progress is measured throughout the intervention period.
- **Monitor Intervention Integrity.** Information is collected (e.g., student attendance, observation of Tier 2 sessions) to verify that the intervention is being delivered with adequate integrity to be effective.

Data

- **Adopt Entrance/Exit Criteria.** Enrollment in Tier 2 services is dynamic: students can enter or exit at several points during the school year, depending on measured academic need.
- **Use Objective Data Sources.** Students are identified for Tier 2 services based on objective data sources.
- **Select Screeners that Identify the Right Students.** Data sources used for Tier 2 accurately highlight areas of academic deficit and assess degree of academic risk among the student population.
- **Appoint a Data Analysis Team.** The Data Analysis Team is the decision-maker to decide whether and when students move into or out of Tier 2 services.

Tier 2/3: Setting Priorities

Task. Look over the *Tier 2: Academic Intervention Services: General Guidelines* on the previous page. List those elements at your school that you feel should be given priority for review or change. For each element, jot down work to be done in the current year and/or next year.

Tier 2 Element	2021-22 (This Year): Changes/Recommendations	2022-23 (Next Year): Changes/Recommendations

Tier 2/3: Academic Programming

Task 1: Determine 'research-based'. Schools must develop their own guidelines to determine if a Tier 2/3 program or practice is 'research-based'. Legitimate sources include peer-reviewed research journals (e.g., Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis); professional guild organizations (e.g., American Speech-Language-Hearing Association); and trusted organizations or sponsoring agencies (e.g., Council for Exceptional Children; New York State Department of Education).

A. Approved 'Research-Based' Sources
Directions. List sources for intervention programs/practices that your group trusts.

B. Process to Create List of Approved 'Research-Based' Sources
Directions. Describe a process in your school/district to generate/update a list of trusted intervention sources.

Task 2: Complete a Tier 2/3 program inventory. Schools inventory the array of Tier 2/3 programs/practices in place to address reading, mathematics, and/or content-area academic delays.

Inventory of Tier 2/3 Programs/Practices					
Directions. List those programs/practices that make up your school/district's current range of Tier 2/3 services.					
Research-Based?	*Tier 2/3 Intervention Program/Practice*	*Grade Level(s)*	*Area(s) of Academic Deficit Targeted*	*Method of Delivery*	*Frequency/ Length of Sessions*
_X_ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure	Read 180: Computer-Assisted Instruction	6-8	Reading fluency, comprehension	Whole class; small group; individual	3-5 days/week 30-45 min sessions
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure					
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure					
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure					
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure					
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure					
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure					
___ Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure					

Task 3: Investigate additional Tier 2/3 programs. Schools locate additional high-quality Tier 2/3 programs using the What Works Clearinghouse search engine and/or other trusted source(s).

Prospective Tier 2/3 Programs/Practices				
Directions. Visit the What Works Clearinghouse site (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/). Use the search and filtering tools to find one or more programs that you might add to your school's inventory of Tier 2/3 reading, math, and/or general academic-skill programs.				
Tier 2/3 Intervention Program/Practice	*Grade Level(s)*	*Area(s) of Academic Deficit Targeted*	*Method of Delivery*	*Frequency/ Length of Sessions*

Task 4: Develop 'treatment-integrity' checks. Schools use treatment-integrity tools to verify the quality implementation of Tier 2/3 interventions.

Treatment-Integrity Checks		
Directions. List your Tier 2/3 programs/practices in the table below. Next to each, record what treatment-integrity tools will be used to monitor the quality of interventions. These might include: *1. work products and records generated during the intervention (e.g., attendance; work samples; contact logs),* *2. teacher self-reports and self-ratings,* *3. direct observation of the intervention and evaluation with checklist.*		
Intervention Program Sample:	Intervention-Integrity Tool(s): Select 1+ from list:	Frequency?
HELPS Program	*Method 1: Direct observation with checklist: Reading teacher to observe/rate TAs during session.*	*1X/4 weeks*
	Method 2: Tutor self-rating	*Each session*
	Method 3: Student attendance	*Each session*
Intervention Program #1:	Intervention-Integrity Tool(s): Select 1+ from list:	Frequency?
	Method 1:	
	Method 2:	
	Method 3:	
Intervention Program #2:	Intervention-Integrity Tool(s): Select 1+ from list:	Frequency?
	Method 1:	
	Method 2:	
	Method 3:	
Intervention Program #3:	Intervention-Integrity Tool(s): Select 1+ from list:	Frequency?
	Method 1:	
	Method 2:	
	Method 3:	
Intervention Program #4:	Intervention-Integrity Tool(s): Select 1+ from list:	Frequency?
	Method 1:	
	Method 2:	
	Method 3:	

Tier 2/3: School-Wide Screeners

Task 1: List important screening data sources. Purpose-built school-wide screeners (e.g., iReady, STAR Reading & Math; NWEA MAP, FastBridge, AIMSweb Plus, etc.) help schools to estimate students' relative risk for academic failure and identify those needing Tier 2/3 interventions. They can be supplemented by instructional data as well.

List of Screener Data Sources

Directions.
- *List screener(s) and other important data sources that your school will use to determine student eligibility for Tier 2/3 academic services. Include a grade range for each measure.*
- *Note whether each will be a PRIMARY or SUPPLEMENTARY data source. (Supplementary data sources carry less weight than primary sources in determining Tier 2/3 eligibility.)*
- *If possible, try to set a cut-point/cut-score for each data source to identify 'below-grade-level' skill gaps.*

Data Source	Grade Range	Status	Cut-Point/Cut-Score
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	
		___ Primary ___ Supplementary	

Tier 2/3: Command & Control: Data Analysis Team

Task 1: Assemble DAT 'dream team'. Collectively, the DAT should have a survey knowledge of the school's Tier 2/3 programming options, personnel, and schedule; a good understanding of the school-wide screening tool(s), associated reports, and cut-points; and positive rapport with each grade level's teaching staff.

Data Analysis 'Dream Team'	
Directions. List the names and/or positions of those personnel whom you believe should be on your ideal DAT.	
Name	Position

Task 2: Plan Your DAT meeting agenda. Three times per year, the DAT reviews the results of the MTSS school-wide screening results and related academic data sources to identify students for Tier 2/3 services and set up their programming.

Data Analysis Team: Meeting 'To Do' List	
Directions. Review the general Tier 2/3 DAT meeting goals below. Create a 'To Do' list, with notes explaining how your school plans to accomplish each goal.	
Prior to its Fall/Winter/Spring meeting, the DAT:	TO DO:
• collects & analyzes school-wide screening data and related sources of academic information (e.g., F&P BAS).	
• prepares summary reports by student and grade-level.	
During its Fall/Winter/Spring meeting, the DAT:	TO DO:
• meets with teachers at each grade level to share that grade's overall performance on the screener and discuss implications for classroom instruction.	
• applies its data cut-points and decision rules to identify those students who newly qualify for Tier 2/3 services, those who continue to qualify (and perhaps should be shifted to a different intervention), and those who can be discharged.	
• creates groups of currently eligible students according to shared academic need.	
• assigns each group to a Tier 2/3 interventionist. (NOTE: The DAT may delegate this step to be completed by the Tier 2/3 interventionists).	
• matches each group to the appropriate academic intervention program/practice. (NOTE: The DAT may delegate this step to be completed by the Tier 2/3 interventionists).	
• ensures that group intervention plans are developed in writing prior to the start of the intervention period and archived for later retrieval. (NOTE: The DAT may delegate this step to be completed by the Tier 2/3 interventionists).	